

Contribution for the panel: Mediatizing affect in digital stories of global events and crises

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Title: What about #JeSuisAnkara? Claiming places of affect.

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After terrorist attacks and other disasters, the stem *#jesuis* has proved to be very productive in the gathering of affective publics (Besnier 1990, Papacharissi 2015) around causes of mourning or protest. One of the most productive structures is that of the stem *#jesuis* followed by a toponym that metonymically refers to the place of the disaster itself. In that way, hashtags like *#jesuisParis* or *#jesuisBruxelles* have been massively used for the expression of condolences and the creation of collaborative sentiment structures (Papacharissi 2015) around places of affect. However, while mourning through social media allows for the “customization (...) of one’s time, space and emotional place needs” (Giaxoglou 2015: 102), not all attacks or disasters have given rise to such massive affective use of *#jesuis* hashtags with toponyms. Our goal is then to examine how twitter users claim similar affective displays for these “other” places.

In order to do so we will analyze tweets like “What about *#jesuisAnkara*?”, in which the twitter user utters a speech act of condolences (Pizarro Pedraza & De Cock 2016) while at the same time contesting the unbalanced affective reactions around some places and others through a meta-pragmatic comment. In doing so, s/he takes a stance both towards the event and towards other twitter users’ affective stances. We work with a database of as of now 31.000 automatically retrieved tweets with the hashtag *#jesuis*, focusing on the subcorpus of metonymies of PLACE FOR EVENT.

We will present a multilevel linguistic analysis on the following aspects: first, at the level of the hashtag, the degree of specificity of the toponym (city, country), in order to observe whether some places are treated as more or less easily identifiable than others (ex. 1). Second, structural aspects of the tweet, such as the presence of a full message (versus a single hashtag), or attachments like links or images, so as to compare those tweets with tweets consisting of a mere functionally independent *#jesuis* hashtags, e.g. *#JesuisParis* (De Cock & Pizarro Pedraza 2016) (ex. 2). Third, when they are expressed, the motives that twitter users suggest themselves for the unequal attention to some places, which gives access to underlying representations of how physical, cultural and/or religious proximity account for varying degrees of solidarity (ex. 3).

Examples:

1. *#jesuispakistan* versus *#jesuisbruxelles*

2. *Ni un atentado más ! #JeSuisBruxelles #NoALaGuerra #JeSuisAllTheWorld*
<https://t.co/39VJPrmhjm>

(‘Not more attacks! *#JeSuisBruxelles #NoToWar #JeSuisAllTheWorld*’)

3. *I guess #jesuis... only applies to Western places? Sad hypocrisy. #jesuisbaghdad :(*

With this we aim at projecting a map of those “other” places, and the reasons and strategies that are mobilized to locate them on the discursive world map of affect.

References

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