

***Saudis in the Eyes of the Other: A Corpus-driven critical discourse study of the
representation of Saudis on Twitter***

by

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Abstract

Despite an abundance of research on the representation of groups and minorities in traditional (mass) media, little work has focused on the representation of others on social media platforms, especially Twitter. More specifically, to the best of my knowledge, no study has yet approached the representation of Saudis on Twitter from a Critical-discourse and Corpus Linguistics perspective. Hence, the overall aim of this thesis is to investigate how Saudis are represented in tweets in English from Australia, Canada, Great Britain, the United States and the rest of the world during two tragic events at Mecca in 2015 (the crane collapse at The Holy Mosque and the stampede at Mina).

Unlike studies of media representation which focus on a one-to-many text context, the current study investigates the bottom-up discursive practices on social media, namely, the user-generated microblogging service, Twitter. The data comprise 89,928 tweets (1.9 million tokens) collected during the tragic events at Mecca starting from 10 September 2015 over a one-month period and including all English tweets mentioning Saudis.

Drawing on theories from Critical Discourse Studies, the thesis deploys concepts and tools from the Discourse-historical approach and Systemic Functional Grammar. These are also supported by corpus-assisted methodologies to unravel the linguistic patterns associated with Saudis across five corpora. Integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches substantiates the findings of the current study as well as enhance the synergy between Critical Discourse Studies and Corpus Linguistics approaches in examining social media texts, particularly Twitter data.

The analysis revealed a hegemonic negative representation of Saudis across the corpora. Themes relating Saudis to war, terrorism and corruption are more prevalent than others. Constructing Saudis in relation to Islam and wealth (oil) triggers negative discourse prosody of extremism and corruption. Tweets about the tragic events at Mecca were generally condemning and reproachful. Additionally, comparing each corpus with others did not produced contradictory results, but rather triangulated the hegemonic, negative discourse recurring across the corpora, which sustains online racist and Saudiphobic discourse. These findings correspond remarkably to earlier findings identified in the analyses of representations of Muslims in Western media. The findings contribute to the ongoing academic discussion on the relationship between traditional media and social media regarding whether social media represent a largely safe space for maintaining and developing alternative discourses, or if it can mirror and reproduce existing hegemonic discourses, which may result in even stronger polarising effects on public discourse. In light of these findings, Twitter seems to serve as an online amplifier that mirrors and reinforces existing discourses in traditional media that are likely to have even stronger polarising effects on public discourse.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has been submitted for a PhD degree from the Department of Linguistics and English Language at Lancaster University, UK. I also declare that it has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

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Abbreviations:

CDS – Critical Discourse Studies

CL – Corpus Linguistics

FCT– Five corpora together

AUSC – Australia corpus

CAC – Canada corpus

GBC – Great Britain corpus

USC – United States corpus

RWC – Rest of the world corpus

Glossing conventions:

Italics – indicates that a word is a keyword or collocate

“ ” – original extract from the data

CAPS – topic/theme

Glossary:

Hajj (Pilgrimage): the fifth pillar of Islam that must be carried out at least once in the lifetime by every able-bodied Muslim. It is the largest annual convention of Faith in the world that requires traveling to Mecca. Hajj is performed based on predetermined dates, times, and places (Hameed, 2010).

Islamic: relating to or characteristic of Islam or its adherents. Something is Islamic or Muslim when it is constituted as such through discourses, practices, communities and structures that are concerned with matters of Islam (traditions, symbols, figures, concepts, rules, stories, etc.) and claim a transcendent authority by reference to Allah, the Qur'an and the Sunna (Petersen, 2012, p. 5).

Islamization: a contemporary phenomenon partly associated with the postcolonial era and partly seen as an assertion or re-assertion of identity in response to modernization. Islamization is a quest for the Islamic ideal. It is an attempt to restore the pristine Islam perceived to be lost or disrupted as a result of Western colonial domination (Othman, 2003, p. 124).

Salafism (Salafiyya): refers to the movement that believes that Muslims should emulate the first three generations of Islam referred to as the pious forefathers (al-salaf al-salih) as much as possible in all areas of life (Meijer, 2009, p. xiii). Salafism preaches a return to the study of the basic sources of Islam (the Holy Quran and the Hadith) and rejects blind following of the four canonical law schools (Madhhab), though it accepts individual interpretation (ijtihad) along strict lines (ibid., p.4). Anyone who adheres to Salafism is called *Salafi*.

Shia: (or Shiite) which means party or faction is an Islamic minority sect who believe that the successors of the Prophet Mohammed are his son-in-law, Ali ibn Abi Talib, and his descendants. The term first appeared with reference to those who followed Ali ibn Abi Talib in the wars that he fought as a (fourth) caliph against the Umayyads in 656 AD.

Sunni: refers to 'Ahl-as-Sunnah' which means the people of the tradition; it is the largest sect of Islam whose name derives from the word *Sunnah*. Adherents of Sunnah

conform to the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed and recognise the four Caliphs as the true successors of the Prophet.

Wahhabism: (often described as the orthodox Sunni Muslim sect) a movement that follows the doctrine of Mohammad ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, who proposed a correction movement during the foundation of Saudi Arabia; the essence of the Wahhabi mission was to revive pure devotion of worship to God alone” (Commins, 2005, p. 3).

Wahhabi: refers to anyone who follows the Wahhabi doctrine.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Upon arriving in the UK in 2014, I started taking driving lessons with an English woman, along with two Saudi friends. A few months later, my instructor told me that she met her friend over the weekend, and as she told her that she was teaching three Saudi women to drive, her friend shouted: “Be careful, they might attack you!”

Although my instructor was kind enough to defend my friends and me at that time, I felt really intimidated by her friend’s comments, and I kept wondering what made her think of us in that way. This incident brought to mind the murder of a Saudi, PhD student, Nahid Almanea, who was stabbed to death in Colchester, Sussex while going to university in June 2014, three months before I arrived in the UK. The murder was suspected of being a religiously-motivated crime (Duggan, 2014). Several cases of Saudi students being killed were also reported in the USA, Canada, Australia, Germany, and Malaysia, although the motives behind some of these crimes were not identified (AlHasan, 2016). These cases, of course, are not restricted to Saudis: Arabs and Asians have been subjected to hate crimes in the UK after terror attacks, such as 9/11, which can lead to “a permanently higher post-attack level” (Hanes & Machin, 2014, p. 22).

Several attacks and crimes have also been committed against Muslims around the world. At the time of writing, another vicious attack recently took place: the shootings in two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, on 15 March 2019 during a Friday prayer, in which 49 Muslims were killed and 42 injured. The killer was a 28-

year-old Australian gunman who was identified as being “clearly connected with alt-right and white supremacist groups that conflate Islam with terrorism and most likely was carefully groomed by their networks” (Besley & Peters, 2019, p. 5). Studies have shown an increase in the percentage of hate-motivated crimes around the world.

Williams, Burnap, Javed, Liu, and Ozalp (2019) state that hate crimes have increased recently and that “the highest number of hate crimes in history was recorded by the police in England and Wales in 2017/18 ... [with] a 17 per cent increase on the previous year and a 123 per cent increase on 2012/13” (p. 93). This increase in hate crimes against other groups and minorities can be linked to online hate discourse.

Williams et al. (2019) state that offline hate crimes and hate speech online correlate strongly with the occurrence of significant events, such as “online terror attacks, political votes and court cases” (p. 94). In fact, Williams (2019) stresses the interconnectedness of online hate speech and offline violence, stating:

Online hate speech tends to spike for 24–48 hours after key national or international events such as a terror attack, and then rapidly fall, although the baseline of online hate can remain elevated for several months. Where it reaches a certain level, online hate speech can translate into offline hate crime on the streets. (p. 9)

Such negative online discourse can be associated with the role of both the mass media and social media in provoking negative attitudes against others and transferring hate speech into offline, street violence. Several studies argue that the role of both the mass media and social media in public discourse is vigorous and can sometimes be harmful. Miranda, Young, and Yetgin (2016) state that both social and mass (traditional) media have positive and negative roles in discourse and “as with traditional media, some

inevitable evils accompany the societal benefits of social media and that mass media is having a detrimental effect on public discourse” (p. 303).

In fact, media can play a significant role in determining what information the public has, and this has rationalised the current focus of research on "how the media shapes public knowledge, attitudes, and behavior" (Shojaei, Youssefi, & Hosseini, 2013, p. 585). Mass media are perceived not only as a way of transmitting information and thoughts, but rather "as shaping opinions and presenting particular versions of reality" (Ameli, Marandi, Ahmed, Kara, & Merali, 2007). One theme that has prompted much research is the representation of minorities and other social groups in the mass media and how such portrayals reflect on their images in society and the literature, especially in terms of the use of language. Media representations do not only mirror the reality, "representations in the media such as in film, television, photography and print journalism create reality and normalise specific world-views or ideologies" (Fürsich, 2010, p. 115).

Unlike mass media, however, the new advances on the Internet, particularly Web 2.0, have provided (to some extent) a more liberated space for all users to share, participate and engage in the virtual world through what is known as social media. Web 2.0 refers to “a group of technologies which have become deeply associated with the term: blogs, wikis, podcasts, RSS feeds etc., which facilitate a more socially connected Web where everyone is able to add to and edit the information space” (Andersen, 2007, p. 5). In comparison with mass media channels where a particular group chooses and displays content (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), social media have succeeded in attracting the attention of millions of users, as well as influencing individuals and society (Sormanen & Dutton, 2015). Merchant (2009, pp. 108–109) outlines four salient characteristics of Web 2.0 as a recent developing trend:

- *Presence*: Web 2.0 spaces encourage users to develop an active presence through an online identity, profile or avatar.
- *Modification*: Web 2.0 spaces usually allow a degree of personalisation such as in the design of the user's home page and personal links, or in the creation of an on-screen avatar.
- *User-generated content*: Web 2.0 spaces are based upon content which is generated within and by the community of users rather than provided by the site itself.
- *Social participation*: Web 2.0 spaces provide an invitation to participate. This derives, in part, from the above three points.

On examining the current literature, studies on microblogging services or social networking sites (SNSs), such as Twitter, are few concerning the representation of social groups compared to studies of mass media. Researching media representations of subgroups, or others, has been widely undertaken by researchers on different forms of media production: on TV and movies (Flood, Nickels, Hutchings, & Miazhevich, 2007; Shaheen, 2003), newspapers (Baker, Gabrielatos, & McEnery, 2013; Kahani-Hopkins & Hopkins, 2002; Kassimeris & Jackson, 2011; Rakesh & De, 2015) and arts and photography (Born & Hesmondhalgh, 2000; Desai, 2000). These studies explain the role of media in sustaining negative stereotypes of others and elucidate how the “the sheer propensity of imagery works to maintain, confirm and recreate problematic representations ad infinitum” (Fürsich, 2010, p. 116). On the other hand, little attention has focused on examining the representation of other groups in social media, especially Twitter (section 2.3.6). More specifically, and at the time of writing these lines, the representation of Saudis in English tweets has not yet been tackled by any research. Hence, this study aims to fill this gap and

investigate the representation of Saudis on Twitter during two tragic events at Mecca, with a focus on tweets in English.

1.2. Background to the study: Why Saudis, why Twitter?

Being a Twitter user (or tweeter) myself, this has tempted me to select Twitter as the data source for my research for several reasons. One is that Twitter is considered to be one of the fastest-growing microblogging sites, currently the most prominent social media service (Murthy, 2012). When the data were collected during the spring of 2016, Twitter was already attracting over 300 million monthly active users (Clement, 2019). It has also received extensive coverage by the media, triggered by significant natural disasters or by political events and figures, such as Obama, who adopt Twitter in their political campaigns (Mischaud, 2007). Another reason is that Twitter succeeds in attracting the attention of many Internet users. Twitter gains in significance because of its accessibility and affordance (to an extent) to almost everyone, and as it has progressively “infused itself into daily life—regardless of one’s geographical location” (Walck, 2013, p. 66). Finally, Twitter is seen as a breaking news source. In fact, it is regarded as the preferred social media source for breaking news (Osborne & Dredze, 2014). Moon and Hadley (2014) state that Twitter has become a primary news source for traditional media, “journalists embraced Twitter as a new channel for information gathering. TV frequently cited Twitter as a sole or a primary source” (p. 289).

Being Saudi, it also intrigued me to examine how tweeters perceive us (Saudis) on Twitter, given that Saudi Arabia ranked fourth among the leading countries of Twitter users in January 2020 (Clement, 2020). Further, Saudi Arabia has received considerable attention in the media over the years, as the world’s largest oil exporter and producer, and as the birthplace of the two sacred places of Islam: Mecca

and Medinah (Al-Rassi, 2019). After the 9/11 attacks in 2001, Saudi Arabia has seen extensive media coverage as 15 out of the 19 attackers were identified as Saudis (Al-Shami, Al-Nuaimi, & Al-Alma'y, 2019). In addition, the United States-led war on Al-Qaida in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq all brought Saudi Arabia into media focus, as it has been a strong ally of the U.S. government (Blanchard, 2015). Lately, Saudi Arabia has joined international coalition forces against the Syrian regime and Saudi-led Arab coalition forces against Houthi groups in Yemen (ibid.).

The debates around Saudi Arabia's role in these events has led to an increase in discussions and conflicts on different media sites (Reaboi, 2019) and, accordingly, Saudis are likely to be represented based on their country's reflection in those media. These representations have received little attention from researchers, with the focus being mainly on the representation of Saudi women in Western newspapers (Adham, 2012; Eltantawy, 2007; Kaufer & Al-Malki, 2009).

1.3. Saudi Arabia: A historical context

Saudi Arabia is located in the Middle East in the Arabian Peninsula, and is recognized as the home of the holy sites of Mecca and Madinah. It is also known globally as the largest oil exporter around the world with its production of oil and gas that is vital to the global market. The state formation underwent several phases that ended in establishing the contemporary Saudi State or the Kingdom of Arabia in 1932 (Altoaimy, 2017). According to Alhazmi and Nyland (2015), Saudi Arabia is one of the few countries that did not experience a direct Western colonisation. Consequently, it survived any religious, political, or cultural disruption or upheaval that other Arab countries experienced during Western colonisation. This survival resulted in making Saudi Arabia “a state dominated by a strict adherence to religious Islamic and a

political system controlled by a monarchy” (Salamah, 2016, p. 6). The population comprises a mixture of ethnic communities (tribal and non-tribal) because of migration within the country and “from migrants from other countries travelling to Saudi Arabia for religious purposes. As a consequence, Saudi Arabia does not comprise of a single ethnic community” (ibid., p.7).

However, the success which accompanied the formation of the Saudi State relied heavily on the allegiance of the House of Al-Saud with an Islamic movement that was known as the Wahhabism (or Salafi) movement, which linked to the religious reformer Mohammad ibn Abd Al-Wahhab and became the official religious doctrine of Saudi Arabia since then. In its core essence, the Wahhabi movement endorsed *Tawhid*, the oneness of God, as the primary theology. According to Nevo (2006), Mohammed ibn Abd Al-Wahhab started preaching in Najd and central Arabia in the 1740s in pursuit to reform Islam. He called for:

The reinstatement of exactly the same religious, social and political customs that had been practised by the prophet Muhammad and his followers, namely adherence to the Quran and the sunna as the only sources for religious conduct, and the rejection of any new element or concept introduced into Islam thereafter; those were branded as bid'a... Not only is God omnipotent, he is the one and only who is such. No person or object possesses divine traits, so no one and nothing can or should mediate between a human being and God. The use of such an intermediary was considered shirk (polytheism, idolatry). (pp. 16-17)

Although the term was not rooted in terror originally, Wahhabism has become associated with terrorism in recent decades; the Wahhabi movement has been widely

criticised for its extreme approach and terrorist inspiration (Blanchard, 2008). And as Wahhabism was claimed to influence terrorist-categorised groups such as ISIS and AlQaeda, it was officially declared “the main source of global terrorism” by the European parliament in Strasbourg in 2013 (Telegraph Reporters, 2017).

The religious establishment remained in power and governed the Saudi society, maintaining its grip over the legal and educational systems. However, the country’s rapid modernisation and openness to the West had led to opposing movements by several preachers and scholars, such as the Islamic Awakening movement (Sahwa), in the 1980s and 1990s which aimed at reviving the “religious conservatism and reinforcing the Islamic identity of Saudis” (Altoaimy, 2017, p. 18). The Saudi society is considered conservative and private and often described as patriarchal and male-dominated (Alwedinani, 2017), with the Islamic rules and principles governing all aspects of life. Such religious control has led to a wide criticism especially in western media, focusing on gender segregation which was often linked to inequality and oppression towards women, such as enforcing modest clothing (hijab), and banning women from driving and jobs that were restricted only to education and medicine (Alsaleh, 2012).

Nevertheless, this situation has changed with the ruling of the late king Abdullah bin Abdulaziz who started the initial steps in promoting gender equality in education, health, and employment since 2005 (Alhazmi & Nylan, 2015). Women were able to vote in municipal elections and study abroad through the King Abdullah scholarship program. In 2019, during the reign of King Salman, the crown prince launched Vision 2030 which promised to increase social freedom and democracy, reducing unemployment, and improving the social welfare system. Women were allowed to drive when King Salman announced the royal decree to lift the driving ban

by June 24, 2018. They were also allowed to travel without a guardian's permission, register births, marriages and divorces, to be guardians to minors and to be issued official family documents (Rashad & Kalin, 2019).

1.4. Aim and Research Questions (RQs)

This research aims to explore how bottom-up discursive strategies were at play in the representation of Saudis on Twitter during the tragic events at Mecca. I adopt Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) and Corpus Linguistics (CL) approaches to examine data from Twitter as one aspect of social media microblogging services to answer the following overarching question: *How were Saudis represented in English on Twitter by tweets in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, the United States and the rest of the world in September 2015, the period including the two tragic events at Mecca?* This question can be broken down to include the following sub-questions (RQs 1–4):

1. How are Saudis represented across the five corpora?
2. What discursive strategies are employed in tweets in representations of Saudis?
3. To what extent are Saudis represented differently by tweets in Australia, Canada, GB, USA and rest of the world corpora?
4. What are the reasons and potential consequences for discourses about Saudis identified through the findings for the above research questions?

1.5. Structure and organisation of the thesis

In the last section of this chapter, I present an outline of the thesis and provide a brief discussion of what each chapter includes. Chapter 1, as discussed above, introduces the topic of the current thesis. It offers the background to the research problem and the overarching question of the thesis, as well as specific sub-questions. It also establishes

a gap in the existing research while highlighting its academic significance within the current literature.

Chapter 2 conducts a detailed literature review of relevant research. It is divided into two parts: the first part reports on the methodological framework upon which the analyses in this thesis are based, i.e. CDS and CL. The second section presents a detailed account of studies of the representation of other groups in both mass and social media. It also reports on the notion of discourse and its social nature. This chapter concludes by reviewing studies on representation on social media and Twitter, with a focus on studies that tackle the representation of Muslims, as they are the most analogous and representative group of Saudis on Twitter.

In Chapter 3, I present an overview of the methodology of the thesis. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first part discusses Twitter, along with its definition and conventions. I also describe the data collection process and how I compiled the data and reference corpora. I also consider the ethical considerations that should be acknowledged while researching Twitter data. The second part presents the analysis tools used throughout the thesis. It offers an explanation of the corpus tools and statistical standards I used to analyse the data both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present the data analysis in relation to the first three research sub-questions. Chapter 4 sets out the basis for the analysis. It aims to answer RQ-1 by first identifying the dominant themes and topics around Saudis during the tragic events at Mecca, which result from the analysis of the keywords of five corpora together (FCT). Chapter 5 also aims to answer RQ-1 by examining the themes through which Saudis are represented by tweets in the FCT, resulting from the

analysis of the keywords in Chapter 4. Chapter 6 answers RQ-2 by triangulating another corpus tool, i.e. collocation. Chapter 7 aims to answer RQ-3 by analysing the differences between the five corpora. The last chapter, Chapter 8, reviews each research question and links the findings of all the analysis chapters as it looks for cumulative evidence building up across different topics to answer RQ-4. An overall conclusion is drawn while identifying recurring patterns and inconsistencies. The chapter concludes by highlighting the limitations of the current study as well as making suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter conducts a review of the literature that informed this research. It is divided into parts: part one introduces the theoretical framework upon which the analyses that follow in Chapters 4–7 are based. Section 2.1 starts with a general introduction to the field of Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). This is followed by a detailed discussion of the various CDS approaches I rely on in this research in sections 2.2.1–2.2.4. Section 2.2.5 concludes the first part of this chapter with a brief introduction to Corpus Linguistics (CL) and the efficacy of combining it with CDS. The second part of this chapter will introduce the notion of discourse and its social nature. I will then draw upon the role of media in discourse in Section 2.3. Next, I introduce representation (Section 2.4) with some related concepts, such as ideology, identity and collective identities, in sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.3. The next sections review studies of representation in the mass media and social media, as well as case studies from newspapers on the representation of Muslims and Saudis. After that, in Section 2.4.5, I discuss representation in social media. The chapter concludes with a summary section (2.5).

2.2. Part One: Theoretical framework

2.2.1. Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)

The introduction of Web 2.0 has generated immense data that are valuable for linguistic analysis. Barton and Lee (2013) assert that the Internet can provide accessible and large amounts of data which create links between different areas of linguistics to be combined as analytical tools, such as Discourse Analysis and Corpus

Linguistics. However, understanding how language conveys meaning goes beyond a mere examination of a clause or sentence, it rather requires a deep understanding of the context or situation in which language is used. According to Wodak (2001), critical approaches to language use have existed in human societies for a long time. Among these approaches to language is Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), which is used throughout my research.

CDS first emerged in the early 1990s as Critical Discourse Analysis.

However, van Dijk (2013) asserts that CDA is not a method of critical discourse analysis since, he argues, being critical is a state of mind rather than explicit methods that researchers apply in their analyses. In the current study, I adopt van Dijk's proposal that Critical Discourse Analysis is ultimately a critical way of approaching scientific data and, henceforth, use the term CDS. According to Wodak and Meyer (2016), CDS can be defined as "a school or paradigm ... characterized by the common interests in deconstructing ideologies and power through the systemic and reproducible investigation of semiotic data (written, spoken or visual)" (p. 4). CDS analysts also seek to position themselves and their interests explicitly while, at the same time, "retaining their respective scientific methodologies and remaining self-reflective of their own research process" (ibid., p. 4).

One of CDS' central objectives is to view the choices offered by language (that are produced in a text) as a possible medium through which the ideological products of a specific discursive situation can be regenerated. This means that CDS aims to locate language choices preferred by speakers/writers which can convey specific ideologies. In Fairclough and Wodak (1997), this is explained as the "working assumption" which holds that "any part of any language text, spoken or written, is simultaneously constituting representations, relations, and identities" (p. 275). In other

words, any given discourse can represent a certain view of the world, specific societal relations among participants and specific social individualities consistent with the goals, contexts and recipients of the discourse (Sahragard & Davatgarzadeh, 2010). In its core concern, CDS approaches to discourse analysis "try to provide an account for the links between the language (discourse) and its higher up social macrostructure, which in turn try to explain the processes of production and interpretation of discourse in a society" (KhosraviNik, 2010, p. 56). In sum, Bloor and Bloor (2013, p. 12) highlight the main objectives of CDS analysis as follows:

- to analyse discourse practices that reflect or construct social problems;
- to investigate how ideologies can become frozen in language and find ways to break the ice;
- to increase awareness of how to apply these objectives to specific cases of injustice, prejudice and misuse of power.

CDS is also multidisciplinary in nature; it goes beyond mere linguistic tools and methods to examine the ways in which discourse and language are utilised to accomplish social purposes and how such utilisation can contribute to maintaining or changing society (Bloor & Bloor, 2013). Yet, linguistic analysis remains a central principle of CDS. What differentiates CDS from other linguistic studies, however, is "its stringent application of linguistics" (Hart, 2014, p. 6). That is to say, linguistic analysis is seen as the medium through which CDS critically examines discourse. In addition to linguistic tools, CDS is seen as multidimensional: researchers do not confine themselves to particular methodologies or tools, they also deal with different types of data and draw on a different range of methods, from the humanities to cognitive science (Hart & Cap, 2014). This multidimensional nature makes CDS a suitable approach for use in my research. However, before explaining how CDS is

combined with other approaches in my research, I introduce some central concepts in CDS in the following subsections.

2.2.1.1. Critique

One of the central tenets of CDS research is its criticality. CDS is critical in the sense that it “influences all levels of analysis, such as the identification of a social problem, data selection, methodology and analysis. ‘Criticality’ is directly linked with the concept of contextualization and, hence, the essential inter-disciplinarity” of CDS (KhosraviNik, 2009, p. 479). The term critical can, however, be misleading as it can suggest a negative evaluation (Bloor & Bloor, 2013), yet in CDS research, “it is used more with the sense of critique”, which means that the analysis can occasionally be directed towards positive outcomes (ibid., p. 5).

2.2.1.2. Discourse

Reisigl and Wodak (2005) define discourse as:

[A] complex bundle of “simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts that manifest themselves within and across the social fields of action as thematically interrelated semiotic, oral or written tokens, very often as ‘texts’, that belong to specific semiotic types, i.e. genre.” (p. 36)

CDS views discourse as a form of “social practice”, which implies a dialectic relationship between “a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s), and social structure(s) which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 258). That is to say, discourse

(little “d” discourse)¹ affects and is affected by other elements, which in turn cannot be reduced to one another: “they are different, but not discrete” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 3).

From a critical discourse perspective, Fairclough (2003) distinguishes between discourse as a count noun and non-count noun; the latter refers to “language and other types of semiosis as elements of social life” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 26). Discourse in its abstract sense (as a mass noun) can signify the historical background and social domain in which the discourse under investigation is enacted, e.g. “late 19th century political discourse” (Koller, 2012, p. 21). This notion of discourse acknowledges that “the contexts of production, distribution and reception influence the make-up of concrete textual instances and that these texts, in turn, have an effect on social reality” (Zotzmann, & O’Regan, 2016, p.7). Whereas the former, discourse as a count noun, denotes the “representation and construction of reality from a particular point of view” (Koller, 2008, p. 11) and the use of language in different social domains, such as media discourse, academic discourse, political discourse, etc. Discourses can be seen as “ways of signifying experience from a particular perspective” (Fairclough, 1995, p.135) and can represent the same area of the world from different perspectives or positions, e.g. US elite media discourse about China policy (Lee, 2002) and war discourse in Sri Lanka (Frerks, 2013). In this study, discourse is used in its countable form and refers to tweeters’ particular ways of representing Saudis drawing on linguistic resources which encode combinations of personal views and beliefs as well as social values and norms.

¹ Gee (2015) differentiates between “little d” discourse which refers to the analysis of language in use and “big D” discourse which refers to how groups of people enact specific identities and activities (p. 2).

Discourse can be implicitly indexed through language which reflects the speaker/writer's opinions on any issue or topic following their world view or knowledge, such as the phrases "*think before you print*" and "*be green*", which can denote a "pro-environment" discourse (Al-Hejin, 2012, p. 14). Discourse can also be explicitly identified through the specialised knowledge of academic or social analysts to describe the language of, for instance, the racist discourse of the British National Party (Werbner, 2005). However, discourses cannot be identified easily unless they are coherent and meaningful; this meaningfulness is usually defined in terms of local or global unity or coherence (van Dijk, 1983). Local coherence requires that the clauses and sentences which make up the discourse are related and meaningful and that the propositions they express are also related. Whereas the global coherence relates to larger parts of the discourse, namely themes or topics; both "are accounted for theoretically in terms of so-called "semantic macrostructures." Thus, a fragment of a discourse or a whole discourse is considered to be globally coherent if a topic (represented by a macroproposition) can be derived from such a fragment" (ibid., p.25). In the current research, for example, the tweets constitute Twitter discourse about Saudis, yet this discourse cannot be considered coherent unless these tweets are meaningfully related and that certain topics or themes (global coherence) can be derived from them, such as war, religion, Mecca events and so on.

However, while van Dijk uses both terms *themes* and *topics* synonymously² (see also Allard & Ulatowska, 1991; Calhoun, 2012; Glosser & Deser, 1991), other researchers set boundaries between the two (Downing, 2015; Jones, 1977; McCabe, 1999; Wical, 1999). For instance, Wical (1999) state that themes are broader and can

² Themes and topics are discussed here in relation to Discourse Analysis rather than the syntactic structure, i.e. Systemic Functional Grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004).

link different topics together; a “theme identifies which topic is really being discussed and what is being Said about that topic” (p. 19). Wical also adds that every “sentence in a discourse can be said to have a topic, explicitly Stated or implied, and a focus, or Something that is being Said about the topic” (p. 11, capitalisation in original). A theme refers to the central idea or the main thread of different levels of discourse (Jones, 1977), while topic is most commonly used to refer to the aboutness in a text (Downing, 2015; McCabe, 1999). Such differences, in fact, do not indicate sharp boundaries between themes and topics: though themes seem to be general and encompass the topics in a discourse, both terms contribute to global coherence which gives discourse its meaningfulness. Consequently, and following van Dijk (1983), both terms are used synonymously in this research.

Discourse is also socially constitutive (reproduces and sustains power) and consequential (gives rise to issues of power). The discursive practices in a given society can have significant ideological effects that arise from unequal power relations, such as social classes, ingroups/outgroups, gender inequality and ethnicity, which position people and represent things accordingly (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016, p. 6). Consequently, language users can “interpret, represent, reproduce or change social structures such as social inequality and injustice” as they are members of groups and communities and have their mental representations and discourses (van Dijk, 2009, p. 66). To better understand the outcomes of the discursive strategies of language users in discourse, analysts can examine what happens when people talk or write, which are texts. This necessitates differentiating between discourse and texts, which I will introduce in the next section.

2.2.1.3. Text

A text refers not only to written and printed texts and transcribed (spoken) conversations and interviews, but it can also be extended to include non-linguistic elements, such as images, symbols and audio effects (Fairclough, 2003). Texts differ from discourse as they represent the materialised form or the realisation of discourse in its abstract sense. Texts can also be a means of demystifying the “social identity of their producers and address the supposed identities of their readers, and texts for [a] massive audience ... actively construct imagined identities for their consumers, creating for them positions they may or may not occupy” (Dremel & Matic, 2014, p. 159). Therefore, texts form a crucial unit of analysis in this study, since tweets (the data) can reflect tweeters’ discursive practices while representing Saudis on Twitter.

2.2.1.4. Intertextuality and interdiscursivity

Intertextuality refers to the ways in which texts implicitly or explicitly recontextualise or incorporate other texts. It can also (partly) represent people’s presuppositions and assumptions when they talk or write (Fairclough, 2003). These relations between texts are established through transferring arguments from one text to another, through references to the same event(s), through explicit references to actors or topics and so on (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). Intertextuality can be explicit, involving the manifest and literal incorporation of texts (e.g. direct quotations), or constitutive, which refers to “the configuration of discourse conventions that go into [text] production” (Fairclough, 1992b, p. 271). On the other hand, interdiscursivity analysis focuses partly on “identifying which discourses are drawn upon, and how they are articulated together” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 128).

2.2.2. The Dialectical-relational approach to CDS

The dialectical-relational approach to language, as proposed by Fairclough (1992), perceives discourse within three dimensions (Figure 2.1). First, the text dimension, which “attends to language analysis of texts”. Second, the discursive practice dimension, which “specifies the nature of the processes of text production and interpretation”. Third, the ‘social practice’ dimension, which “attends to issues of concern in social analysis, such as the institutional and organizational circumstances of the discursive event and how that shapes the nature of the discursive practice, and the constitutive/constructive effects of discourse” (p. 4). The key issue is that texts do not operate in a vacuum but rather have dialectical, interrelated relationships with the society: societal trends influence texts through interaction which, in turn, is shaped socially and mediated textually.

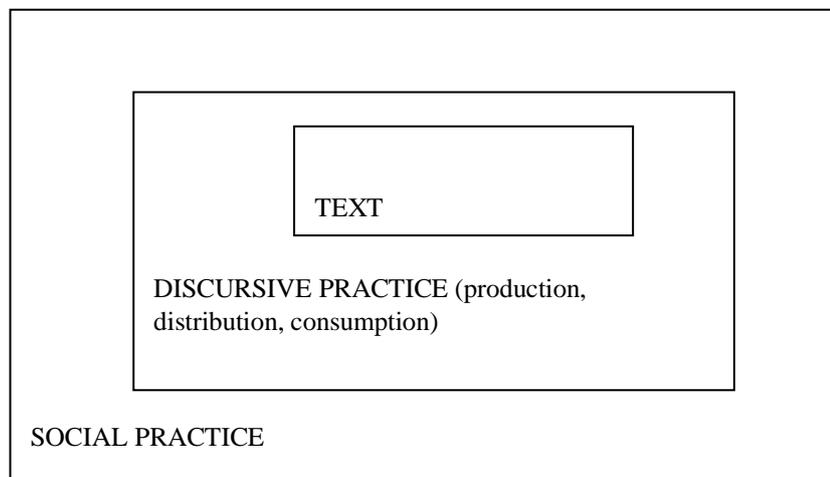


Figure 2-1: Three-dimensional conception of discourse

Following these dimensions of discourse, Fairclough (1998/2001, p. 26) distinguishes three stages in the critical analysis of discourse. The first stage is “description”, which is concerned with the “formal properties of the text”. The second

is “interpretation”, which concerns the “the relationship between text and interaction – with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation”. The third stage is ‘explanation’, which concerns “the relationship between interaction and social context – with the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects”. In the current research, the analysis is not conducted in stages, since it follows a data-driven approach. However, the analysis oscillates between these stages, tweets are described and then interpreted, and when a social effect is evident, it is then explained.

2.2.3. The Discourse-historical approach (DHA)

2.2.3.1. Historical dimensions

The Discourse-historical Approach (henceforth DHA) is one of the prominent approaches of CDS. According to Wodak (2009b), the DHA “focuses on multiple genres, large data corpora and on argumentative, rhetorical and pragmatic interdisciplinary analysis, while integrating multiple layers of socio-political and historical contexts in order to theorize dimensions of social change and identity politics” (p. 1). However, what distinguishes the DHA from other approaches to the critical analysis of discourse is its ability to integrate interdisciplinary and multimethodological ways with different types of empirical data and contextual information (ibid.). The context, thus, constitutes an inherent part of the DHA’s analysis of discourse, which takes into consideration four levels (Wodak, 2015, p. 5):

- the immediate language, or text-internal context;
- the intertextual and interdiscursive relationship between utterances, texts, genres and discourses;

- the extralinguistic social variables and institutional frames of a specific “context of situation”; and
- the broader sociopolitical and historical context, which discursive practices are embedded in and related to.

The DHA recognises the importance of examining the intertextual influence of, for instance, Saudis’ historical representation in Western media in the current discourse on Twitter (see Section 2.3.4.2).

2.2.3.2. Discursive strategies

In addition to the importance of the contextual and background information of texts, the DHA also aims to identify the effects of specific discursive strategies which serve to present groups or individuals positively or negatively (Richardson & Colombo, 2014). A discursive strategy can be defined as “a (more or less accurate and more or less intentional) plan of practices, including discursive practices, adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal” (Wodak, 2009b). The following discursive strategies are relevant to the current research. *Nomination* strategies, which refers to the ways in which persons, objects, phenomena, events, processes and actions are named and referred to linguistically in texts (Reisigl & Wodak, 2016). *Predication* strategies, which refers to the qualities or characteristics ascribed to social actors, objects, phenomena, events, processes and actions mentioned in the discourse (ibid.). *Perspectivisation* strategies, which refers to the ways (perspectives) in which speakers or writers position their points of view and express their involvement in the discourse (Wodak, 2015). Finally, *Intensification* strategies, which refers to the modification of the “epistemic status of a proposition by intensifying the illocutionary force of utterances” (Wodak, 2009b, p. 9).

2.2.4. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

Both CDS and Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) have matching views of discourse: CDS is concerned with addressing issues of power and inequality in discourse, similarly SFL (M. A. K. Halliday) with its inception of language as “an ideologically committed form of social action” (Martin & Wodak, 2003, p. 3). SFL views language as a social semiotic system which enables individuals to communicate three fundamental types of meanings (referred to as metafunctions): (1) ideational, which refers to how participants convey their experience of the external world; (2) interpersonal, which refers to how language users enact social roles and maintain interpersonal relations; and (3) textual, which refers to how ideational and interpersonal meanings facilitate text interpretation (Matthiessen & Halliday, 2009, pp. 12–13).

2.2.4.1. Transitivity

In order to identify the different ways in which media streams depict social agents and represent them accordingly, linguists employ a variety of analysis tools. As Hart (2014) states, "linguistic expressions do not correspond directly with the realities they describe", but rather "the grammar of representation, located in the ideational function of language, yields a linguistic product which reflects but a particular take on reality which may thus be ideologically confused" (p. 19). One of the crucial components of the ideational metafunction is transitivity. Transitivity in SFL is concerned with “the type of process expressed in the clause, with the participants in this process, animate and inanimate, and with various attributes and circumstances of the process and the participants” (Halliday, 1967, p. 38). Processes in the transitivity system are of six types (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, pp. 170–171). Material processes include the

Actor who performs the action, and the Goal or Patient receiving the action (p. 179). Mental processes include the Sensor and the Phenomenon being sensed; these can also be subdivided into Cognitive (e.g. think), Perceptive (e.g. see), Emotive (e.g. love) or Desiderative (e.g. wish) (p. 208). Relational processes include Identifying processes (e.g. Sam is the manager) and Attributive processes (e.g. Jane is smart) (p. 215). Verbal processes include the Sayer, Receiver, Verbiage and Target (p. 255). Behavioural processes are grammatically more like those of doing and include the Behaver as a human participant (e.g. Tim is coughing) (p. 251). Finally, Existential processes represent something that exists or happens (e.g. there is a problem) (p. 256).

Transitivity has proved to be informative in critical linguistics as an “essential tool in the analysis of representation” (Fowler, 1991, p. 70). Transitivity in SFL is a system of options, and the choices that language users make among these options can mirror a particular point of view and hence imply ideological significance (ibid.). Lee (2016) points to the role of transitivity in representation, stating that:

The significance of transitivity in linguistic representation derives from the fact that the various participant roles associated with different process types ... project a cline of dynamism ... so that depending on which participant role a character is mostly associated with in a text, he/she may come across as relatively more active or passive (or more powerful or powerless). (p. 467)

However, despite some difficulties in identifying certain process types or roles that participants play in these processes (Thompson, 2013, p. 95), transitivity remains a systematic and intuitive way to identify linguistic choices that “play a fundamental role in the propagation and perpetuation of implicit and dominant ideologies and ...

there are certain ideological differences that are conveyed either tacitly or overtly” in texts (Chilton, 2007, p. 402).

2.2.4.2. Modality

In SFL, modality is often presented through the interpersonal metafunction of language. In the current research, three types of modality are relevant. The first is deontic modality (Nuyts, 2006, p. 4), which is traditionally defined in terms of obligation and permission as an “indication of the degree of moral desirability of the state of affairs expressed in the utterance, typically, but not necessarily, on behalf of the speaker” (e.g. You **should** be thankful). The other type is epistemic modality (Nuyts, 2001, p. 21), which refers to the “evaluation of the chances that a certain hypothetical state of affairs under consideration (or some aspect of it) will occur, is occurring or has occurred in a possible world” (e.g. Ann **will/may not** come). The last type is dynamic modality (ibid., p. 3), which is traditionally “characterized as an ascription of a capacity to the subject-participant of the clause (the subject is able to perform the action expressed by the main verb in the clause)” (e.g. Mary **can** sing).

2.2.5. Corpus linguistics (CL)

Corpus linguistics (henceforth CL) can be defined as “a way of using computers to assist the analysis of language so that regularities among many millions of words can be quickly and accurately identified” (Baker & McEnery, 2015a, p. 1). CL can provide a means for empirical language analysis. In fact, CL is often used to answer wider research questions, “in areas such as language teaching and learning, discourse analysis, literary stylistics, forensic linguistics, pragmatics, speech technology, sociolinguistics and health communication, among others” (McCarthy & O’Keeffe, 2010, p. 7). However, Hardt-Mautner (1995) states that computer software such as

that used in CL cannot produce meaningful analyses by itself. Background (contextual) information and transitivity cannot, at least for now, be delivered via software analysis. Nevertheless, CL is not an end in itself, rather, it can lead to insights beyond grammar and lexis through the applications of its techniques to answer various research questions (McCarthy & O’Keeffe, 2010). CL’s basic techniques can also make a valuable contribution to the study of discourse from a critical discourse perspective (Hardt-Mautner, 1995).

There are different types of corpora, depending on the research goals. The most important type (for discourse analysis) is the specialised corpus (Baker, 2006, p. 26), which is used “to study aspects of a particular variety or genre of language”, such as examining the language of academic essays or newspapers. The other type is the reference corpus, which consists of a large body of texts and is “representative of a particular language variety” (ibid., p. 30). Following Tognini-Bonelli (2001), two approaches to CL research are identified: corpus-driven and corpus-based. The corpus-driven approach means that the analyst does not have a prior hypothesis or make assumptions about the data and his/her findings are strictly based on the findings emerging from the corpus. Whereas the corpus-based approach relies on the corpus to validate pre-existing claims, theories or findings from other research. The current research adopts both approaches, although it follows a corpus-driven approach with the corpus being the basis of observation (without prior assumptions or theories). However, a corpus-based approach is also used to verify/validate any emerging phenomena (e.g. a recurring pattern). Incorporating one of these approaches (or both of them) can assist the researcher’s arguments about certain texts or discourses (Subtirelu & Baker, 2017).

2.2.5.1. Central concepts

In this section, I will briefly introduce some basic CL concepts that are used in this research.

- Tokens: the overall number of words in a corpus
- Lemma: is “the canonical form of a word” (Baker, 2006, p. 55) or “a set of lexical forms having the same stem and belonging to the same major word class, differing only in inflection and/or spelling” (Francis & Kučera, 1982, p. 1). For example, the lemma WRITE includes writes, written, writing and wrote.³
- Span: refers to the number of words located to the left and right of the node.
- Dispersion: “The rate of occurrence of a word or phrase across a particular file or corpus” (Baker, Hardie, & McEnery, 2006, p. 59).
- Cluster: a term used to refer to a group of words in a sequence (pattern).
- Concordancer: “a software tool that searches through a corpus for each instance of a given word, phrase or other element and the immediate context in which each instance occurs, to create a concordance” (Baker et al., 2006, p. 44). Modern concordancers, such as WordSmith, makes it possible to look at word forms in several ways, each of which has significance for the researcher (Tribble, 2010). A concordancer also enables the researcher to examine the context of the node within one or two mouse clicks. Using a concordancer is of crucial importance as the bulk of this research is carried out through concordance analysis.

³ Lemmas in this document are represented in small capitals, e.g. HELP.

- **Keywords:** Scott (1997) defines a keyword as “a word which occurs with unusual frequency in a given text. This does not mean high frequency but unusual frequency, by comparison with a reference corpus of some kind” (p. 236). Keywords can locate existing discourses as well as reveal techniques that highlight and normalise some discourses over others (Baker, 2006).
- **Collocation:** refers to a “relationship of habitual co-occurrence between words (lemmas or wordforms)” (Stubbs, 1995, p. 24). Examining the collocates of a word can both assist in the semantic analysis of a word and provide information about the most salient or frequent notions related to the word (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008). Integrating collocation analysis within a CDA framework can be fruitful since one of CDA’s aims is to show how discursive practices in texts are linked to issues of power and domination in society and the interplay of discourse in reproducing and challenging dominance (Salama, 2011). In this way, “collocation (as a linguistic-discursive practice) may well be linked to different ideologies as ‘the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group’” (ibid., p. 317).
- **Colligation:** a “form of collocation which involves relationships at the grammatical rather than the lexical level. For example, nouns tend to colligate with adjectives while verbs tend to colligate with adverbs” (Baker et al., 2006, p. 36).
- **Discourse prosody:** (also referred to by Louw (1993) as semantic prosody) refers to “the way that words in a corpus can collocate with a related set of words or phrases, often revealing (hidden) attitudes” (Baker et al., 2006, p. 58). According to Stubbs (2002), discourse prosody expresses the speaker’s/

writer's attitude and can be "evaluative", as it expresses "the speaker's reason for making the utterance, and therefore identify functional discourse units" (p. 65).

2.2.5.2. Combining CDS and CL

To use CL methods along with CDS in analysing texts is not an innovative research practice, although both are considered as new in linguistics (Baker et al., 2008). In fact, analysing language through a corpus approach "dates back to the pre-Chomskyan period when it was used by field linguists such as Boas (1940) and linguists of the structuralist tradition, including Sapir, Newman, Bloomfield and Pike" (McEnery, Xiao, & Tono, 2006, p. 2). CL in linguistics can be understood as "an approach that is grounded in empiricism and has much in common with other approaches in the social sciences where samples are taken in order to make generalisations about a wider population" (Baker, 2014b, p. 7). Mautner (2016, pp. 155–156) outlines three factors when incorporating CL with CDS:

- Corpus linguistics allows critical discourse analysts to work with much larger data volumes than they can when using purely manual techniques.
- In enabling critical discourse analysts to significantly broaden their empirical base, corpus linguistics can help reduce researcher bias, thus coping with a problem to which CDA is hardly more prone than other social sciences but for which it has come in for harsh and persistent criticism.
- Corpus linguistics software offers both quantitative and qualitative perspectives on textual data, computing frequencies and measures of statistical significance, as well as presenting data extracts in such a way that the

researcher can assess individual occurrences of search words, qualitatively examine their collocational environments, describe salient semantic patterns and identify discourse functions.

Using corpora has become very popular for several reasons, such as their enormous size, broad social, geographic and linguistic range, up-to-dateness, multimodality and affordable accessibility (Fletcher, 2012). In fact, incorporating CDS research with corpus tools can assist researchers to, first, work with large volumes of data; second, reduce researcher bias, which is a problem often associated with CDS researchers; and lastly, corpus tools allow both the qualitative and quantitative textual analysis of data, enabling researchers to examine word occurrences as well as their semantic patterns and discourse functions (Mautner, 2016).

However, both CDS and CL are criticised for their limitations. CDS is criticised for its methodological weaknesses, given its qualitative approach to analysing language, which can lead to “fragmentary [and] exemplificatory” text types (Fowler, 2013, p. 8). Subjectivity is also another drawback that Widdowson (2000) criticises CDS for, as the researcher’s presumptions heavily influence the data analysis. Similarly, CL is criticised for its inability to represent the reality, i.e. what people really know or think. Widdowson states that CL can only reveal what people unintentionally do with language, depending on the analyst’s observations, rather than the introspection of the language user (2000). Other issues include CL’s quantitative nature, data decontextualisation and representativeness (Handford, 2010).

To mitigate these criticisms, analysts can improve their methodological rigour by combining both CDS and CL approaches in the analysis of data. O’Halloran argues

that the “use of large reference corpora in CDA, for purposes of comparison with a text(s) under investigation, reveals salient linguistic features in that text. In this way is arbitrariness, and thus analyst subjectivity, reduced since it is the software which reveals salience and not the analyst” (2010, p. 565). Furthermore, a CL methodology can allow a higher degree of objectivity. That is, it enables the researcher to analyse texts (comparatively) while avoiding any predetermined assumptions regarding their linguistic or pragmatic/semantic content (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008, p. 7).

The synergy of both CDS and CL has proven useful in researching media representations of social actors and minority groups (Al-Hejin, 2015; Baker, 2014a; Baker et al., 2008; Baker et al., 2013; KhosraviNik, 2010a, 2010b; KhosraviNik, Krzyżanowski, & Wodak, 2012; Rasinger, 2010). One of the novel synergies of both CDS and CL is presented by the work of Baker et al. (2008) *A useful methodological synergy? Combining critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics to examine discourses of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK press*, in which they examine the discourse on immigration in UK newspapers. The analysis includes a 140-million-word corpus about refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants and was carried out in different stages, using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Baker et al. argue that the “combination of methodologies traditionally associated with CDA (DHA) and CL in research projects, and their potential theoretical and methodological cross-pollination, seem to benefit both CDA and CL. Combining methods strengthens the theoretical basis of both [the] DHA and CL” (p. 297). They also note that using CDS and CL can supplement both approaches: CL analysis, especially concordance analysis, “can be positively influenced by exposure and familiarity with CDA analytical techniques, and the theoretical notions and categories of DHA can inform the quantitative CL analysis” (p. 297).

Using both approaches has also proven fruitful in investigating Twitter data, with CL providing quantitative analysis while processing thousands of tweets and CDS qualitative and contextual analysis that can together substantiate the findings of both.

2.3. Part Two: Discourse and media

2.3.1. Discourse as a social practice

As a part of socializing, people gain acquaintance with a variety of discourses, either acquired through experience or teaching. (Bloor & Bloor, 2013)

Fairclough (1995) states that discourse is commonly used in social theory and analysis "to refer to different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practice". In this sense, discourse is "manifested in particular ways of using language and other symbolic forms such as visual images" (p. 3). In what way is discourse considered a social practice? By saying that discourse is a form of social practice, I refer to the "relatively stabilised form of social activity (examples would be classroom teaching, television news, family meals, medical consultations)" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 1). Each form of practice resembles an expression of the "diverse social elements within a relatively stable configuration, always including discourse" (ibid., p. 1). Social practices can also be oriented either economically, politically, culturally or ideologically, and discourse is then involved in each one of them (Fairclough, 1992b). However, van Leeuwen posits some differences between discourse and social practice. On the one hand, a discourse can be recognised by "itself [as] social practice, discourse as a form of action, as something people do to, or for, or with each other". On the other hand there is "discourse in the Foucauldian sense, as a way of representing social practice(s), as a form of knowledge, as the things people say about

social practice(s)" (cited in Wodak, 2001, p. 9). However, as this research applies a critical discourse approach, I use the two terms suggested by van Leeuwen, who presents discourse as both a tool for initialising power and ideology and a tool for representing and establishing the social reality.

Discourse can also play a vital role in shaping and changing the social system and in forming ideologies. For the current study, ideology can be defined (according to van Dijk, 1998) as the "basis of the social representations shared by members of a group". This definition presumes that "ideologies allow people, as group members, to organise the multitude of social beliefs about what is the case, good or bad, right or wrong, for them, and to act accordingly"(p. 8). van Dijk (2009) also asserts that as part of language users and community members, people with their discourse and mental representations resemble an integral element in society. Thereby, they can, through language use within the social structure, "interpret, represent, reproduce or change social structures such as social inequality and injustice" (p. 66). Discourse can also be a concrete part of ideology: Fairclough quotes Pêcheux et al.'s (1979) contribution to evolution of the notion of "language as one crucially important material form of ideology", so that discourse can reveal the "effects of ideological struggle within the functioning of language, and, conversely, the existence of linguistic materiality within discourse" (1992b, p. 30). This research aims to explore social practices that affect the discourse about Saudis on Twitter and seeks to unravel the different ideologies inherent within it.

2.3.2. The role of media in discourse

In the context of this study, a comprehensive meaning that encompasses old and new media forms best defines media as the "technological and institutional systems

through which people produce, store, distribute, and 'consume' symbolic material on a mass scale: television, radio, the press, the Internet, and so on" (Graham, 2004, p. 54). According to Fetzer (2014), mediated discourse (or media discourse as I shall refer to it henceforth) is basically linked to the "advent of printing, access to education and media literacy, and more recently with the electronic transmission and multiplication of data" (p. 365). However, Fairclough (1995) differentiates between reporting written or spoken talk and the representation of discourse in news production, where the latter involves choice in interpreting and then representing it in one or more ways.

Emerging from the idea that discourse can only be construed and understood in context, the context itself is constituted through social, political and cultural conditions (Figueiredo, 2004). Thus, the context of a certain event is crucial in interpreting the discourse surrounding that event: the discourse of individuals is profoundly shaped and affected by the context in which it is generated. Media projections and representations can, thereby, play a vital role and participate in modelling the discourse of the public. Chouliaraki (1999) argues that media can create a reality (through discourse) for individuals who live within the society's system as residents. These individuals are "drawn into informed debates" and local and international issues that "weigh heavily on the formation of public opinion" (cited in Polovina-Vukovic, 2004, p. 155). It is through media language, which can be one of the most powerful ways, "that discourses can be circulated, maintained or challenged due to the fact that media language has a large audience and is plentiful" (Baker, 2014b, p. 107). Media discourse, according to Talbot (2007), is entrenched in people's lives and their daily communication, thereby, "attention to media and the circuit of culture and to the concept of discourse will flesh out this observation" (p. 5).

2.4. Media representations: An overview

"We cannot communicate unless we share certain representations"

(Moscovici & Markova, 2000, p. 274)

Representation denotes how people perceive the reality and project that reality onto their lives and the lives of others. Hart defines representation as being concerned with "the depiction of social actors, situations and events" (2014, p. 19). To identify representation, researchers need to recognise it as a "discursive structure": this approach to representation "examines representation in the form of an interrelated circle of meaning" (Ameli et al., 2007). Fairclough (2005) argues that through semiosis (discourse in an abstract sense), people can represent the world, act and interact through modality, and construct identities, both personal and social (p. 58). Language offers participants a range of linguistic choices, and it is through these choices that representation highlights particular aspects of identity that language users wish to conceal or draw attention to, added to their effect on implying ideologies and ethics that cannot be expressed explicitly (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The following sections offer an overview of how media representation can influence ideology and establish identity and collective identities.

2.4.1. Media representations: Ideology and stereotyping

Nowadays, both mass and social media are seen as key elements in society and can play an influential role in the formation of individuals' awareness of daily issues (Shirky, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Media are also perceived as not only a way for transmitting information and thoughts, but also "shaping opinions and presenting particular versions of reality" (Ameli et al., 2007). Media representations do not only

mirror the reality, as "representations in the media such as in film, television, photography and print journalism create reality and normalise specific world-views or ideologies" (Fürsich, 2010, p. 115).

Quoting Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, and Sasson (1992), when they refer to a general, accepted argument that media can have an effect on society:

We walk around with media-generated images of the world, using them to construct meaning about political and social issues. The lens through which we receive these images is not neutral but evinces the power and point of view of the political and economic elites who operate and focus it. And the special genius of this system is to make the whole process seem so normal and natural that the very art of social construction is invisible. (p. 374)

In fact, Graham (2004) asserts that new forms of media disturb and change evaluating systems of meaning, in and outside the systems of society. It is through media that certain people, who have access to the discourse of the public or hold authority and power, can gain control in the formation of public knowledge (van Dijk, 2005).

Representing social actors in the media can also illustrate the different ideologies via which such representation is constructed. Fairclough (1995) states that the media representation of discourse can be regarded as ideology formation. He adds that discourse representation in news media can be seen as an ideological process of considerable social importance, and that "the finer detail of discourse representation, which on the face of it is merely a matter of technical properties of the grammar and semantics of texts, may be tuned to social determinates and social effects" (p. 48).

In different media contexts, the representation of subgroups and minorities can be an essential factor that contributes to unravelling how mainstream audiences or majorities perceive them in society. Media do not only construct subgroups and minorities by silencing their voices but also portray them in negative and constrained ways that stereotype them badly in the eyes of others (KhosraviNik, 2009). Media representations can also be an indicator revealing "[t]he inequality inherent in social structure ... perpetuated in the internal organisation of the process, and in the representation of actors" (Rakesh & De, 2015, p. 13).

I refer finally to the disputes in some works in the literature regarding the actual impact of media and the extent of such impact on the public and the society. Comstock (1986) states that the myth of media affecting people's lives is often exaggerated, assuming that the public's exposure to media does not necessarily entail explicit effects on their actions or thoughts. In addition, Mutz, Sniderman, and Brody (1996) assert that it is quite difficult to show the real effect of mass media on people's opinions, and that the 1940s and 1950s scholarly consensus assumes only a minimal effect of media over society. However, one cannot deny that media can play a role in influencing the public who are exposed to or have access to them, often noticeably present in current societies and to varying extents. For instance, Fürsich (2010) argues that several social science researchers of mass communication "ascribe to the media a central or at least an important role in contemporary society when it comes to defining and explaining issues of civic concern" (p. 115). Talbot (2007) also argues that most people are affected by media discourse. Besides its unquestionable role in the modern era, "the media have largely replaced older institutions ... as the primary source of [our] understanding of the world. Since discourse plays a vital role in constituting

people's realities, the implications for the power and influence of media discourse are clear" (p. 3).

2.4.2. Identity and media representations

Can media representations be a medium for establishing identity and collective identities? To answer this question, it is important first to draw on the definition of identity as defined in the literature. According to Blommaert (2005), identity simply means "who and what you are" (p. 203). In Arabic, identity, 'Alhawyya', is defined as the absolute truth of a person and his/her core characteristics (Almaany, 2015). However, such definitions flatten the concept and may distort the ways in which identity can be understood, as "identities are multiple and overlapping and context-sensitive, and some are relatively trivial or transient" (Shaw, 2010, p. 32). According to Howarth (2002), identity is not static but "continually developed and contested through others' representations of our claimed social groups ... identities are always constructed through and against representations" (p. 20).

The discourse of identity construction has been central to research in a wide range of disciplines, such as the social sciences and humanities; there are also diverse, often contradictory analytical methods that researchers used to theorise and analyse identity (Santhakumaran, 2007). Arguably, theories of identity have fallen into two categories: constructionist or essentialist. The essentialists view identity as a "product of the minds, cognition, the psyche or socialisation practices, and is constructed only through binary oppositions: nature vs culture, insiders vs outsiders" (Georgalou, 2014, p. 19). In contrast, constructionists view identity as a social construct, "it is whatever people agree it to be in any given historical and cultural context". Constructionist researchers examine the performance of people and how they assign and battle with

identity, and how far the meaning of identity can be shaped in different texts and talk (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 9). For the purposes of the current study, a constructionist approach for defining identity is adopted as my study examines how identity is performed and constructed by others through social media discourse.

2.4.3. The representation of collective identities

In the previous section, I discussed the notion of identity and how it is constructed through discourse. However, in constructing others' identity and referring to them as a unified self, then it is collective identity that is being constructed. A collective identity, or collective identities, according to Koller (2014), can be understood as "socio-cognitive representations of the group self, including its attributes, relational behaviour, goals and values, which are constitutive and negotiated by the interactions within a discourse community" (p. 148).

The representation of others also has a strong influence over identity construction. De Cilia, Reisigl & Wodak (1999) assume that "there are certain relations (of transfer and contradiction) between the images of identity offered by political elites or the media and 'everyday discourses' about nations and national identities" (p.154). For Durkheim (1989), representing collective identities "is a 'social fact' which is imposed on us, difficult to challenge, uniform and coercive in its effects" (cited in Howarth, 2011, p. 7). Through practising discourse in societies, "socio-cognitive representations that a text producer holds about a social group, be it their own or another, translate into the textual construction of a collective identity for it" (Koller, 2012, p. 20). However, representing collective identities usually serves certain ideologies and is bound up with employing some political policies (Khan & Nawaz, 2015a) For instance, Shaheen (2003), in his book *Reel Bad Arabs: How*

Hollywood Vilifies a People, examines over 900 Hollywood movies to explore the negative images through which Muslims and Arabs are represented. He argues that through the repetition of negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in these movies, "slanderous stereotypes have affected honest discourse and public policy" (p. 172). Shaheen also criticises the absence of true critique and the public silence towards these negative images, and how that might promote extreme stereotyping.

Researching collective identities is important in researching social behaviour. Simon and Klandermans (2001) state that collective identity is an important and illuminating variable that helps researchers to better understand "when and why people stereotype themselves and others, discriminate against out-groups in favor of in-groups, and accept influence from in-group members but reject influence from out-group members" (p. 320). In addition, studying collective identities can provide answers to questions, such as how people understand the world around them, how they make sense of some social and cultural products, such as objects, texts and practices, and consequently produce meaning (Johnston, 1995).

2.4.4. Representations in the mass media

Quoting Fairclough's (2013) view of news media:

[T]he balance of sources and perspectives and ideology is overwhelmingly in favour of existing power-holders ... media operate as a means for the expression and reproduction of the power of the dominant class and bloc. And the mediated power of existing power-holders is also a hidden power, because it is implicit in the practices of the media rather than being explicit. (p. 43)

Researching media representations of subgroups, or others, has long been undertaken by researchers looking at different media outlets: on TV and in movies (Flood et al., 2007; Shaheen, 2003), in newspapers (Baker et al., 2013; Kahani-Hopkins & Hopkins, 2002; Kassimeris & Jackson, 2011; Rakesh & De, 2015) and in arts and photography (Born & Hesmondhalgh, 2000; Desai, 2000). However, examining the literature shows that a great deal of research has been devoted to the representation of other groups in newspapers. Hence, this research will expand the attention paid to news discourse by bringing into focus the social media platform Twitter.

The language of news has an influential role on society and politics, and also education: “[b]y being exposed to news, people make connections and try to understand and explain how events reported in the media relate to society as a whole” (Caldas-Coulthard, 2003, p. 273). In response to current social norms that render taboo negative views of other groups, Every and Augoustinos (2007) state that “[t]hose who wish to express negative views against out-groups take care to construct these views as legitimate, warranted and rational, denying, mitigating, justifying and excusing negative acts and views towards minorities in order to position themselves as decent, moral, reasonable citizens” (p. 412). The discourse of newspapers tends to control subgroups, reinforce ideologies and emphasise negative characteristics (van Dijk, 1998). In the following sections, I report briefly on existing studies that tackle the representation of Muslims in the Western press, as they have tackled Muslim representations more often over different time periods and as Muslims are the most analogous, representative group of Saudis. I also report on the current research on the representation of Saudis in the next sections.

2.4.4.1. An analogous case? The representation of Islam and Muslims

Media representations of Islam and Muslims is not a novel topic, it has been discussed widely by writers and researchers in different fields and with varied interests (Ali, 2012). A great deal of research has studied the representation of Muslims in the media, especially the Western and European media. How Muslims are represented in media streams has been discussed extensively since the 9/11 attacks on commercial buildings in New York in 2001 (Moore, Mason, & Lewis, 2008). These studies have revealed hostility and Islamophobic discourse in Western media since those September attacks, which result in aggressive treatment and intensive othering of Muslims (Haw, 2018). In fact, it is those “adhering to the Islamic faith [who] seem to be the most feared and targeted in Western societies, more so than any other immigrant group” (Wilkins-Laflamme, 2018, p. 87). Researching media also marks the growth of anti-Muslim discourse, depicted in newspaper articles in the European press by right-wing groups seeking support (Baker et al., 2013).

Several studies have examined the representation of Islam and Muslims and other minority groups in the Australian media (Ali & Khattab, 2018; Hebbani & Wills, 2012; Kabir, 2004). Researching the representation of Muslims in the Australian press finds that the opposition to Muslims settling in Australia is due to either their failure to adapt (conform) to Australian culture and values or their attempts to break the law or change it (Fozdar & Low, 2015; Kabir, 2004; Pedersen & Hartley, 2017). Kabir (2004) has also studied Muslims’ settlement in Australia from the convict, colonial period to the multicultural period, using archival research, interviews with different racial and ethnic groups and data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census. She states that Muslims were discriminated against and marginalised and were subject to policies of discrimination and isolation whenever there was a threat to national identity and security. This situation also applies to other

minority groups, such as Asians and Aborigines (p. 318). In fact, Islamophobic discourse has consequences, as attested to by several violent attacks against Muslims, mostly women wearing hijab. Akbarzadeh (2016) stresses that:

[A]fter extensive community consultation in 2015, the Australian Human Rights Commission noted that the Australian government's decision to raise the official terror alert level to "High" in August 2014 "made many Australian Muslims feel a sense of 'us versus them'". Physical violence against Muslims merely compounds the message of not belonging that has become commonplace within the Australian political debate. The climate has inevitably influenced the Australian Muslim community, with the assumed connection between Australian Muslims and terrorism poisoning attitudes and eroding the sense of belonging, especially amongst the youth. (pp. 5–6)

A key example of violence practised against Muslims in Australia is the Cronulla beach riot incident in Sydney in which 5000 white Australians congregated to reclaim their beach and verbally and physically attacked Lebanese Australians. Poynting (2006) describes the event as "a violent attack by members of a dominant ethnic group against a minority, in order to put them back in their place ... fuelled by alcohol, attacking anyone of 'Middle Eastern appearance'" (p. 85).

In the Canadian media, researching the misrepresentation of minority groups is preoccupied with two streams of views: "underrepresentation (or absence) of ethnic minorities" and "misrepresentation (or negative portrayal) of ethnic minorities" (Mahtani, 2001, p. 101). Both streams have similar impacts on minorities' conditions, which limit citizenship and provide "justification for the continued oppression of minorities in Canada" (ibid., p. 101). Mahtani argues that the way media portray

minority groups in Canada can affect the ways in which the public accept these groups in Canadian society, and asserts that when “media representations fail to represent Canada’s minorities with sensitivity, the entire country suffers the consequences” (p. 125).

In another study, by Steuter and Wills (2009), they examined Canadian newspapers’ coverage of the War on Terror and the war on Iraq and Afghanistan from 2001 to 2009, focusing on the use of metaphors. Their findings show clear evidence of the use of dehumanising metaphors in newspaper headlines. Steuter and Wills state that news reporters also use animalistic terms and metaphors to refer to the 9/11 terrorists, such as “rats” and “cockroaches”. These terms are also used “in descriptions of combatants in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as of Muslims in general” (p. 13). Muslim women are also studied in the Canadian media (Bullock & Jafri, 2000; Hirji, 2011; Khan & Eid, 2011; Korteweg, 2008; Thomas, 2015). For instance, Thomas (2015) studied the Canadian government’s decision to ban the niqab in citizenship ceremonies. Using a critical discourse approach, she analysed 80 Canadian newspaper articles and government releases over the ban. She concluded that the Canadian government perceives niqab as oppressive and distinct from Canadian values. Though the media present opposite views of the ban, i.e. opposing and supporting ones, “these views homogenized Muslim women rather than illustrating the diversity of their experiences and practices ... These viewpoints also speak to the perception of Muslim minorities in Canadian society ... that certain Islamic practices contradict Western values” (p. 198).

The representation of Islam and Muslims in the UK had also been extensively studied by several researchers (Allen, 2012; Ameli et al., 2007; Baker, 2010; Baker et al., 2013; Flood et al., 2007; Moore et al., 2008; Poole, 2011; Saeed, 2007). The UK

media represent Muslims as opposing British values (Moore et al., 2008), an alien 'other' (Saeed, 2007) and dangerous and terrorist others (Sian, Law, & Sayyid, 2012). Sian et al. (2012) examined the representation of Muslims in three British newspapers over three months from a critical discourse perspective. Focusing on four themes, Sian et al. found out that, in these newspapers:

[T]he logics of the 'us' and 'them' discourse to frame Muslims were almost always constructed as belonging 'outside' the nation. The representations were hostile and strongly Islamophobic which facilitated the development of a hysteria and overwhelming sense of fear by insisting that terrorists are 'lurking' on the streets of Britain ... The recurring use of words such as 'fanatic', 'terrorist', 'fundamentalist', 'radical' and 'extremist' ... imprint a particular image of the Muslim 'enemy', this image circulates globally as well as nationally with the continuation of the war on terror which has been typically constructed as a war between the west and Islam. (p. 264)

In addition, Baker et al.'s (2013) corpus project echoes significant findings that match previous research on Muslims representations in the press. In analysing 200,000 British newspaper articles between 1998 and 2009, Baker et al. employed a combined approach of CDS and CL to examine the representations of Islam and Muslims over time, using an almost 143-million-word corpus. The results conform to earlier research which posited Islam and Muslims as "a difficult issue that needs to be addressed", along with existing bias in media discourse which associates words with Muslims and Islam and provoke negative associations for both, predominantly in the context of conflict and as causes for concern (p. 66). They also found out that the concept of extremism is constant over time and that the media use "phrases such as

Muslim community and Muslim world ... to construct a homogenous category of Muslims, often differentiated from the UK or “the West”” (Bednarek, 2015, p. 407).

In the US, researching the media reveals negative representations of Islam and Muslims, resulting in Islamophobic discourse and constructing them as a threatening entity (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Bowe, Fahmy, & Matthes, 2015; Kassimeris & Jackson, 2011; Khan et al., 2019; Powell, 2011). Ahmed and Matthes (2017) state that there is a dominating, antagonistic discourse in Western media which represents Islam and Muslims negatively, with much of the tension in relationships with Muslims being in the US. In his study of the media reporting of the 11 terrorist attacks that occurred or were stopped on 11 September 2001, on the World Trade Centre in New York and elsewhere, Powel (2011) states that the media proved to be biased in representing Islam and Muslims adversely. Using content analysis, he concludes that the media succeed in presenting “Muslim terrorists ... as unacceptable, while domestic terrorists were excused due to mental issues”. The US media demonise Muslims while Christians are humanised; this creates “a climate of fear that supports U.S. attacks on countries with a large Muslim population ... and a fear of the outsider other was intensified ... to justify otherwise unjustifiable acts of war to “protect our freedom” (p. 108).

Similarly, Kassimeris and Jackson (2011) examined the discourse of media representing Muslims as it was constructed after the 9/11 attacks in *The Weekly Standard magazine*. They found that neoconservative writers tend to construct a subjective Muslim identity to legitimise certain actions as necessary and inescapable. They also expose how the Eurocentric narrative (a belief that favours Europeans, among others) promotes certain concepts, such as evil and freedom, to construct a particular Muslim identity in discourse, and that identity is consequently "evoked as a

rationale for war" (p. 31). Muslim women are also subject to media bias and misrepresentation in the US. They are presented as either agentless victims who are subject to oppression (Mishra, 2007b) or as a source of threat with their hijab that resembles a radical ideology which could lead to terrorism (Byng, 2010).

The representation of Islam and Muslims in the media is also investigated in other countries around the world. In Danish newspapers, for instance, Jacobsen, Jensen, Vitus, and Weibel (2012) conducted two case studies to explore the means employed by the media to reproduce ethnic and racial inequities. They looked at a period of two months in 2011, from mid-October to mid-December. Their findings show that newspapers constructed a negative and misleading image of Muslims and Islam, and therefore "contributed to a general climate of intolerance and discrimination against Muslim minorities" (p. 1). They also state that newspaper stories frame Muslims and Islam negatively and limit their representation to certain issues such as "extremism, terror and sharia, whereas positive actions and critical topics like racism and discrimination against Muslims were more or less nonexistent in the media coverage" (p. 1). Media reporting tends to be biased and to exclude the voices of minorities, and "when Muslims were given voice, the same few publicly visible and vocal actors appeared. At the same time, the lives and opinions of the less visible majority of Muslims more or less vanished in the media coverage" (p. 53).

In a study by Luqiu and Yang (2018), they examined the representation of Islam and Muslims in Chinese state news media over ten years, using content analysis, questionnaires and surveys. They concluded that Muslims are portrayed negatively by Chinese state media and that non-Muslim Chinese people also held negative stereotypes of Muslims. A survey of Chinese Muslims shows that they are acquainted with the media's negative depictions of Islam and themselves. They state

that after the 9/11 attacks, the Chinese media were heavily affected by the Western media's coverage of Islam and Muslims. This results in a negative framing of Islam and Muslims and contributes towards an Islamophobic discourse in Chinese media reports. Luqiu and Yang (2018) also argue that for over a decade, the Chinese media did not present any information about Muslims, their religion or culture, but rather “devote[ed] most of their coverage to religious extremists... [and] created an image of Muslims as a threat, and terms such as ‘Arab’, ‘Muslim’, and ‘Islam’ have become inextricably linked with ‘terror’” (p. 613).

In his article *Mass Media and Muslims in India: Representation or Subversion*, Kumar (2011) examines the representation of Islam and Muslims in Indian mainstream print media with a focus on the rape case of a Muslim woman by her father-in-law, using content analysis. Kumar states that Muslims in the Indian media are generally “under-represented among the newsmakers, experts, and citizens presented by the news media” (p. 75). He also asserts that the negative stereotypes that people hold of minorities in India, including Muslims, have been influenced by “the media to which Indians are exposed”, and when Muslims receive attention from the media, “they are more apt to be portrayed as villains” (p. 75). Kumar quotes Dilip Padgaonkar, an eminent journalist, who states that the Indian media are biased against Muslims, who are often stereotyped “as ‘fanatical’ and ‘fundamentalists’”. Often, the acts of a few individuals belonging to the community are seen as approved by the entire community” (p. 60). Such media stereotypes, Kumar argues, result in subverting people's comprehension of the reality and proliferating false images of disfavoured minorities, i.e. Muslims.

2.4.4.2. Media-triggered violence and aggression against Muslims

Negative portrayals and stereotypes and xenophobic discourse in the media do not operate in a vacuum but, instead, can have consequences for the targeted groups. According to Armoudian (2015), disseminating particular (negative) portrayals of other groups can “impact emotions and behaviors toward them, particularly during conflict. When extremely negative, these portrayals can be used to justify harmful behaviors”. He also adds that “the norms and structures of professional journalism can moderate extreme portrayals” (p. 360).

Despite their existence before the 9/11 attacks, negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslims have increased considerably; the September attacks generated a climate of Islamophobic and anti-Muslim attitudes in several countries (cited in Ogan, Willnat, Pennington, & Bashir, 2014, p. 28). In the United States, for example, the number of hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims increased dramatically in the months and years following 9/11. The FBI reported an increase of 1,600% between 2000 and 2001. And although the number of such crimes decreased in subsequent years, it remained five times what it used to be in 2000 (Disha, Cavendish, & King, 2011). In the UK, the percentage of offline crimes and physical attacks against Muslims increased following the Woolwich murder of the British soldier Lee Rigby in 2013, such as sabotaging mosques and pulling off Muslim women’s veils (Awan & Zempi, 2017). A report conducted by the British association Tell MAMA (2017), which aims to counter anti-Muslim crime, concluded that “victims of Islamophobia usually experience indeed both online and offline harassment” (p. 9). In this report, the researchers also found out that the media’s extensive coverage of the EU referendum (also known as Brexit) was strongly linked to increased reporting of hate crimes in the UK. This report also identifies that:

Misleading statements about Islam and Muslims from public figures and sections of the press are, intentionally or otherwise, contributing to pre-existing anti-Muslim echo chambers online which find validation in such statements. Others may find their prejudicial views reinforced in print and broadcast media, which may, in turn, give a measure of legitimacy and justification for some to carry out pre-motivated or opportunistic forms of hate crime. (p. 9)

In Canada, Perry and Poynting (2006b) demonstrate how the Canadian media have vilified Muslims and presented them in adverse depictions. These “negative media portrayals, together with discriminatory rhetoric, policy and practices at the level of the state create an enabling environment that signals the legitimacy of public hostility toward the Muslim communities” (ibid., p. 1). Hate crimes against Muslims have increased in Canada since the 9/11 attacks. Negative attitudes towards Muslims by Canadian citizens have increased from 30 to 45 per cent, which results in “a high level of harm and fear for the Muslim population” (Helly, 2004, p. 35). Furthermore, in Australia, Poynting and Noble (2004) investigated the experiences of Arabs and Muslims in Australia post the 9/11 attacks in a report to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). They state that racially-based attacks against Muslims and “Middle Eastern appearance residents” started after the Gulf War in 1991. However, the 9/11 attacks prompted another sharp outbreak of severe incidents, such as “women having their hijab torn at in public places, of people being spat upon or more violently assaulted, of incidents of arson, vandalism, threats and harassment” (ibid., p. 4). Poynting & Noble argue that the media participated in triggering several instances of “racial vilification in the recent events”, as the terms Muslims or Arabs are connected with terrorists, part of “a pattern reported during the Gulf War, long

before the September 11 attacks” (p. 4). Further, the sudden interest in stories that were similar to the 9/11 attacks prompted an increase in cinematic productions in which Arabs are the antagonists (Alalawi, 2015). This negative portrayal of Arabs led to institutionalising bias and racism against them in the US and worldwide, so that:

Being an Arab or Muslim even those with Muslim sounding names becomes a target of discrimination because of the strong association with terroristic activities. Consequently, these discrimination and attacks gave rise to inhuman and nefarious treatment of Muslims especially those from Afghanistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Iraq. (ibid., p. 58)

2.4.4.3. The representation of Saudis in the mass media

Saudi Arabia has been under a Western media focus for several years since the 9/11 attacks (Blanchard, 2015). Saudi Arabia is well-recognized as being the administrator of the birthplace of the Islamic faith for Muslims around the world. Saudi Arabia is the world’s largest oil exporter and producer, and also has the highest oil reserves in the world, thereby influencing the global prices of oil (Tisdal, 2015). Since the September 11 attacks, Saudi Arabia has been under the scrutiny of media coverage as 15 of the 19 attackers were Saudis (Al-Shami et al., 2019). In addition, the United States-led war on AlQaeda in Afghanistan and the invasion of Iraq brought Saudi Arabia into the media focus, as it has been a strong ally to the U.S. government. Lately, Saudi Arabia has joined international coalition forces against the Syrian regime and Saudi-led Arab coalition forces against Houthi groups in Yemen (Blanchard, 2015). The debates around Saudi Arabia's role in these events have led to an increase in discussions and conflicts on different mass media and social media channels (ibid.).

Researching the literature shows little attention being paid towards how Saudis, as a collective term, are represented in the mass or social media. The representation of Saudis has received little attention from researchers, focusing only on the representation of Saudi women in Western newspapers (Adham, 2012; Bashatah, 2017; Dahlan, 2011; Eltantawy, 2007; Kaufer & Al-Malki, 2009; Mishra, 2007a), in Middle Eastern media (Aljuwaiser, 2018; Lida & Avoine, 2016; Sakr, 2008) and their practices and self-presentation on social media (Al Maghlouth, 2017; Guta & Karolak, 2015; Odine, 2013). Nahid Bashatah (2017), for instance, examined the representation of Saudi women in British newspapers, using a conceptual framework, such as content and framing analyses, and focusing on four British newspapers during the period 2005–2013. Her study revealed that Saudi women are represented negatively in British newspapers when compared to their Western counterparts. Bashatah argues that the absence of understanding of cultural and social differences in the journalism realm leads to misconceptions and negative stereotypes of Saudi women. She also notes that her study findings echo the same negative depictions of Muslim women in the Western media, which have been heavily influenced by an Orientalist ideology, which presents Muslim women in similar cultural frames.

In the Middle Eastern media, Lida and Avoine (2016) examined the representation of Saudi women (in addition to Iraqis and Bahrainis) in three online Arab newspapers in English that are based in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Iraq. In light of the driving-ban issue, Lida and Avoine state that the *Saudi Arab News* newspaper is ambivalent in presenting Saudi women's efforts to lift the driving ban, being portrayed as "very pale" (p. 42). They also argue that "politics, driving cars and working in the media are "deviant" work for Saudi women because, despite their

activism, they are still denied a social space” (p. 42). Lida and Avoine also note that *Arab News* refrains from referring to some discriminatory situations for Saudi women, such as male guardianship and sex segregation. Yet, it often presents some of the achievements of a certain fringe of Saudi women. Their study adopts a critical approach towards international media criticism of the oppression practised against Saudi women, “thus exposing Saudi government policy towards women's rights” (p. 44).

2.4.5. Representation through the lens of social media

The swift change in traditional media, from mass content, audience and production to more electronic and digital content and virtual communities, is extensively documented in recent research (Harrison & Barthel, 2009). With the introduction of Web 2.0, the second generation of the World Wide Web (Reddick & Aikins, 2012), users can generate content and participate online through socially-based websites, or what is known as social media. Among the different definitions of social media from different researchers (Page, Barton, Unger, & Zappavigna, 2014; Reddick & Aikins, 2012; Shirky, 2008), I find Cho's (2013) definition of social media to be a comprehensive one because he incorporates a wide range of computer applications and software connected with the Internet, and serving different purposes. According to Cho, social media is:

[A]n umbrella term that refers to a broad array of Internet-based computer programs and applications that invite user-generated content and audience participation, enable direct peer connection and networking, and offer a highly customizable information stream. The term social media comprises

other, more specific concepts, such as Web 2.0 and social network sites (SNSs). (p. 1974)

The new advances in the Internet, particularly Web 2.0, have enabled (to an extent) a more liberated space for many users to share, participate and engage in the virtual world through what is known as social media. In comparison with traditional mass media channels where a certain group chooses and displays the content (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), social media have succeeded in attracting the attention of millions of users, in addition to their impact on individuals and society (Kent & Taylor, 2014). According to Stefanone, Lackaff, and Rosen (2010), "the development of social media platforms enables non-media professionals, or "normal people", to participate in a newly accessible media environment, not just as an audience member, but also as multimedia producers" (p. 510). Page et al. (2014) argue for social media affordances that can be understood better as "developing from and overlapping with earlier forms of communication". Though it is complicated to assign boundaries to the different genres on the Web, social media emphasise "recency and real-time communication ... collective groups ... communication to be highly contextualised and to use an increasingly wide range of multimodal resources which are often embedded in complex semiotic groups rather than distinctly separated" (p. 24).

In addition, social media can also have an impact on society and social spheres, as well as affecting popular culture. Burns (2009) and Couldry (2012) discuss the role of social media in shaping the social, economic and political domains. Burnes states that social media have proven to be profoundly influencing the business sphere, as well as religious and public activities, and participants' interactive relations. He also adds that what is most affected by social media is popular culture, as social media can influence how people consume cultural patterns and how they create popular

culture products, in a way altering their real concept. Couldry also stresses the importance of digital media for society the economy, and political scales. He also emphasises the change that media can enact in the ways people speak of society and how constructing inequities can take place.

Bardici (2012) further highlights social media's role in society in her research on the representation of social actors during the Egyptian revolution. Through representation, Bardici asserts that social media provide public spaces in which individuals can draw attention to the abuse and corruption of the government. She adds that social media websites, such as Facebook, Twitter and web-blogs, are perceived to strengthen "the collective identity of Egyptians worldwide to support the struggle against the regime. This was driven by the oppressive conditions under which the Egyptians had lived for long" (p. 20). Mautner (2005) argues for the importance of examining Web discourse as an influential factor to construct social relations and representations of reality, through CDA inspired research. He stresses that:

[T]he Web has become a major arena in which practically every aspect of social life is being enacted. In a variety of domains – from the intensely personal and local to the public and global – discourse on the Web is now a key factor in constructing representations of reality and social relationships, while also establishing new conventions for both textuality and intertextuality. Because the medium is so dynamic and flexible, it reacts with unprecedented speed and precision to social change; because it is more widely accessible than print media it is inherently more democratic and backgrounds (and in some cases obfuscates) power differentials. (p. 22)

2.4.5.1. Salient research on representation on Twitter

Despite the abundance in mass media research (see section 2.3.4), few studies have utilised CDS and CL approaches in examining online data (Mautner, 2005), particularly the representation of social actors and minority groups on social media platforms, mainly Twitter. Researching Twitter data has been carried out by researchers from different disciplines and through diverse methods and approaches (Bruns & Burgess, 2012). Zimmer and Proferes (2014b), in their study of Twitter-based research, examined a corpus of a full-text, academic research between 2006 and 2012. They state that the majority of research that uses Twitter for data collection and analysis comes from “computer science, information science, and communications ... business, economics, education, medicine, political science, and sociology” (p. 253). They also note that the main approaches used in the analyses rely on content analysis, sentiment analysis, predictive or correlational analysis, and traffic or network analysis.

Three studies, however, which use Twitter data are relatively significant in the context of the present study, two of them utilised both CDS and CL approaches in their analyses. The first study is by Baker and McEnery (2015b), *Who benefits when discourse gets democratised: Analysing a Twitter corpus around the British benefits street debate*, in which they examine the discourse around people who receive government support (benefits) in the UK between 2008-2009 and 2010–2012. Their purpose was to investigate whether the discourse on benefits in the conservative tabloid *The Sun* is refuted or articulated among Twitter users. They also sought to assess the compatibility of combining methods, such as CDS and CL, in identifying similar discourses of earlier studies of newspapers. Baker and McEnery show that Twitter discourse allows a multiplicity of voices different from newspapers’ discourse which often aims to be “a representative ‘voice’ of a particular audience demographic

or even an ‘imagined community’” (p. 262). Keyword analysis (as well as clusters and concordances) also proves useful in identifying different discourses on benefits on Twitter. Baker and McEnery note that tweets use dehumanising language while referring to both the rich and the poor, which may be due to the “sense of distance and immediacy brought about by online communication [which] explains the use of taboo and inflammatory language” (p. 262). Others, they assert, argue that Twitter allows people to communicate messages that might be avoided in face-to-face communication, such as “making death threats” (p. 262).

The second study is by McEnery, McGlashan, and Love (2015), *Press and social media reaction to ideologically inspired murder: The case of Lee Rigby*, in which they analyse the reactions of both the UK press and social media (Twitter) to the murder of an English soldier in London by two converts to Islam. Employing both CDS and CL, the researchers examine the reporting of the murder in the press and on Twitter using a diachronic, contrastive approach to explore whether the event is static or subject to change over time. McEnery et al. state that the mainstream media have a substantial presence on Twitter and play an important role in guiding and steering social media discourse (but the opposite is less true), and that “analysts should always consider the role that the press are playing in forming that discourse” (p. 237). They also argue for the ability of CL to process and analyse large bodies of tweets as well as small ones. Twitter, they note, allows a multiplicity of voices and “provides a forum within which oppositional discourses co-exist” (246).

The last study is by Awan (2014), *Islamophobia and Twitter: A Typology of online hate against Muslims on social media*, in which he examines tweeters’ reactions to the murder of Lee Rigby in Woolwich, south-east London. Awan aims to investigate how Muslims are represented and targeted by anti-Muslim abuse by

perpetrators on Twitter. Awan analysed 500 tweets from 100 different accounts and hashtags to offer an account of Islamophobic discourse on Twitter. He stresses that “[c]yber hate remains a complex problem and with the emerging rise of online anti-Muslim hate, prejudice, discrimination, and threats there is an urgent need to examine this area in more depth” (147). This research, hence, aims to contribute to CDS research by combining it with a CL approach in examining Twitter data, particularly the representation of Saudis in English tweets.

2.4.5.2. The representation of Saudis on Twitter

Examining the literature shows that only a few studies have examined Saudis on Twitter. Most of these studies focus on the Saudi women driving ban (Addawood, Alshamrani, Alqahtani, Diesner, & Broniatowski, 2018; Aljarallah, 2017; Almahmoud, 2015; Altoaimy, 2017; Zamakhshari, 2018), social media’s impact on Saudi women’s political awareness (Altwayjiri, 2017), Saudis’ views of 2030 Vision (Alkarni, 2018) and Twitter and Saudi women’s rights (Alkowitz, 2019). In these studies, however, the data focus on how Saudi tweeters react or interact with the issues being investigated; none of these studies tackles others’ (non-Saudi tweeters) reactions to issues related to Saudis (men or women). In fact, up to writing this review, no study has yet examined the representation of Saudis by others on Twitter and in English tweets. Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap and contribute to studies on the representation of other groups in social media (Twitter) by focusing on Saudis as data for analysis.

2.5. Summary

To sum up, this chapter provides a brief overview of the main theoretical concepts and analytical tools from both CDS and CL that are employed in the current research.

This review, I hope, demonstrates how the approaches used in this research do not only theoretically harmonise but each one of them can afford appropriate tools that can handle the various linguistic topics and patterns which emerge from Twitter or tweet corpora. This chapter also gives an overview of the notion of discourse and how it is shaped and affected by traditional media. A review of the literature that tackles analogous case studies of the representation of others, particularly Muslims, in mass media and social media, which deploy both critical and corpus approaches, is also addressed. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of salient research on the representation of others on Twitter and an overview of current studies about Saudis in particular, where the current research situates its significance and contribution to present-day studies of the representation of other groups on social media platforms (Twitter).

Chapter 3. Data and method

3.1. Introduction

This chapter is in two parts. Part one (section 3.2) begins with some background information about Twitter, as one of the well-known SNSs, along with its definition and related conventions. Another two sections discuss issues concerning acquiring historical data from Twitter (section 3.2.3), as well as ethical considerations that should be considered with Twitter data (section 3.2.4). Part two (section 3.3) details the method and procedures I follow to acquire and process the data corpus and the reference corpus. This is followed by an explanation of the corpus tools and statistical standards that I utilise to analyse the data both quantitatively and qualitatively.

3.2. Data

3.2.1. Twitter as a data source

In this section, I report briefly on Twitter as one of the prominent, constantly evolving social networking sites (SNSs). Twitter is considered to be one of the fastest-growing microblogging services, among other social media platforms (Chae, 2015).

Microblogging refers to “[i]nternet services that allow the users (bloggers) to post brief online messages (“status updates”) that are visible to their social network” (Kirilenko & Stepchenkova, 2014, p. 2). In addition, microblogging services allow “users to exchange small elements of content such as short sentences, individual pages, or video links” (Mukherjee & Bhattacharyya, 2012, p. 1850). According to Marwick and boyd (2011a), Twitter is considered to be one of the platforms that are offered by microblogging services, which “prompts users to answer the question ‘What are you doing?’, creating a constantly updated timeline, or stream, of short

messages that range from humor and musings on life to links and breaking news” (p. 116).

Twitter was developed by “a San Francisco-based 10-person start-up called Obvious” and introduced to the public in October 2006 (Honey & Herring, 2009, p. 1). Tweepers could send messages with a 140-character limitation on post length; however, this changed in 2017 as Twitter doubled the character count from 140 to 280 characters (after the data for the current study were collected). Posting tweets takes place via Twitter's main website or other related websites, as well as third-party clients, such as smartphones and other devices. Users can share their tweets, or they can keep them private and visible only to trusted followers. Tweepers can also freely choose whom to follow, and who follows them. Besides posting tweets, participants can share photos, videos and links, including shortened URLs. The data in microblogging services, as in Twitter, are episodic with posts listed in the user’s account chronologically (boyd, Golder, & Lotan, 2010; Honey & Herring, 2009; Marwick & boyd, 2011b; Xifra & Grau, 2010; Zappavigna, 2011). According to Statista.com, by 2019, Twitter was already serving 275 million monthly active users worldwide, with an average of 500 million tweets sent each day (Internetlivestat, 2019).

Twitter is considered to be an influential social media source due to several important features, such as establishing communities, interaction and collective action groups (O’Leary, 2015, p. 227) and can be a good representation of reality (Letierce, Passant, Breslin, & Decker, 2010). Twitter can provide factual information and breaking news and deliver users’ opinions on and reactions to tweeted topics (ibid.). Both interaction and communication on Twitter can be a valuable source to examine public reactions and stances, given its availability and textual nature. The information

abundance offered by microblogging services, like Twitter, marks them as appealing sources of data, such as for analysing sentiments and mining opinions (Pak & Paroubek, 2010).

However, there has been some debate concerning the nature of Twitter as a new stream of communication and its vitality to support and offer rapport in human relationships. For instance, Lee and Kim (2014) found out that SNSs (in their case study, Twitter) function like “an extension of, rather than an alternative to, face-to-face interaction, such that those with stronger affiliative need, yet lacking communication skills, are less likely to utilize Twitter to expand their social boundaries” (p. 304). This view suggests that social interaction on Twitter is somehow erratic, and that “most of the links declared within Twitter were meaningless from an interaction point of view” (Huberman, Romero, & Wu, 2008, p. 8). Lee and Kim also argue against virtual communities: they stress that Twitter’s amenability to provide extensive interpersonal networks beyond users’ everyday encounters “may create another layer of divide between more and less communicative individuals, which is not fully captured by the sheer size of one’s Twitter network” (2014, p. 304).

Nevertheless, such claims can be challenged given the increasing popularity of Twitter and empowered by its conventions (such as hashtags), which create “the possibility of ambient affiliation. [Users] affiliate with a copresent ... impermanent, community by bonding around evolving topics of interest” (Zappavigna, 2011, p. 800). Zhao and Rosson (2009) also assert that the affordability of Twitter, along with its mobility and low cost, all contribute to the fact that it shapes “a new informal communication channel that complements other forms of interaction” (p. 252). Besides, according to Gillen and Merchant (2013), Twitter is in some way a

(democratised) “conversation”, where everybody can participate, and it can be a powerful tool that connects users together. They also add that “‘tweeting’ is a significant social practice worthy of attention”, and even if users refrain from participation, “they have become aware that Twitter is impinging on many areas of life that touch upon the mass media” (p. 45).

3.2.2. Twitter conventions

Twitter participants, being acquainted with the technical affordances of SNSs, are provided with a series of (evolving) conventions which allow them to modify and add content to tweets. To facilitate their interactions, users make use of some conventions allowed by Twitter’s website, such as the @ sign that indicates addressivity, RT marking a retweet and the # (hashtag) which tags certain topics for users to follow (boyd et al., 2010; Zappavigna, 2011). Participants can interact with each other directly through Twitter’s main website, either via desktop or third-party devices (such as smartphones) or through other applications that present microposts in different ways and forms, such as Tweetdeck (Gillen & Merchant, 2013). In this study, I will briefly discuss some of these basic conventions to facilitate conceptualising Twitter as a textual space.

3.2.2.1. Timeline

The timeline is one of the central aspects of Twitter, which users see when they are logged in. It represents the homepage of the tweeter and displays a stream of tweets listed in chronological order, posted by those who follow or are being followed by the tweeter, as well as suggesting content powered by Twitter. Users can interact through their timelines: by clicking on a tweet post, it expands and displays the whole content of the tweet, including any media elements. Users can also post, retweet, reply and

like tweets on the timeline. In addition, the timeline features users' profiles (depending on the type of application), which display a user's avatar, bio and any other personal metrics, such as the total number of tweets, numbers of followers and followees, likes, media, tweets and replies, direct messages and so on. Users can also choose to have their tweet stream public or protected, albeit the Twitter default is public, and their profiles are public and minimal (boyd et al., 2010).

3.2.2.2. Addressivity @ (mention)

Twitter users employ the @ character, or 'at' symbol, which "indicates that the username which follows it is addressed in the tweet and the structure functions like a vocative, that is, as a form of address". Although it is positioned initially in a tweet, the @ character can function in different places, in "a medial or final position" (Zappavigna, 2011, p. 790). A tweeter can choose to explicitly message another tweeter (e.g. @YemenPostNews shame on Saudis and capitalist allies) or mention another user in the tweet to indicate a reference rather than addressivity (e.g. seriously? @JebBush, in the pocket of Saudis). According to Bay (1998), addressivity in online chatting functions similarly to "gaze ... in face-to-face" conversations, in which the exchange is directed at the target user or the whole group (cited in Honey & Herring, 2009, p. 2). Another feature that relates to addressivity is the reply. It refers to the platform-provided feature to communicate with a tweet author by clicking on Twitter's 'Reply' (indicated by the  icon) button in response to a tweet (Purohit et al., 2013).

3.2.2.3. Retweet (RT)

A retweet is the "Twitter-equivalent of email forwarding where users post messages originally posted by others". Retweeting does not have a specific syntax, but usually

follows the “RT @user msg” form (boyd et al., 2010, p. 1). The number of retweets is displayed below posts and indicated by the sign ↴. An RT can also be modified: this occurs when the tweet is forwarded by another user to his/her followers. The modification takes place when users add their comments, commonly at the beginning of the tweet, followed by RT shortening and ending with the original message (Page, 2012). Purohit et al. (2013) assert that an RT does not only circulate information but rather constitutes a conversation, in the sense that it embraces other users being involved within the tweet together with the tweeter. Following a methodological decision described in section 3.3.2, RTs are not included in the analysis of the current study for two reasons: first, RTs can cause skewed frequencies in wordlists (Baker & McEnery, 2015b); and second, I am mainly interested in the original uses of language. Yet, RTs could be an interesting area for future research (section 8.4).

3.2.2.4. Like

Twitter also allows users to like a tweet by clicking on a small heart-shaped icon (♡) which indicates their endorsement of or sentiment with the tweet content. In simple terms, the Like function on Twitter “is the simplest thing a person can do to show and provide support. Favoriting identifies the issue as important and offers a fundamental level of acknowledgement to the poster” (Hosterman, Johnson, Stouffer, & Herring, 2018, p. 84).

3.2.2.5. Hashtags (#)

A hashtag is a word or phrase that includes “alphanumeric characters prefixed with the pound sign. Authors use hashtags “liberally within tweets to mark them as belonging to a particular topic, and hashtags can serve to group messages belonging to a topic” (Gotti, Langlais, & Farzindar, 2014, p. 2254). A hashtag can further indicate

“a tweet's meaning such as its topic or its intended audience” (Efron, 2010). Hashtags also mark searchability; that is, users can trace back any topic of interest by placing the hash sign # before keywords. This will list all the desired or related queries in chronological order. Hashtagging is a significant feature of Twitter as it highlights any emerging topic and circulates issues rapidly. Users can simply attach the hash sign to any evolving topic within the tweet and can even post a different number of hashtags within a single tweet. In the current research, hashtags are significant as they form part of the unique keywords lists in Chapter 7, and thereby can be indicative of the different ways in which Saudis are represented in each corpus.

3.2.2.6. Followers and following

An important feature of Twitter is the feasibility of networking (Preussler & Kerres, 2013); that is, a tweeter adds or follows other users to his/her social network. These followers may (or may not) follow the tweeter. Consequently, the tweeter's posts, the posts of his/her followers, and only those s/he is following are displayed in their timeline. Also, following a tweet does not necessarily entail a follow-back or signify a virtual friendship.

3.2.3. Twitter historical data

Despite them being accessible online, collecting Twitter data are not always reachable. In fact, Twitter historical data are only available via “large-scale institutional or corporate involvement, as both technical and contractual challenges must be met”. And while acquiring data is theoretically available via Twitter, “the process of obtaining it is in practice complicated, and requires a sophisticated infrastructure to capture information (beyond one's personal archive) at scale” (Puschmann & Burgess, 2013, pp. 50–51).

Twitter historical data used to be accessible to developers and skilled researchers in the early years through Twitter's Application Programming Interface (API). The API allows developers to collect tweets from the public Twitter feed, i.e. tweets that are streamed through public (unprotected) accounts (Zappavigna, 2011, p. 23). However, historical Twitter data have been made available recently by some commercial, third-party corporates through purchasing specific data sets (Giglietto, Rossi, & Bennato, 2012). Some corporations limit access to their data totally, others offer data for profit, while others provide small sets of data for university-based research (Burgess & Bruns, 2015). Though some websites offer free tools and software that can scrape historical data from Twitter, acquiring such data is becoming challenging and very difficult due to the constant changes to the terms of services on Twitter (Mishra, 2019). Generally, the only feasible way to obtain such access is to buy data at a varying cost from one of the authorised, commercial Twitter data resellers (such as Gnip and Datasift), "thus placing larger-scale access to Twitter data out of reach of most publicly-funded research projects and institutions" (ibid.). In the case of the current research, data were bought from a commercial company called Followthehashtag (section 3.3.1).

3.2.4. Ethical considerations

Researching social media is constantly evolving, and despite being public and open to everyone, there are still ongoing debates around the ethical issues that should be considered when approaching social media data. On Twitter's Terms of Service webpage, it states that:

By submitting, posting or displaying Content on or through the Services, you grant us a worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free license (with the

right to sublicense) to use, copy, reproduce, process, adapt, modify, publish, transmit, display and distribute such Content in any and all media or distribution methods (now known or later developed). This license authorizes us to make your Content available to the rest of the world and to let others do the same.

Based on these terms and conditions, Twitter data are made public and thereby accessible to developers and to anyone outside Twitter. In contrast with other SNSs, such as Facebook that provides users with customised and highly detailed privacy settings that restrict access to certain content, Twitter's terms of privacy are rather simple. Users can either choose to have their accounts public, accessible by anyone, or private, requiring permission to access all content (Zimmer & Proferes, 2014a). It is assumed, then, that some users may not be aware of the consequences of exposing their content to others. According to Zimmer and Proferes, publishing personal information or sensitive data can threaten users' privacy if they are shared or leaked beyond their intended audience. Consequently, Twitter's privacy becomes a "clear and present issue" (2014a, p. 170).

Nonetheless, such concerns should not restrict researchers from working with Twitter data, since there are not yet common grounds around the rules and ethics that researchers should adhere to while working with social media texts. Baker and McEnery (2015b, p. 247) state that there is no "current common consensus around best practice" when carrying out social media research, and that these ethical concerns should not hinder researching Twitter data. They also note that it is "important that researchers are able to show their data to readers, in order to demonstrate transparency, i.e. they have not made up their analyses". Townsend and Wallace (2016) also argue that "[d]ata accessed from open and public online locations such as

Twitter present less ethical issues than data which are found in closed or private online spaces” (p. 10).

In the current research, the consent of tweeters is not obtained as approaching all accounts for consent is not feasible, either because of the immense number of accounts in the corpus or because some accounts or tweets are suspended or deleted. I also take into account that some tweeters may not be aware of the Terms and Conditions on Twitter which allow publicising their tweets. Hence, and to mitigate privacy concerns, all of the examples presented throughout this thesis are listed anonymously, i.e. without users’ names. In addition, tweets that contain violent or sensitive content are not displayed. There are examples, however, that advocate threatening behaviour or contain improper language presented in this thesis: these are only used because either the tweet or the account is deleted, so that the identity of the tweeter remains anonymous.

3.3. Methods

The method section is divided into two main subsections. In the first subsection, I give an account of the data collection and design procedures. I first discuss (3.3.1) how the data are chosen and collected, presenting a rationale for this approach as well as a rationale for the whole thesis. In Section 3.3.2, I explain the steps followed in processing and filtering the data, explaining in detail how the data corpus and the reference corpus (Section 3.3.3) are selected and designed. I also shed light in Section 3.3.4 on some issues related to Twitter data collection. In the second subsection (3.4), I outline the computer-based, corpus linguistics tools I employ in examining the discourse around Saudis on Twitter.

3.3.1. Data collection: Acquiring raw data

Data were purchased through a third-party commercial service called *Followthehashtag*. Like Datasift and Gnip, *Followthehashtag* gains access to Twitter historical tweets through the Twitter API. On its main webpage, *Followthehashtag* state that they “can perform nested searches, that is to say, use parentheses and common Twitter search operators to make even more complex searches than ones based on simple queries or advanced search features” (*Followthehashtag*, 2018). The main data were collected over a one-month period starting on 10 September 2015, which marks the occurrence of the first tragic event at Mecca (the crane collapse) and also covering the second event (Mina stampede) which took place on 24 September 2015. This step is central to my research given the nature of the data: Twitter generates millions of tweets per day and this, in turn, makes it quite challenging to collect all tweets about Saudis without restricting the search criteria. A spike in key events, such as the tragic events at Mecca, would therefore trigger more tweeters to tweet about Saudis.

The basic search term utilised in collecting the data set centres around the word ‘Saudis’. This term is challenged by others, such as ‘Saudi’, ‘Saudi citizens’ and ‘Saudi people’. The aim of my research is to examine how Saudis as social actors are collectively represented in English on Twitter, so it is likely that ‘Saudi’ as an adjective collocates with irrelevant words. The search query ‘Saudi’ yielded different results, either referring to geographic locations, such as ‘Saudi Arabia’ or ‘Saudi city’, or referring to a particular individual or object, such as ‘Saudi ambassador’, ‘Saudi prince’ or ‘Saudi government’, none of which conform to the aim of my research and research questions. This is also the case with the terms ‘Saudi people’ and ‘Saudi citizens’: neither term generated many results, and therefore they were discarded. The

final search parameter that was used by *Followthehashtag* to scrape data was to collect all tweets in English containing ‘Saudis’ from 11 September 2015 to 11 October 2015. The search query is represented by the following formula: lang:en since:2015-09-11 until:2015-10-11. The data were collected and available for download online on 15 March 2016 and exported in a compressed .zip file. This file included data packed in Excel files along with other relevant information, such as a search summary, stream of tweets, top retweets, favourites, geolocalisation, countries etc. The data filtering and processing are explained in detail in the following section (3.3.2).

3.3.2. Processing and filtering data: Data corpora

The data were extracted into an XLSX file format, with different columns providing data information: such as users’ names, bios, tweet content, date, country, place, following, followers and so on. The corpus comprises 89,929 tweets (1.9 million tokens). Among these, 44,968 are retweets that caused skewed data and, consequently, inaccurate frequency lists. Since I am interested in the original use of the language of tweets and in order to achieve as reliable results as possible, these retweets are deleted during the analysis stage. The resulting corpus comprises 497,523 tokens.

The next step is to divide this corpus into sub-corpora based on the geolocations of the tweeters. The resulting four corpora represent Canada, Australia, Great Britain and the USA. This step is essential to the present research to answer the overarching question concerning the representation of Saudis in Australia, Canada, GB and the USA (these countries are among the top ten Western, English-speaking countries in the data), as well as the rest of the world. Each of the corpora represents

subsequent stages of cleansing and processing. Those stages are described below, and each builds on the work of the previous stage:

- The data are split by country (AU, CA, GB, US, World) using Excel's filters. All columns are preserved. Saved in XLSX format
- The data are processed through FireAnt to remove retweets using regex query `^(?!RT)`. All columns are preserved and exported into CSV format.
- The data are stripped of handles and URLs using Notepad++ queries `http://t.co/..... https://t.co/..... @[A-Za-z0-9_]+`. Only the tweet column is preserved, and exported into TXT format. Duplicates are then removed via Excel's "Remove Duplicates" function.
- The data are stripped of special characters, multiple whitespaces, and Emoji encodings using Notepad++ F&R query: `([^\a-zA-Z0-9\-\.\| \:;\| \#\, \\"?!\&\(\)])`. Saved in TXT format

The geolocations of tweets are based on the 'home' locations provided by users in their public profiles on Twitter (these values are provided with data by *Followthehashtag*). To validate this step, a random 20° longitude and 20° latitude specification was checked on Google Maps to ensure that the locations matched specified countries; among these, 16 coordinates matched the specified geolocations of tweets, thus it is safe to take these geolocations as correct. The rest of the tweets are grouped together as one corpus representing countries in the rest of the world. An initial letter system is used to refer to each corpus; the resulting corpora are the Australia corpus (AUSC), Canada corpus (CAC), Great Britain corpus (GBC), United States corpus (USC) and, finally, the rest of the world corpus (RWC).

To answer RQs 1–3, it is essential to examine the overall, common representations of Saudis in tweets. Hence, the data are examined as a whole, and the acronym FCT is used to refer to the five corpora together. A wordlist and a keyword list for the FCT are generated and examined in order to locate common themes, ways of representations and discursive strategies employed by tweets in the aftermath of the two tragic events at Mecca.

3.3.3. Reference corpus

In order to answer the research questions and carry out the analysis, keywords (Section 3.4.3) in each corpus should be identified to facilitate locating the dominant discourse(s) about Saudis in the corpora. To do this, I decided to compile a comparable specialised reference corpus as this can, according to Baker (2006), “uncover evidence of particular discourse” and be a useful “benchmark of what is ‘normal’ in language” for comparison with the target data (p. 43).

The reference corpus (henceforth RC) was also extracted from Twitter so that it can be compared to the data corpus. The RC contains about one million tweets collected through the FireAnt corpus tool (Section 3.4.2). FireAnt is used for the purposes of this study to generate a random corpus of general tweets in English. For a general reference corpus, there are no preset search parameters that are applied to gather the data, rather, the search is run until it hits one million words. The data were collected directly via the Twitter API; the search started on 23 May 2016, beginning at 17:14, and ended on the same day at 21:55. The resulting corpus thus comprises a one-million-word reference corpus of general, English tweets.

3.3.4. Issues to consider with Twitter data

Although Twitter can be a rich source for data, working with Twitter data can be quite challenging for several reasons. First, retweeting original tweets can cause skewed frequencies while generating keywords and wordlists (Baker & McEnery, 2015b). In my thesis, I have tried to overcome this issue by removing duplicates via the FireAnt and Excel Sheet duplicate-removing functions. Second, Twitter is a multimodal sphere, and these multimodal elements are lost while saving data to a different file format. However, this has not been an issue in the current research as multimodal analysis is not within the scope of this thesis. Third is retweeted tweets (RTs): in a few cases, the original tweet is deleted, and only retweeted tweets are left. This issue requires a manual check of all the occurrences of the retweets in the original data file to avoid tweet loss or repetition. Consequently, a single retweet is kept if the original tweet is deleted. Another issue also concerns modified tweets (MTs). Unlike RTs, tweeters reproduce the original tweet or part of it to fit in their own comments. In this case, MTs are not deleted as they are not mere repetitions but also contain original data from the other tweeter. Finally, although tweets are short and therefore easier to track along a single concordance line, most of the tweets are ‘conversational’, i.e. part of a conversational thread, such as replies, which makes their meaning ambiguous and cotext-dependent, such as in the following example:

@user no, Saudis paid for it.

In this tweet, the user uses the negation “no” as an answer to a yes/no question in another tweet, and it would be impossible to determine the meaning of this tweet. In this case, I have to refer to the original tweet and review the entire conversation in order to comprehend the context of the tweet. However, issues sometimes arise such

as when the original tweet or conversational thread was deleted. In this case, the tweet is not included in the analysis. Fortunately, only a few such cases were encountered in the corpus.

3.4. Corpus linguistic tools

Implementing a corpus linguistics approach is carried out via a variety of tools offered to researchers, both computer and Web-based tools. In the following sections, I will briefly introduce the corpus tools I employ in my research.

3.4.1. WordSmith

The main corpus tool utilised in the analysis is a PC-based program called WordSmith (version 7 Scott, 2019). Examining the keywords lists generated by WordSmith was usually my first step in exploring the FCT. This step was essential to address RQ-1 concerning the current, dominant topics in the FCT, as well as RQ-4, which focused on differences in the representations of Saudis between the five corpora. WordSmith enabled me to examine common keywords in the FCT, as well as the ability to ensure the significance of each keyword and its commonality (recurrence) among the five corpora through extensive details of keywords, such as their frequencies and statistical values and their recurrence in the five corpora. WordSmith adopts predetermined statistical significance standards to measure the keyness of keywords (such as Log-likelihood, Chi-square) and collocates. It also facilitates comparisons as it can display different statistical scores for collocates on the same page.

Concordance analysis also facilitated the qualitative analysis of keywords in the FCT via complete access to the tweets. Another feature of WordSmith is sorting concordance lines to the left or right of a node (search term); sorting concordance lines facilitated locating significant collocates and emerging patterns that tended to

occur with Saudis in the FTC. This was particularly important in tracing back significant words that tended to collocate with Saudis; these words were examined later through concordance analysis.

However, filtering the data, removing duplicates and allocating spelling variations and mistakes were not offered by WordSmith. To do this, I utilised other tools, such as FireAnt, to filter the data by removing handles and duplicates (Section 3.4.2). Handling spelling variations (e.g. Makkah/Mecca, Moslim/Muslim) and mistakes (e.g. y'all/you all) was done by exporting the data into an Excel spreadsheet and manually modifying misspelt words, using the Find and Replace function. The only way to identify these spelling mistakes was by examining the concordance of the tweets.

3.4.2. FireAnt

FireAnt is a PC-based corpus tool developed for extracting, exporting and visualising social media data (Anthony & Hardaker, 2017). FireAnt can collect Twitter data automatically, through Twitter's API, and store them in a corpus for analysis with either FireAnt or other corpus tools, such as AntConc and WordSmith (Anthony, 2018). It can also be a useful tool for preliminary, corpus-based discourse analysis, as it requires less complicated technical knowledge at the outset (ibid.). FireAnt can also filter data sets in different ways and export the results in different file formats.

3.4.3. Keywords

As explained in Section 2.2.5.1, keywords are lexical items that tend to have significantly higher frequencies in one corpus when compared to another (reference)

corpus. In this section, I will briefly explain how keywords in the FCT are operationalised to answer RQ-1 *How are Saudis represented across the five corpora?*

The high frequency of some topics and discourses in a corpus can result in an emerging correlation with certain lexical items and patterns that are positively associated with those topics and discourses. In the FCT, for instance, keywords like *bombing* and *civilians* are likely to indicate a discourse about war. Since the FCT can contain a wide range of topics, given the breaking news on Twitter and different users' accounts, keywords facilitate uncovering these topics, which can be highlighted when it comes to Saudis.

However, there are different statistical measures that determine the significance of both keywords and collocates. It should be acknowledged that applying different statistical standards can lead to varying results (Al-Hejin, 2012). In the current research, Log-likelihood (LL) is used as a measure of the keyness of keywords in the FCT. LL is a statistical significance measure or confidence level that frequency differences between two (or more) corpora are not due to chance (ibid.). I utilise LL in this research as “it tends to produce high-frequency keywords which are likely to indicate the most characteristic themes – or ‘aboutness’” (Brookes & McEnery, 2019, p. 9) of the tweets in the five corpora under investigation.

Keywords are generated using WordSmith by comparing each corpus with the one-million-word reference corpus, using the LL statistical measure. LL provides a keyness indicator by assigning each word a '*p* value' which “represents the probability that this keyness is accidental. Therefore, the higher the keyness value and the lower the *p* value, the more distinctive a word is for a particular appeal” (Biber, Connor, & Upton, 2007, p. 151). In the current research, each keyword has to

conform to the following criterion that is set throughout the whole thesis: each token must have a frequency ≥ 3 and LL value ≥ 19.53 , which corresponds to a p value < 0.000001 . This threshold is set as the default probability value by WordSmith. Using this value was, however, preceded by several attempts with different cut-off points in order to arrive at manageable keyword lists that could be analysed qualitatively. The other attempts produced thousands of keywords that would have been difficult to investigate qualitatively, especially with larger corpora. For instance, a lower p value produced fewer keywords with smaller corpora, such as the AUSC and the CAC, and higher cut-off points also produced thousands of keyword lists in larger corpora, such as the USC and the RWC. It was also crucial to examine the resulting keyword lists in each attempt to ensure that no further (new) topics or themes were neglected.

3.4.4. Collocation

Another corpus tool used to answer RQ-2 is collocation. A collocate (as explained in Section 2.2.5.1) is a lexical item that tends to occur with a node. From a critical discourse perspective, collocations can represent a “*discursive practice that is textually instantiated in the form of frequent lexical co-occurrences, and that is therefore deemed to be a potential site for contested representations of participants, topics or events*” (Salama, 2011, p. 338, italics in original). In the current research, examining the collocates of Saudis facilitated locating the discursive strategies with which tweets represented Saudis across the corpora. So, for instance, the collocation between the terms *Saudis* and *think* yielded the discursive strategy of ‘Perspectivisation’, which reflected tweeters’ involvement in the representation of Saudis on Twitter. The collocation of *women* with *Saudis* also reflected a negative discourse of dominance and oppression.

However, in order to be included in the analysis, a collocate had to conform to the following statistical standards:

1. Collocation span of ± 5 to the left and right of the node Saudis

There is not a consensus among corpus linguists regarding a fixed word span for collocation. McEnery and Hardie (2012) suggest that “collocation should not be controlled by fixed-length word spans” (p. 129). However, a span of ± 5 (left and right) was chosen because significant lexical collocation is likely to occur within this range (Al-Hejin, 2012).

2. Mutual Information (MI) score ≥ 3

Following Brezina, McEnery, and Wattam (2015), MI score is used in this thesis as a collocation measure “because it is an association measure commonly used in corpus studies and implemented in a large number of corpus tools”. MI score is a measure of “effect size”, i.e. the correlation between the observed and expected frequency of occurrence between two lexical items (cited in Al-Hejin, 2012, p. 88). In order to reflect an appealing or significant collocational relationship, a word should have an MI score of at least 3 (ibid.).

3. Log-likelihood (LL) value ≥ 15.13 ($p < 0.0001$)

Another measure for collocation is Log-likelihood (LL). MI scores do not convey the statistical significance of collocates; therefore, LL is also used to assess the significance of collocation. A collocate has to have an LL value of at least 15.13; Rayson, Berridge, and Francis (2004) suggest that this threshold is the new (preferred) critical value for corpus linguists.

However, identifying the collocates of Saudis in the data required exhaustive work, since tweets are short (140 character or less) and can extend over a single

concordance line. As stated in Section 6.1, WordSmith generated thousands of collocates (6,677), most of which were function words so numerous and varied in their patterns, and context dependent, that, individually, each could present thousands of potential avenues of investigation that require extensive analysis of their concordance lines. Thus, to overcome this issue, I applied the following procedure: first, I investigated only the top 20 lexical collocates to undertake a manageable and systematic analysis, and second, I manually examined the co-text of each collocate in order to validate its co-occurrence with the node. To do this, I examined random sets of concordance lines (a hundred concordance lines at a time) for each collocate to ensure that the collocate falls within the span of the same tweet. This procedure has resulted in excluding the following words as they were miscounted as collocates of Saudis: *now*, *world*, *new* and *same*. Although these words co-occurred with Saudis in some tweets, they were not consistent collocates since they were a part of the preceding or following tweet, for example, in a sentence-initial position, e.g. (*Now playing role of good boy 2 the world*), (*New post: "pilgrims Criticise Hajj Organization"*), or in sentence-final position, e.g. (*So the Saudis are both backing the terrorists and buying us off with tit bits on information on the same people?*), (*U.K. and Saudis in 'secret deal' over election to human rights council - World*).

3.4.5. N-grams

Also referred to as ‘clusters’ and ‘lexical bundles’, an n-gram is a set of words (two or more) that co-occur, one after another, in a given corpus. Studying n-grams “is one way to operationalise the analysis of *collocation*” (McEnery & Hardie, 2012, p. 247, italics in original). For instance, the cluster *Saudis are* proved helpful in uncovering metaphors as one of the discursive strategies that could not be identified through mere keyword or collocation analyses.

3.5. Summary

This chapter started with a brief discussion of Twitter as the data source of the current study. The chapter is divided into parts; the first one briefly discussed the significance of Twitter as both a social media and research source. This was followed by an overview of Twitter conventions. I also discussed Twitter's historical data, as well as the ethical considerations that should be considered while researching social media texts, such as Twitter. I then presented a detailed description of the procedures undertaken in building the corpora for this study. Another section outlined some of the issues that I encountered while analysing Twitter data. The second part of this chapter explained the corpus methods used to analyse the data. I described the corpus software used to filter and analyse the data, as well as the statistical standards used to compute keywords and collocates. Accounting for these standards was necessary in order to explaining the means for downsizing the numbers of keywords and collocates included in the analysis, so that qualitative analysis would be feasible to fulfil the CDS approach of this thesis. The next chapter (Chapter 4) begins the analysis by addressing RQ-1, which focuses on the representation of Saudis across the corpora by first examining the most commonly recurring topics and themes in the aftermath of the tragic events at Mecca.

Chapter 4. Identification and categorisation of topics associated with Saudis across the corpora

4.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the representation of Saudis across the five corpora. It aims to address the first research question (*How are Saudis represented across the five corpora?*) through reporting the most salient themes and topics that are shared by five corpora. This reporting is achieved by an exploration of the top keywords in the five corpora together (FCT). Any interpretation of a single keyword or collocate is thus informed by the contextual, cotext information (events and issues) that tends to be associated with Saudis in each corpus. This chapter thereby provides many of the contextual clues necessary for analysing and interpreting the corpus linguistics findings that follow in Chapters 5, 6 and 7.

4.2. The categorisation of keywords in the five corpora

As the aim of this research is to examine the representation of Saudis in English-language tweets, the corpus is divided according to the country of the tweeter, which is determined based on the criteria explained in Section 3.4.6. The resulting corpora are Australia, Canada, Great Britain, the United States and the rest of the world. An initial letter system is used to refer to each corpus as follows: AUSC, CAC, GBC, USC and RWC, respectively, where the last 'C' refers to corpus. The total numbers of tweets and tokens for each corpus (after filtering) are shown in the following table:

| | AUSC | CAC | GBC | USC | RWC | Total |
|---------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| Tweets | 519 | 1,259 | 2,399 | 3,409 | 25,261 | 32,847 |
| Tokens | 47,660 | 107,855 | 188,339 | 277,004 | 381,707 | 497,523 |

Table 4-1: Total number of tweets and tokens for the five corpora

To answer RQ-1, *How are Saudis represented across the five corpora?*, the analysis utilises the keywords tool from CL. This tool is accessed through the PC-based software WordSmith. Keywords analysis facilitates locating the most salient themes and topics linked to Saudis in the corpora by comparing the five corpora wordlists with a one-million-word reference corpus of general tweets. To be considered in the analysis of the current study, each keyword must have a frequency ≥ 3 and an LL value ≥ 19.53 , which corresponds to a p value < 0.000001 (statistical significance measures are explained in Section 3.4.3). The resulting keyword analysis for the RWC produced 500 keywords, the highest number of keywords among the five corpora. In comparison, the USC produced 493, the GBC 336, the CAC 227 and the AUSC 127 keywords (the smallest number of keywords).

Examining the keywords list, I chose the top 100 lexical keywords⁴ (with the exception of *are*, as a preliminary investigation showed interesting patterns of discourse associated with Saudis). Examining all the keywords in the corpora would have proven a far more difficult task, requiring a close reading of thousands of concordance lines. Besides, these top hundred keywords were sufficient to facilitate locating the most salient themes that tended to be associated with Saudis on Twitter in

⁴ Raw lists of the keywords are displayed in the Appendices.

the aftermath of both tragic events, given that examining further keywords did not contribute towards locating new themes (an initial examination included the top 150 keywords).

The next step is to categorise these keywords into themes, or topics, using concordance analysis. This analysis takes the cotext of each keyword into account. Accordingly, thematic categorisation can be fuzzy, as a single keyword may occur in different contexts. For instance, the word *deaths* belongs to the MECCA EVENTS category, but there are cases where *deaths* is also used in the WAR category. In fuzzy cases, I place the keyword in question in the category in which the keyword occurs most often. The following table presents 100 keywords for each corpus:

| Thematic category | AUSC | CAC | GBC | USC | RWC |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| GEOGRAPHY, COUNTRIES AND NATIONALITIES | <i>Saudi, Arabia, US, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Saudi's, Australia western, Israeli, Syrian, Russians, Gulfies, Qatar, West, Turks, Iranian, US, Afghanistan, world, countries</i> | <i>Saudi, Arabia, Iranians, Canada, Iran, US, Canadian, Iran's, Israel, Saudi's, Taiz, Briton, Western, Canadians</i> | <i>Saudi, Arabia, Iran, US, UK, Syrian, Iranians, Russians, Saudi's, Israel, Israelis, Qataris, Briton, Americans, Germany, Western, Iraq, Tukey, Turks, British, Yemen's, West, East, foreign, Britain</i> | <i>Saudi, Iran, Arabia, US, Israel, Iranians, Syrian, Iraq, Iranians, Arab, Israelis, Russian, Qatar, countries, Qataris, Turkey, KSA, Saudi's, Turks, country, USA, Americans, Gulf, UAE, East, Sanaa, western, Arabs</i> | <i>Saudi, Iran, Arabia, US, Israel, Iranians, Syrian, Germany, Iranian, Arab, Israelis, Russians, Qatar, countries, Qataris, Turkey, KSA, Saudi's, Arabs, Turks, country, USA, Americans, Gulf, UAE, East, western</i> |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|---|---|
| WAR | <i>Yemen, Syria, Russia, bombing, war, civilians, civilian, attacks, bombed, Yemeni, bombs, coalition, airstrike</i> | <i>Yemen, Syria, bombing, women, war, civilian, rebels, crimes, Yemeni, bombs, civilians, Russia, bombs, coalition, military, inquiry</i> | <i>Yemen, Syria, bombing, Russia, war, civilians, bombs, crimes, civilian, regime, inquiry, hostages, bomb, Yemeni, airstrikes</i> | <i>Yemen, Syria, Russia, war, bombing, Yemenis, civilians, crimes, rebels, killed, killing, bombs, Yemeni, airstrikes, Syrians, Nuclear</i> | <i>Yemen, Syria, Russia, war, bombing, Yemenis, civilians, crimes, rebels, killed, bombs, Yemeni, airstrikes, Sanaa</i> |
| POLITICS | <i>rights, UN, human, allies, panel, council, oil, CIA, arms, UNHCR, UNHRC, weapons</i> | <i>arms, rights, human, weapons, allies, oil, wheat, deal, UN, board, vehicles, LAV, billions, council, assets, deals, GOV, prices</i> | <i>rights, human, UN, oil, council, weapons, arms, allies, panel, deal, shale</i> | <i>rights, human, UN, oil, allies, weapons, arms, council, Govt, panel</i> | <i>rights, human, UN, oil, allies, weapons, arms, council, Govt, panel</i> |
| TERRORISM & VIOLENCE | <i>Behead, crucify, beheading, crucifixion, terrorists, funding, arming, fund, funded, torture, terrorism, barbaric, hijackers</i> | <i>crucify, behead, beheading, crucifixion, fund barbaric, terrorists, beheading, funding, funded, terrorism, hypocrisy, beheaders, crucifying</i> | <i>crucify, crucifixion, behead, hijackers, barbaric, arming, beheading, funding, terrorism, crucifying, protester, terrorists, fund</i> | <i>crucify, terrorists, hijackers, behead, beheading, crucifixion, terrorism, funded, funding, fund</i> | <i>crucify, behead, terrorists, beheading, crucifixion, terrorism, funded, terror, funding, fund</i> |
| SOCIAL ACTORS/ GROUPS | <i>Saudis, ISIS, Assad, AlNusra, AlQaeda, refugees, Qaeda, jihadis, Bush, jihadists, Shiite, Mossad, Nusra</i> | <i>Saudis, Harper, ISIS, refugees, Houthis, Assad, Duceppe, Saud, Nimr, Taliban, ISIL</i> | <i>Saudis, ISIS, Cameron, Assad, Houthis, refugees, MOJ, Corbyn, Tories, rebels, Houthis, Putin, Nimr, AlQaeda, Corbyn's</i> | <i>Saudis, ISIS, refugees, Assad, Houthis, Putin, AlQaeda, Obama, Bush, Houthis</i> | <i>Saudis, ISIS, refugees, Assad, Houthis, Putin, Shia, AlQaeda, Obama, Bush, Houthis</i> |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|--|---|--|
| MECCA EVENTS | <i>Hajj, stampede, Mecca, tragedy, crane, deaths, blame, deadly, collapse, mosque</i> | <i>Hajj, stampede, crane, Mecca, tragedy, toll, pilgrims, deaths, disaster</i> | <i>Hajj, Mecca, pilgrims, stampede, crane, blame, deaths, Mina, toll</i> | <i>Hajj, stampede, pilgrims, Mecca, crane, deaths, blame, Mina, tragedy, blaming, toll, disaster, mosque,</i> | <i>Hajj, stampede, pilgrims, Mecca, crane, deaths, blame, Mina, tragedy, blaming, killing, tents, toll, disaster, mosque</i> |
| RELIGION | <i>Muslims, mosques, Islam, Wahhabi, Wahhabism, Muslim, Moslem, Sunnis, Christians, moderates</i> | <i>Wahhabi, niqab, Islam, mosques</i> | <i>mosques, Muslims, Islam, Sunni, Wahhabi</i> | <i>mosques, Muslims, Islam, Muslim, Sunni, Islamic, Shia, Wahhabi</i> | <i>mosques, Muslims, Islam, Muslim, Sunni, Islamic, Wahhabi</i> |
| HASHTAGS | <i>Auspol, HumanRights, AliMohammedAlnimr, Aus</i> | <i>cdnpoli, BarabariCulturalPractices, MunkDebate, SaudiArabia, CPC, Debatdeschefs, CDN, PNPCPC, NDP</i> | <i>SaudiArabia Mina-Stampede, newsnight</i> | <i>MinaStampede, SaudiArabia, HajjStampede</i> | <i>Mina-Stampede, SaudiArabia, HajjStampede</i> |
| PROCESSES | <i>are, build</i> | <i>selling, are, sells, sold, supporting</i> | <i>are, build, selling</i> | <i>are, build</i> | <i>are, build, should</i> |
| OTHER | <i>News, Wikileaks</i> | | <i>BBC</i> | | |

Table 4-2: Top 100 lexical keywords in each of the five corpora

Table 4.2 displays the top 100 lexical keywords in each of the five corpora. Thematic groups are presented from top to bottom in order of the number of keywords in each category. The keywords per category are listed in order of frequency, from most frequent to least frequent. The keywords in bold are unique keywords in each corpus;

these words are discussed in more detail in Chapter 7, in addition to words that are common in only a few corpora and not the rest. As the aim of Chapter 5 is to examine the representation of Saudis in the five corpora, I explore the top hundred keywords of the five corpora together (henceforth the FCT) in that chapter. While Table 4.2 has outlined the topics highlighted in each of the five corpora, Table 4.3, below, summarises the common keywords and, consequently, topics in the FCT.

| Category | Keywords |
|---|--|
| GEOGRAPHY, COUNTRIES AND NATIONALITIES | <i>Saudi, Iran, Arabia, Russia, US, Israel, Iranians, Iraq, Germany, Iranian, Israelis, Arab, Russians, Saudi's, Americans, Turkey, countries, Qatar, Qataris, Turks, USA, Gulf, KSA, Arabs, East, West, western</i> |
| WAR | <i>Yemen, Syria, war, bombing, civilians, Syrian, Yemenis, rebels, Yemeni, crimes, Syrians, bombs, killed, airstrikes, bomb, inquiry</i> |
| MECCA EVENTS | <i>Haji, stampede, Mecca, pilgrims, crane, blame, deaths, Mina, tragedy, toll, disaster, tents, collapse, mosque, blaming</i> |
| TERRORISM & VIOLENCE | <i>crucify, terrorists, behead, crucifixion, beheading, terrorism, funding, fund, funded, barbaric, terror, hijackers, arming</i> |
| POLITICS | <i>rights, human, UN, oil, arms, allies, weapons, council, panel, deal</i> |
| RELIGION | <i>mosques, Muslims, Islam, Muslim, Sunni, Islamic, Wahhabi</i> |
| SOCIAL ACTORS/ GROUPS | <i>Saudis, ISIS, refugees, Assad, Houthis, Putin, AlQaeda, Bush, Obama</i> |
| PROCESSES | <i>are, build, selling</i> |

Table 4-3: Top lexical keywords and topics in the FCT

Table 4.3 includes several keywords that are common to the five corpora. However, as shown, these keywords rank differently in one or more corpora and, consequently, not all of these keywords occur among the top hundred keywords in Table 4.2. For instance, the keyword *Muslims* is key in all corpora. However, in the CAC it ranks 141st; in other words, it does not appear among the top 100 keywords. Each of the 100 keywords in Table 4.3 is examined against the keyword list in each corpus to confirm its keyness (every keyword must conform to the pre-set criterion identified in Section 3.4.3). In addition, each keyword is examined in context to ensure its conformity with the topics identified in Table 4.3. Having outlined this, common topics in the FCT are discussed in the following sections.

4.2.1. GEOGRAPHY, COUNTRIES and NATIONALITIES

With a total of 26 keywords, GEOGRAPHY, COUNTRIES AND NATIONALITIES is the largest category in the FCT. This category mostly relates to the current situation in the Middle East, particularly the wars in Yemen and Syria. The Middle East has been in crisis since the uprisings in several Arab countries in 2010, during the so-called ‘Arab Spring’. The uprisings began in Tunisia and later spread to Libya, Egypt, Yemen, Syria and Iraq; Iraq was particularly afflicted, as the country has been in conflict since the Gulf War waged by the US-led coalition in 1991. Many of the associated keywords (e.g. *Saudi (Arabia), Iran, Russia, US, Israel, Turkey, Germany*) reflect other ongoing events in the area at the time. *Saudi* (1,894:12,394) functions as a modifier of *Arabia* (723:4,602) in 637 tweets to refer to *Saudi Arabia* as either a place (18 tweets) or a government (619 tweets). In the remaining 1,275 tweets, *Saudi* modifies other words (e.g. government, prince, king, diplomat, authorities) during references mainly to declarations, statements or events (such as the Hajj stampede).

An example follows:

Example 1 The Latest: Saudi king offers condolences over hajj tragedy
Example 2 UPDATE: Saudi officials: 107 dead in crane collapse at Mecca's
Grand Mosque

Iran (1,046:5,439) has had a tense relationship with both the West and the Middle East since the Islamic revolution and the US embassy crisis of 1979 and the Iraq War in 1980, during which the US, the West and Arabs united against Iran. The high frequency of *Iran* also arises from Iranian officials' declarations and comments through the media and Twitter concerning both tragic events at Mecca. These statements mainly cast blame, accusing the Saudis of incompetence in failing to ensure pilgrims' safety and condemning the suggestion that Iranian pilgrims were somehow at fault in the stampede. The tension is compounded by Iran's current intervention in the wars in Yemen (supporting the Houthis) and Syria (supporting Assad). *Russia* (572:3,039) also occurs frequently in the FCT due to its intervention in the Syrian war in support of the Assad regime. Tweets associate Saudis and Russians in a binary relationship, as either opponents in terms of supporting two rival sides (rebels/Assad) or equals in terms of escalating the Syrian war, especially the refugee crisis. The *US* (1,701:2,804) and *Israel* (485:2,398) are also connected to the ongoing wars in *Yemen* and *Syria*. The United States supports the Saudi-led coalitions of Arab countries in both wars, while Israel is linked with Saudi support for terrorism. The frequency of *US* is also high due to the United States' strong relationship with Saudi Arabia, which is considered an ally, and to the 9/11 attacks. *Germany* (241:1,034) is key in the FCT as it is linked with the news that the Saudis will build 200 mosques for the refugees in Germany (see Section 4.2.7 below). *Turkey* (195:804) is also frequent in the FCT due to its geographic location. Namely, Turkey shares a long border with Syria, making Turkey a key player in the ongoing war against the Kurdish rebels and

a host country of Syrian refugees. However, these keywords are referred to in the analysis only when they contribute to revealing aspects of the representation of Saudis in the FCT.

4.2.2. WAR

The second largest category is WAR, with 16 keywords. These keywords include *Yemen* (1,808:12,276), *Syria* (801:4,339), *war* (757:2,896), *bombing* (341:1,861), *civilians* (341:1,857), *Yemenis* (180:1,286), *rebels* (185:1,150), *Yemeni* (162:1,107), *crimes* (207:1,079), *Syrian* (291:1,504), *Syrians* (145:929) *bombs* (212:549), *killed* (303:704), *airstrikes* (96:575), *bomb* (212:549) and *inquiry* (100:545). The prominence of this category can be attributed to the keywords *Yemen* and *Syria*, which both rank among the most frequent keywords in each corpus and in the FCT. This category associates the Saudis with the ongoing wars in Yemen and Syria. The war in Yemen broke out during the so-called Arab Spring uprisings in 2011, following the failure of a transition of power from the then president, Ali Saleh, to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Hadi (BBC, 2012). The situation was exacerbated with the rise of groups of rebels such as AlQaeda and the Houthis. These groups' activities led to an intervention by a coalition of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, with the coalition supported logistically by the United States and France in 2016 (Musa, 2017). The war in Syria, on the other hand, started with protests against the fragile conditions under the ruling Assad regime; these protests gradually erupted into a civil war that killed thousands and displaced several million Syrians into refugee camps in 2011. The situation in Syria led to two opposing camps: Iran and Hezbollah, in support of the Assad regime; and a coalition of Saudi Arabia, and Qatar and Turkey, in support of the anti-Assad rebels (Barnes-Dacey & Levy, 2013). However, growing criticism has arisen in the media of the Saudis' role in both wars, framing their roles negatively

and referring to several issues, such as Saudis' support for terrorism, Saudis' killing of civilians, and Saudis' handling of the refugee crisis (Sons & Matthiesen, 2016). Since Twitter is interactive and public by nature and "has become a regularly used source for newspaper journalists" (Broersma & Graham, 2013, p. 15), both events have been the subject of considerable reporting by users on Twitter. Users have taken advantage of Twitter's capacity to comment on the events by retweeting, replying and favouriting news accounts and sharing mass media posts and weblinks to articles originally published outside Twitter. Saudis' role in both wars is represented negatively by tweeters. The military intervention in Yemen is described through the keywords *killed*, *civilians*, *airstrikes* and *bomb*. In the Syrian war, the Saudis are posited as supporting the rebels (including AlQaeda and AlNusra) by supplying arms and weapons.

4.2.3. MECCA EVENTS

The MECCA EVENTS category ranks third, comprising 15 keywords, such as *Hajj* (1,121: 8,107), *stampede* (505:3,557), *Mecca* (375:2,619), *pilgrims* (333:2,330), *crane* (240:1,540), *blame* (304:1,179), *deaths* (214:1,163), *Mina* (151:900), *tragedy* (176:879), *toll* (134:715), *disaster* (133:573), *tents* (88:562), *collapse* (112:552), *mosque* (133:767) and *blaming* (138:749.9). These keywords associate Saudis with the tragic events (i.e. the crane collapse and Mina stampede) which occurred at Mecca in September 2015. The expansion of the Holy Mosque was halted during the Hajj season; during this period, a crane collapsed on 11 September 2015 during a thunderstorm. The collapse caused hundreds of deaths and injuries. On the 24th of the same month, over a thousand pilgrims died or were injured during one of the Hajj rituals in Mina, a few kilometres from Mecca. The event started when pilgrims went to Mina (a large valley) to throw stones at Jamarat (pillars) which represent the devil.

The stampede occurred when some pilgrims were going towards Jamarat while others were going in the opposite direction. The crowds then became chaotic and people started falling down (BBC, 2015).

Although the time span for data collection was set to include tweets generated in the aftermath of both tragic events at Mecca, keywords related to those events do not dominate other categories in the FCT, but rather rank third after the GEOGRAPHY, COUNTRIES and NATIONALITIES category and the WAR category. Looking back at Table 4.2, the MECCA EVENTS category does not dominate over other categories; it ranks sixth in the AUSC, fifth in the CAC and the GBC, and third in the USC and the RWC. The first incident (crane collapse) is also less frequent than the second (stampede); among the total of 14 keywords in the category, only two keywords are associated: *crane* and *collapse*. Also, the keywords *disaster* and *tragedy* collocate with the stampede event more than with the crane collapse, which collocates with *disaster* in only nine tweets and *tragedy* in just three.

Hajj, which is mainly associated with the stampede event, is less frequent in the AUSC and the CAC, in part due to the smaller size of these two corpora. It is more frequent, albeit similarly dispersed, in the GBC and the USC. Finally, it occurs at the highest frequency in the RWC (see Figure 4-1 below).

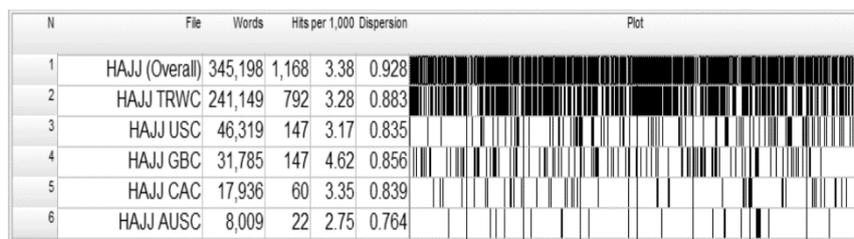


Figure 4-1: Dispersion plot of *Hajj* sorted by number of hits

Crane is also dispersed differently across the five corpora; with six tweets in the AUSC, 17 tweets in the CAC, 18 tweets in the GBC, 45 tweets in the USC and, finally, in the RWC, it is mentioned in 155 tweets. This variation in the dispersion of the main keywords in the MECCA EVENTS category can be attributed in part to the number of Muslims in each country, as well as the amount of news coverage of both events by the media inside and outside Twitter. The percentage of Muslims in each country varies considerably, e.g. Muslims represented 1.9% of the population in Australia, 2.8% in Canada, 4.6% in Great Britain and just 0.8% in the United States in 2013/14 (Muslim, 2014). The low percentage of Muslims in the United States compared to the higher number of keywords supports the second assumption regarding the media coverage of both events. On Twitter, tweeting includes retweeting and hashtagging of both events. News accounts on Twitter may not have focused on Mecca events as much as on events in other categories (such as WAR) and hence do not make a major contribution to either event. In fact, neither tragic event at Mecca triggered any sympathy or sentiments of condolences; rather, tweets presented Saudis negatively, delivered through the keywords *blame* and *disaster*, as well as words like “incompetence”, “criticism”, “deadly” and “organizing”. The Saudis are blamed for the incidents and labelled as incompetent in their handling of the Hajj season and the maintenance of pilgrims’ safety. The crane collapse is also described as “karma” for the 9/11 attacks, the war in Yemen and for not taking in any Syrian refugees, as shown in the following examples:

- Example 3 Karma on 9/11 for Saudis?! Maybe. At least 62 dead in Grand Mosque in Mecca from falling crane
- Example 4 the Saudis seems 2 have a lot of bad fate! Karma striking for their terrorism in Syria/Yemen?

4.2.4. TERRORISM and VIOLENCE

The keywords in the TERRORISM and VIOLENCE category connect Saudis to issues related to terrorism and violence. Examples include *crucify* (292:1,946), *terrorists* (268:1,387), *behead* (244:1,566), *crucifixion* (188:1,234), *beheading* (155:1,063), *funding* (180:720), *barbaric* (94:578), *arming* (96:585) and *hijackers* (77:532). The keywords *crucify*, *behead* and *crucifixion* link mainly to a local issue in Saudi Arabia regarding the crucifixion (death) penalty for a 17-year-old protester, Ali Al-Nimr. Al-Nimr belongs to the Shiite group in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia and comes from the family ‘Al-Nimr’, which is known for its anti-government position, especially his uncle, Nimr Baqir Al-Nimr (a Shiite sheikh in Saudi Arabia), who was executed in 2016 for using arms when confronting police, inflammatory speeches and foreign meddling in the kingdom. Ali participated in an anti-government protest in 2011 and was convicted for violating state security and joining a terrorist group. He was arrested and sentenced to death by crucifixion in 2014, though he remains alive and in custody today (France24, 2015). Although the Saudi government made no official declaration at the time, Al-Nimr’s case received some attention in the media and on Twitter. Tweets also use *behead* to refer to the method of carrying out the death penalty for witchcraft and sorcery (mainly used against women in the FCT), and they use this keyword in an attributive process that depicts Saudis as having a criminal nature (as beheaders). Beheading women for sorcery actually refers to a single case against a woman who was subjected to capital punishment in 2011 for practising witchcraft in the northern region of AlJawf in Saudi Arabia (Saudi woman executed, 2011); this was reported by different news outlets and websites, such as BBC, CNN and Amnesty.org. However, carrying out this penalty is restricted in law

to a variety of conditions, such as causing someone's death or declaring disbelief (AlHakami, 2004).

The keyword *terrorists* links Saudis to either the 9/11 attacks or supporting terrorist groups, such as ISIS in the wars in both Yemen and Syria. In the former case, tweets refer to the September attacks on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001, where 15 out of the total of 19 attackers were reported to be Saudis. This attitude correspondingly reflects tweeters' reactions towards their governments' and political representatives' alliances and arms deals with the Saudis. Other related keywords include *terror* (140:564), *terrorism* (154:739) and *terrorist* (92:278), which also link Saudis to the same issues. The keyword *funding* (including *fund* and *funded*) also links Saudis with the financial and material support for terrorist groups.

Hijackers is another keyword which describes the Saudis as the main actors in the 9/11 attacks. Use of this keyword not only stresses the Saudis' responsibility but also calls for (violent) reactions against them, such as declaring war and destroying Mecca in response to the crane collapse event, as shown in the following tweet:

Example 5 with 17/19 hijackers on 9/11 Saudis...we should have nuked Mecca
and sent the barbarians a message....

The keyword *barbaric* is also common in the FCT, either in reference to Al-Nimr's case (eight tweets) or as an argument against the Saudis (e.g. regarding selling arms, human rights violations, holding a UNHRC seat). This keyword tends to be part of referential and predicative strategies that posit negative evaluations of Saudis, which is addressed in Chapter 6.

4.2.5. POLITICS

The fifth category, POLITICS, contains the following 10 keywords: *rights* (1,085:6,982), *human* (1,088:4,669), *UN* (800:4,074), *oil* (836:4,032), *arms* (442:1,861), *allies* (295:1,941), *weapons* (347:1,843) *council* (280:1,192), *panel* (190:810) and *deal* (310:564). As WordSmith treats compound words as single lexical units, a reference to the context through concordance lines is necessary in order to determine the exact meaning of a keyword and the semantic relationship with its collocates. So, for instance, the keyword *rights* collocates with *human* in 981 of the total number of *rights* tweets, referring mainly to the term ‘*human rights*’, whether with regard to the organisation itself (HR) or human rights records or conditions in a country. Another set of related keywords is *UN* and *council*, which constitute the term UNHRC. Keywords in this category are mainly used to reference one of two topics: the Saudis joining the Human Rights Council, or arms and weapon deals made between the Saudis and other governments (mainly Canada, GB and the USA). This topic is significant in the data as it correlates with designating Saudis to head a UNHRC panel; the envoy of Saudi Arabia was appointed to head an influential UNHRC panel in June 2015; however, the appointment only took place in September (Arbuthnot, 2015). This appointment triggered adverse reactions from the media, as identified in the data through tweets, replies and comments to media accounts reporting on the event.

Other significant keywords are *oil*, *arms* and *weapons*. *Oil* is one of the strongest keywords in the five corpora (ranking 13th in the list). Associating oil with Saudis is not novel, it dates back to 1933 when oil was first discovered; since then, “Saudi Arabia has gained recognition around the world primarily for its huge oil production” (Alanazi, 1996, p. 241). However, how the media associate Saudis with

oil can be inferred from a statement by *The Washington Post* editor, who observed in the 1980s that “the world’s supplies of oil and price levels are manipulated and controlled by greedy Arabs” (Ghareeb, 1983, cited in, El-Farra, 1996).

Arms and *weapons* are also significant keywords in the FCT. However, they are more likely to occur in the POLITICS category than in the WAR category (out of the total number of tweets for both in the FCT, *arms* occurs in 312 tweets and *weapons* in 231). The keyword *deal* refers mainly to either arms deals made with the Saudis by Western governments (specifically Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States) or to the *deal* designating the Saudis to the UNHRC, which was also negotiated between government members and the Saudis.

4.2.6. RELIGION

Some keywords in this category are common among the five corpora, such as *mosques* (395:2,730), *Muslims* (484:2,307), *Islam* (330:1,496), *Muslim* (326:1,284), *Sunni* (157:957), *Islamic* (165:726), *Wahhabi* (91:650) and *Shia* (115:629). Others are unique to a single corpus, such as *niqab*, which only appears in the CAC (see Section 7.4). However, a concordance analysis of the keywords in this category did not reveal any association with either of the tragic events at Mecca. For example, *Muslims* (484 tweets) collocates with *Hajj* in only 16 tweets, with *Mecca* in 11 tweets, and with *stampede* in nine tweets. Examining the concordance of *Muslim* suggests a negative association with Saudis, as the term associates with words like “radical”, *funding* and *killing*, each of which suggests an extreme level of belief. Other tweets posit *Muslims* and Saudis as being in a counter relationship, with the former represented as victimised by the latter. *Islam* is also depicted as a victim of the Saudis, who have “hijacked” and “killed”. *Mosques*, plural form, is also negatively attributed to Saudis

with tweeters referring to Saudi Arabia's plan to build 200 mosques for refugees in Germany instead of taking in refugees themselves (see Section 4.2.7).

Other keywords (*Wahhabi* and *Sunni*) are used to modify Saudis, collocating with “extremist” and “Islamists”; these associations further suggest a negative discourse prosody regarding extreme faith. *Sunni* refers to the largest sect of Islam; the minority sect is *Shia* (or Shiite), whose name derives from the word ‘Sunnah’. Adherents of Sunnah conform to the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed and recognise the four Caliphs as the successors of the Prophet; Shia followers, however, believe that the successors of the Prophet are his son-in-law, Ali, and his descendants. This division has kept both parties locked in dispute for 14 centuries, and the tension has been compounded in recent years, particularly by the Shia in Iran.

Wahhabi is also among the top keywords in the FCT. This term refers to a Sunni group (among many other Sunni sects) that adopted a reform movement referred to as ‘Wahhabism’, which dates back to the 1740s. The movement follows the doctrine of Mohammad ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, who proposed a correction movement during the foundation of Saudi Arabia, namely “the essence of the Wahhabi mission was to revive pure devotion of worship to God alone” (Commins, 2005, p. 3). The movement aimed to restore monotheistic worship of God and purge widespread delusory practices. Such practices include approaching tombs and shrines, which started in Najd (Eastern region of Saudi Arabia); the practice was backed by Mohammed bin Saud and flourished during the foundation of Saudi Arabia, continuing till modern times. It is now integrated into the official Sunni-Islam doctrine of Saudi Arabia. Although the term was not rooted in terror originally, it has become associated with terrorism in recent decades; the Wahhabi movement has been widely criticised for its extreme approach and terrorist inspiration (Blanchard, 2008).

And as Wahhabism was claimed to influence terrorist-categorised groups such as ISIS and AlQaeda, it was officially declared “the main source of global terrorism” by the European parliament in Strasbourg in 2013 (Telegraph Reporters, 2017). On Twitter, users refer to Saudis as Wahhabis to portray them as either terrorist in nature or supporters and funders of terrorism and terrorist groups.

4.2.7. SOCIAL ACTORS/GROUPS

The social actors/groups category includes words referring to social actors, groups and names. These keywords include references to social groups like *Saudis* (20,810:150,949), *ISIS* (1,004:5,338), *refugees* (545:2,967), *Houthis* (206:1,484) and *AlQaeda* (128:888), as well as the names of social actors such as *Assad* (364:2,319), *Putin* (171:976), *Bush* (164:761) and *Obama* (294:652). The keywords *Assad* and *Putin* refer to the military regimes of both the ruling Syrian army and Russian forces. Both keywords are also associated with Saudis in terms of escalating the Syrian crisis (especially the refugee crisis). *Bush* and *Obama* are significant keywords due to both the relationship with the Saudis in terms of the long alliance between the United States and Saudi Arabia, especially in the war against terrorism launched after the 9/11 attacks, and the current Saudi-led coalition in the Yemen and Syria wars, which are supported by the United States. *Houthis* is key in the FCT due to its association with the war in Yemen. The Houthis group is a key player in the civil war which broke out in Yemen in 2011, although it started as a preaching ‘Zaidi Shiite’ movement in the 1990s. The group’s increased enmity with the Saudis was elevated after Saudi Arabia backed the now-deceased president, Ali Saleh, and his military campaigns against the Houthis. The tension has continued since the establishment of a Saudi-led coalition in 2015. *AlQaeda* is significant in the data as tweeters associate Saudis with the group in connection with the 9/11 attacks and allege the Saudis’

support for terrorist groups (such as ISIS), especially in Yemen. However, two significant words, *ISIS* and *refugees*, have a strong relationship with the Saudis as keywords and collocates in the FCT; thus, a brief contextual background of each term is presented in the following paragraphs.

ISIS is an abbreviation standing for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. The group, recognised as Jihadist militants, became known widely as ISIS as the militants became active in the Syrian war in 2012 (Hogeback, 2018). Though it first identified itself as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the group later took the name ISIS, which is abbreviated in Arabic as Daesh. As the group became well known in the world's political domains, and since "English-speaking countries and news agencies have an aversion to long names", the group quickly became known by the acronym ISIS. Since then, some media outlets and people worldwide, by influence, have started to use the term ISIS (Hogeback, 2018). However, the group has identified itself as the Islamic State (IS) since June 2014 (ibid.). In the FCT, the Saudis are associated with ISIS in a symmetrical relationship (such as "hand in glove"), or as creators and supporters of ISIS both materially and financially.

The keyword *refugees* refers to the Syrian refugee crisis; the UNHCR reports that 5.6 million people have fled the ongoing civil war in Syria since 2011 (unhcr.org, 2018). Some of these refugees have fled to neighbouring countries and are displaced in refugee camps; others have sought asylum and refuge in Europe, particularly in Germany and Sweden. The refugee crisis has been recognised as "a topical issue in the media" (Patrascu, 2016, p. 8) and, according to Chouliaraki and Stolic (2017), it has been framed by media outlets in Europe in 2015 as "the continent's main cause for concern and policy focus" (p. 14). On Twitter, discourse on the refugee crisis was highlighted following the news that the Saudis intended to build mosques for refugees

in Europe (Germany in particular); this proposal triggered hostile reactions condemning the Saudis for not taking in refugees instead. In fact, however, there was never any official declaration from the Saudi government regarding building mosques for refugees. Withnall (2015) states that the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* quoted the Lebanese newspaper *Al Diyar* as the news source; since the latter news outlet is known for its hostile stance against the Saudis, it can be assumed that the proposal to build mosques for refugees was fabricated.

4.2.8. PROCESSES

This category comprises keywords that are grammatically classified as verbs, such as *are* (4,350:5,625), *build* (337:1,050) and *selling* (173:466). *Are* is one of the strongest keywords, as well as a strong collocate and cluster with Saudis in the FCT. Although grammatical words (or function words) are sometimes overlooked in corpus analysis, Pearce (2014) states that these “can offer insights into the representation of ideology ... meanings and values which might not have been accessible if . . . only the apparently semantically ‘richer’ lexical words had been considered” (p. 24). A concordance check of *are* with Saudis revealed interesting patterns that may facilitate locating the discursive strategies employed in the representation of Saudis. Specifically, the cluster “Saudis are” discloses predicational strategies employed by tweeters while representing Saudis. Other keywords in this category include *build* and *selling*. The keyword *build* associates Saudis with the issue of building mosques for Syrian refugees in Germany, rather than accepting refugees (see Section 4.2.7), an issue that is condemned and debated by tweeters. *Selling*, on the other hand, correlates Saudis with arms and weapons deals made with Western governments and parliament members, especially in Canada, Great Britain and the United States. The process of *selling* arms and weapons to the Saudis is linked by tweeters to the war in Yemen, in

which weapons are used to kill civilians. In addition, tweeters condemn *selling* arms and weapons to the Saudis, as tweeters assume that the Saudis will send them to ISIS.

4.3. Summary

This chapter has taken some initial steps towards answering RQ-1 through exploration of the top keywords of each of the five corpora and topics that tended to be associated with Saudis in the aftermath of the tragic events at Mecca. This exploration has also facilitated locating common keywords that are shared by the corpora (the FCT), keywords that are more common in some corpora than others, and keywords that are unique to a single corpus.

The initial categorisation of topics surrounding Saudis after the tragic events at Mecca introduced in Table 4.3 shows that the top two categories, GEOGRAPHY, COUNTRIES and NATIONALITIES and WAR, have more frequent keywords compared to other categories the FCT. The time span of the data is set around both tragic events and includes the 14th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York in 2001. However, neither the tragic events nor the 9/11 attacks seem to skew the results of the data; examining the resulting topics of the top hundred categories presented in Table 4.3 shows that the MECCA EVENTS category ranks third, after the GEOGRAPHY, COUNTRIES and NATIONALITIES category and the WAR category.

The high frequency of keywords in the GEOGRAPHY, COUNTRIES and NATIONALITIES category can be associated with the current situation in the Middle East, especially the wars in Yemen and Syria, but also the international coalitions and alliances discussed in the media and other events taking place in the region. Few keywords, however, are linked to the tragic events at Mecca; *Iran* is an exception,

referring to the official Iranian declarations that attribute blame to Saudi Arabia over the Hajj stampede. Alternatively, Iran is involved in both the Yemen and Syria wars, albeit more often with the latter due to Iran's alliance with the *Assad* regime. This case also applies to the keywords *US, Israel, Turkey, Qatar* and *West*, which are either attributed to the wars in both *Yemen* and *Syria* or used to condemn these countries' alliances and arm deals with the Saudis.

The keywords in the WAR category are mainly linked to the wars in Yemen and Syria: Saudis are linked to both wars due to the Saudi-led coalition in *Yemen* and the Saudis' contributions to the international coalition against the *Assad* regime in *Syria*. However, Saudis are depicted negatively in the *war* context, represented as killing *civilians* and blocking *UN* enquiries into (their) war crimes in *Yemen*, or as supporting terrorist groups in *Syria*. Tweeters also condemn *selling* weapons and making arms deals with the Saudis, claiming that these weapons are used to kill Yemenis and/or transferred to terrorist groups like ISIS.

Saudis are also negatively represented in relation to the tragic events at Mecca; they are either subjected to blame by tweeters or reported as having been blamed by others over the Hajj stampede. The Saudis are accused of being incapable of overseeing the Hajj season and maintaining pilgrims' safety. They are also criticised for blaming other pilgrims (like Africans) over the stampede. The crane collapse is also mocked by tweeters as "karma" for what the Saudis are doing in Yemen, for their role in the 9/11 attacks, and for not taking in Syrian refugees.

When it comes to terrorism and violence, the Saudis are represented as terrorists themselves or as funding and supporting terror and terrorist groups. The lemmas CRUCIFY and BEHEAD are frequent due to either highlighting Al-Nimr's case

or arguing against the crucifixion penalty, which is applied for practising witchcraft and sorcery (referenced especially in its use against women in the FCT). The keyword *hijackers* links Saudis to the 9/11 attacks: tweets highlight the number of Saudis who are believed to have been involved in the attacks, quoting numbers (11,15,18 and 20) or using quantifying words, such as “majority”, “many”, “most” and “all”, to stress the Saudis’ responsibility for the attacks. Associating the Saudis with 9/11, consequently, was constructed as an argument against the war on Afghanistan and Iraq, which many tweets portray as irrational, arguing that the war should have been directed against the Saudis.

Saudis are also negatively depicted in terms of their religious affiliation. Saudis as Muslims are portrayed as embracing an extreme and radical form of belief, through the keywords *Sunni* and *Wahhabi*, which categorise Saudis as extremists and terrorists. Saudis are also depicted as victimising both Islam (such as “hijacking” and “killing”) and Muslims (such as mistreating and radicalising).

In Chapter 5, I explore the representation of Saudis more closely through examining common keywords in the FCT to answer RQ-1. This chapter also contributes to answering RQ-2 concerning the discursive strategies employed by tweeters in representing Saudis in Chapter 6. The differences between the corpora, including the keywords unique to each corpus, are addressed further in Chapter 7 to answer RQ-3.

Chapter 5. The representation of Saudis in the FCT

5.1. Introduction

This chapter begins the exploration of the representation of Saudis in the FCT (five corpora together). It aims to address RQ-2 (How are Saudis are represented across five corpora?) by examining common keywords and collocates of Saudis in the FCT compared to a one-million-tweet reference corpus. To do this, I incorporate qualitative concordance analysis, keywords and qualitative analysis to substantiate my interpretations. The themes adopted in this chapter are guided by the initial categorisation of the common keywords in the FCT in Chapter 4.

5.2. Dominant discourses in the FCT

Table 4.3 in Chapter 4 summarises the most salient themes and topics that tend to be associated with Saudis after both tragic events at Mecca in the FCT. The themes adopted in this chapter resulted from an in-depth examination and concordance analysis, which yielded two issues that led to this re-categorisation. The first issue is that a number of keywords in these categories are frequent or significant due to some events that associate them with Saudis. For instance, the high frequency of keywords in the countries and nationalities category (such as *Russia, Iran, Israel*) is due to the military interventions in the current wars in Syria and Yemen. This also suggests a high coverage of news reporting that includes frequent references to these countries. An initial investigation of the concordance of these keywords did not link them directly with the representation of Saudis. Some of these keywords are present due to the reporting of events relating to the wars in the region, where the Saudis form a part of military coalitions in both Yemen and Syria, or due to political issues, such as military support and arms deals. The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen links to the second

issue, which concerns the interrelation of themes, which causes some keywords to be recurrent across different categories. For instance, the lemma TERROR coexists with Saudis in both the WAR and RELIGION categories, in addition to the TERRORISM and VIOLENCE category. Also, some categories include keywords that are unique to one corpus or shared by a few corpora and not the rest. These keywords are addressed in detail in Chapter 7, as this aims to answer RQ-3 which concerns the differences between the five corpora. For any keyword to be considered in the analysis, it should conform to the criterion set earlier for this study (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4.3), i.e. a minimum frequency ≥ 3 and an LL value ≥ 19.53 , which corresponds to a p value < 0.000001 .

Having outlined the above points, and been guided by the thematic categories in Chapter 4, I choose the following themes (WAR, MECCA EVENTS, TERRORISM, RELIGION and OIL) that tend to be highlighted around Saudis and can contribute towards answering RQ-1 concerning the ways in which Saudis are represented by tweets in the FCT after both tragic events at Mecca.

5.2.1. Saudis in the war context

War is among the top hundred keywords (757:2,967)⁵ as well as a strong collocate of Saudis (464:5,867)⁶ in the FCT. This strong representation of war suggests extensive reporting of the situation in the area due to the ongoing conflict situation in the Middle East, since the start of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict, the war on Iraq in 2003, the uprising of the so-called Arab Spring (which spread through Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen) and finally the revolution in Syria, all of which have drawn considerable

⁵ This notation (frequency: LL value) will henceforth be used to save space. In this respect, (757) means the raw frequency of the term and (2,967) the log likelihood value.

⁶ The collocation value represents both the frequency of the collocate and LL value respectively.

media attention. War reporting is also supported by the high frequency of two keywords, *Yemen* and *Syria*, in the FCT. On Twitter, this can be achieved via tweeting, retweeting and hashtagging news updates and news accounts. However, this raises a question concerning the significance of *war* and how far Saudis can be depicted and represented in the war context.

Examining the concordance of *war* shows that tweets associate Saudis with one of the following issues: war in general (rather than a specific war), war in the region (with a focus on the wars in Yemen and Syria) or war for oil. The frequency of *war* in its different contexts is summarised in Table 5-1, below:

| | Yemen | Syria | Oil | Other |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|
| AUSC | 14 | 7 | 2 | 3 |
| CAC | 15 | 6 | 11 | 4 |
| GBC | 40 | 18 | 4 | 12 |
| USC | 46 | 25 | 22 | 16 |
| RWC | 296 | 117 | 60 | 61 |
| Total | 411 | 173 | 78 | 96 |
| | 758 | | | |

Table 5-1: Raw frequency distribution of tweets about *war* in the five corpora

The total number of tweets containing *war* in the FCT is 758 tweets. The highest number of tweets containing war relates to the ongoing war in Yemen (411 tweets), followed by 173 tweets relative to the war in Syria, and then tweets in the Other category which concerns war in general, not relative to a specific war, and finally war

for oil (78 tweets). Tweets about the wars in Yemen and Syria are discussed in the following subsections, whereas war for oil is addressed in Section 5.2.2. However, tweets associating Saudis to war generally are labelled as Other and are discussed below.

The Other category includes 45 tweets associating Saudis with two issues: tweets assume the Saudis will become involved in a war with Russia, which could lead to a Third World War (45 tweets), and 19 tweets questioning the war on terror led by Western countries, while turning a blind eye to Saudi terrorism. The “war on terror”, for instance, is condemned in tweets which perceive it as misleading because the Saudis finance terrorism, such as ISIS and the 9/11 attacks. Additionally, the Saudis are represented as a threat to the world and the Middle East, because they plan to launch a third World War (15 tweets), or a regional war (25 tweets), which is perceived as alarming and threatening. For instance:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Example 6 | If Saudis helped finance 9/11, "it would really call into question the whole war on terror" |
| Example 7 | The West and the Saudis have turned the whole of the Middle East into a dangerous place ready to explode into a regional war |
| Example 8 | Saudis Mull Launch Of World War 3 As Russia Pounds Targets In Syria For Fourth Day |

Example 6 comments on an online article by the Wealth Daily⁷ account which is attached via a Web link. This article raises claims around the war on terror since it ignores the Saudis’ responsibility for the 9/11 attacks in 2001 and refers to a case

⁷ Wealth Daily is a US-based, free daily newsletter offering investment advice and analysis for the stock market.

raised by families of the victims of the attacks against the Saudis, which was later rejected by a federal judge. The article criticises the US government for refuting the case against the Saudis for a second time, although, according to Wealth Daily (2015):

It has long been held by some that the Saudi government was involved in the 9/11 attacks, especially in the financing. Osama bin Laden was from Saudi Arabia originally and 15 of the 19 hijackers were from there ... Former Florida Senator Bob Graham claims that the documents show that Saudi Arabia was the principle financier of the attacks. This, of course, would present a problem for the U.S. government, which considers the Saudis a staunch ally.

Using direct quotes from the article, the tweet recontextualises the Saudis' responsibility for the attacks and associates it with the US-led "War on Terror". Through the use of the conditional phrase "if", the tweet highlights the Saudis' role in executing the attacks to criticise the US government for the "War on Terror", which targets terrorist groups and activities and neglects the Saudis. In this respect, the tweet attributes disloyalty and deception to the US government for its (ongoing) alliance with the Saudis, using a negative other-presentation strategy (van Dijk, 1999) which demonises both the Saudis for the 9/11 attacks and the US government for protecting them. The tweet in example 7 states that the Saudis, aided by the West, are responsible for turning the Middle East into an unsafe zone, which may lead to a "regional" war. It thereby suggests a severely negative role for the Saudis which, supported by the West, can be threatening and alarming for the whole area. While in example 8, the tweet claims that the Saudis plan to start a Third World War as Russia intervenes in Syria for a fourth day. The tweet presents the Saudis negatively by elevating their contribution to the war in Syria, which is described adversely in "Mull

Launch Of World War 3", while ignoring the role of Russia, described in "Pounds targets" for successive days. These examples represent the Saudis negatively, using a negative other-presentation strategy (van Dijk, 1999), which constructs them as a violent out-group whose presence is dangerous and alarming to the Middle East in particular, and the whole world in general.

Having explained the representation of Saudis in light of the general sense of war, the following subsections discuss Saudis' representation more specifically in terms of their roles in the wars in Yemen and Syria, given the significance of both keywords and since the majority of the keywords in the WAR category are connected with the wars in Yemen and Syria.

5.2.1.1. The war in Yemen: Crime, terror and human rights manipulation

In the FCT, there are 280 tweets about the war in Yemen, which is also among the top keywords (1,808:12,267) and a strong collocate of Saudis (995:191) (see Fig. 5-1, below, for the frequency dispersion of Yemen across the five corpora).

| N | File | Words | Hits per 1,000 | Dispersion | Plot | |
|---|-----------------|---------|----------------|------------|-------|--|
| 1 | yemen (Overall) | 345,198 | 1,812 | 5.25 | 0.955 | |
| 2 | yemen AUSC | 8,009 | 57 | 7.12 | 0.886 | |
| 3 | yemen CAC | 17,936 | 89 | 4.96 | 0.909 | |
| 4 | yemen GBC | 31,785 | 189 | 5.95 | 0.844 | |
| 5 | yemen USC | 46,319 | 244 | 5.27 | 0.908 | |
| 6 | yemen TRWC | 241,149 | 1,233 | 5.11 | 0.934 | |

Figure 5-1: Frequency dispersion of Yemen in the five corpora

The prominence of *Yemen* as a keyword and a collocate of Saudis raises a question concerning how *Yemen* is associated with the Saudis and how far this association can project a positive or negative representation of Saudis on Twitter. A concordance analysis shows that allocating Saudis to the war in Yemen centres on two key issues: war crimes that the Saudis are committing in Yemen and supporting terrorist groups. The first issue relates the Saudis to war crimes (135 tweets): this issue suggests a suspicious role which links the Saudis with the UN, where the latter is accused of providing cover for the Saudis' war crimes and their obstruction of any investigation into Saudi violations in Yemen. In this respect, the Saudis are depicted as either willing to "commit war crimes" or "investigate themselves" in a UN inquiry into their own war crimes in Yemen, as illustrated in the following Figure 5.2:

| | |
|----|---|
| 1 | cnat.. just to be clear that Houthis and Saudis are clearly doing war crimes! |
| 2 | Stop this genocide against #Yemenis, Saudis are committing war crimes #filter |
| 3 | idea what to do next, #KSA "strategy" "Saudis are committing war crimes in |
| 4 | - what else do you expect? Saudis are committing war crimes in |
| 5 | . Cameron, not Corbyn, is helping the Saudis commit probable war crimes vs |
| 6 | : Assad Must Go Or Face WAR - via Saudis commit war crimes we sit back |
| 7 | on Yemen War Crimes UN to Saudis. Investigate Yourselfs on Yemer |
| 8 | on Yemen War Crimes: UN to Let Saudis Investigate Themselves on |
| 9 | their own war crimes! UN to Let Saudis Investigate Themselves on |
| 10 | . Pentagon investigating itself is much Saudis investigating war crimes in |
| 11 | a tory mp it's outrageous to suggest the Saudis may have committed war crimes |
| 12 | the Saudis? Like her closed ally, US, Saudis may commit war crimes: Saudi tc |
| 13 | visit) Interesting report finding that #Saudis might have committed war |
| 14 | as political as any org. UN Jumps Ship: Saudis Reward Their War Crimes in |
| 15 | pathetic as the Saudis UN Jumps Ship: Saudis Reward Their War Crimes in |

Figure 5-2: Concordance of Saudis and *war crimes*

Looking at Figure 5-2 above, the Saudis are actively participating in war crimes in Yemen. Using the present continuous tense with a v+ing form indicates recency and continuity of action. Tweets also assume that the Saudis can disregard the UN through their ability to conceal their war crimes. In lines 14–15, for instance, the tweets

suggest that the Saudis dominate the UN, such as "UN jumps ship", and consequently can be rewarded for their war crimes instead of being held responsible or charged for them. Tweets also posit other ways that the Saudis control the UN, such as their capability of "blocking UN inquiry" or "sinking UN probe" and their ability to "investigate themselves" as regards their war crimes (lines 8–9). By linking their war crimes to their UN membership, the tweets, intertextually, reflect negative representations of Saudis to oppose designating them to the UN. The UN, accordingly, is represented as disempowered, illegitimate and deceptive. This negative portrayal of the UN is indicated by the agentive role which tweets assign to Saudis, such as their ability to "block", "kill", "prevent" and "scuttle" a UN inquiry/investigation into their crimes in Yemen. The UN is also described in negative predicates, such as "irony of the century", "joke", "disgrace" and "biased". In fact, the UN is presented as being worse than the Saudis, who are described in a negative predicate as "barbaric despots". The tweet criticises the UN for being "far worse" than the Saudis and condemns the Council for electing them in the first place, such as in the tweet below:

Example 9 The Saudis are barbaric despots. But, the UN is far worse
 because it is legitimizing and enabling the Saudis

Associating Saudis with war crimes is also emphasised through other keywords, such as *airstrikes* (47 tweets), *bombing* (81 tweets) and *killed* (36 tweets), which affect civilians in Yemen. Tweets refer to airstrikes led by the Saudis as "deadly", they only kill civilians and destroy infrastructure in Yemen. For instance, tweets condemn an incident in which an airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition targeted a

wedding party and had casualties (127 tweets). Tweets refer to the Saudis' role in this incident as deliberate and criminal, using material processes: "attack" (eight tweets), "bombing" (63 tweets), "hit" (15 tweets) and "targeted" (12 tweets). For example:

- Example 10 Saudi-led airstrikes hit Yemen wedding party, killing at least 28.
- Example 11 135 martyrs, 80 women within, in a genocide by Saudis targeted a wedding in Mocha district, Taiz city in Yemen.
- Example 12 Saudis bomb Yemen wedding kill 131. Will UN Human Rights Comm investigate? Ask UN Chair: Saudi Arabia.

In the examples above, the tweets deploy material processes: "hit", "targeted" and "kill", to refer to airstrikes which resulted in many deaths, including women and children. Using these processes ascribes direct and deliberate agency to the Saudis for the attack. In example 11, the tweet refers to the attack as "genocide" and uses the passive voice to shift the emphasis to the victims who are described as "martyrs" and "women". To further criminalise the Saudis, the tweet in example 12 quotes an online newspaper reporting the attack and comments further by asking whether the UN will investigate the incident. The tweet responds sarcastically, saying "Ask the UN chair: Saudi Arabia", which implicitly criticises designating Saudis to the UN. These tweets depict Saudis in a hostile way, by criminalising airstrikes which are presented as violating the laws of war, as they target civilians, and by mocking the UNHRC which, by designating the Saudis to the Council, covers up their violations and war crimes.

The second issue that links Saudis to the war in Yemen is terrorism, one of the recurrent topics for Saudis in the FCT. Terrorism is postulated through associating Saudis with terror-recognised groups, such as ISIS and AlQaeda. *ISIS* is a strong

keyword (1,002:5,236) and collocate of Saudis in the FCT (548:101). This collocational relation posits another dark image of Saudis on Twitter since, first, both ISIS and AlQaeda are considered worldwide as terrorist groups (Martin & Solomon, 2017); and second, this relation is a reciprocal one. The central notion in the Saudis-ISIS relationship, as perceived in the tweets, is based on financial support and funding. The tweets tend to use the verbs "armed", "pay", "support", "send" and "fund" to refer to how the Saudis and ISIS cooperate. Conflating Saudis with terrorism in the Yemen war is also presented in collocation with *AlQaeda* (62:355.9). Saudis are represented as supportive of AlQaeda through active roles as agents in material processes, such as "arming", "fund", "help", "support", "sponsoring" and "backed", which indicate both moral and material assistance. Saudis are assumed to be parenting ISIS, as well as AlQaeda, and supporting them (with money and weapons) to destroy Yemen (Section 5.2.4 discusses the keyword *fund* in detail). For example:

- Example 13 US allies & parents of AlQaeda & ISIS murder 27 in Yemen.
Well done Saudis. Hope Russians start bombing you too.
- Example 14 Saudis after bombing send ISIS and others into Yemen! destroying.
- Example 15 Terror from the air and on the ground: the #Saudis in alliance with AlQaeda wreck #Yemen

Example 13 comments on an article in the *New York Times* about an airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition on a Yemeni wedding which killed 23 people. The tweet recontextualises the *New York Times* article about the airstrike on the wedding to condemn the US's alliance with the Saudis, despite the latter allegedly attacking and killing Yemenis. It also links them to terrorism by describing their relationship with AlQaeda and ISIS as one of parent and children. In example 14, the tweet claims that

after bombing Yemen, the Saudis send ISIS, with others, to further destroy Yemen. Whereas in example 15, the tweet claims that the Saudis ally with AlQaeda to “wreck” Yemen, describing their role in Yemen as terroristic, attacking from both air and ground. Associating Saudis with both *ISIS* and *AlQaeda*, thus, serves to criminalise the Saudis’ role in Yemen and highlight their connection with terrorism and terrorist groups.

In fact, there is a tweet in which ISIS is represented as criticising the Saudis’ barbaric actions in Yemen, suggesting a more considerate nature of ISIS compared to a more aggressive side of the Saudis, such as in the following tweet:

Example 16 When ISIS #daesh think #Saudis are barbaric, "bombing civilians" in Yemen...and condemn them 😐

Example 16 above states that ISIS (also referred to as 'Daesh') condemns the Saudis and perceives them as "barbaric" for targeting civilians in Yemen by bombing weddings. The tweet also includes a neutral emoji face, "😐", which indicates a no-comment response (or disbelief) of the tweet towards the proclaimed ISIS stance on the Saudis attacking the wedding. This contrast between the Saudis and ISIS is presented as ironic: though ISIS is known for its brutality in wars (Tarlow, 2015), the Saudis are presented as surpassing ISIS, to the point that it criticises the Saudis’ "barbaric" attitude towards civilians in Yemen.

A further transitivity analysis validates the above findings. Saudis are negatively represented as active agents in material processes in 489 tweets which involve "killing" Yemenis and "destroying" Yemen. These acts of murder are

introduced through other processes, such as: "slaughtering", "attacked", "destroying", "butcher", "commit" and "wiping out". Some of these material processes (213 tweets, 43%) are in the present continuous tense, suggesting continuity and recency, such as in the following examples:

- Example 17 This is Sana a, capital of Yemen where Saudis are dropping American cluster bombs. Take a good look it could vanish.
- Example 18 The Saudis are again murdering people in #Yemen from the skies
- Example 19 You know Saudis are attacking Yemen, organized by Pentagon.
- Example 20 Meanwhile the Saudis are bombing Yemen to smithereens right now
- Example 21 creating more death destruction and potential refugees good point. No one seems to care the Saudis are butchering civilians in Yemen.

In the examples above, tweets use the continuous present tense to describe the processes that the Saudis are engaged in in Yemen. When the Saudis are reported to be “committing”, “bombing”, “dropping”, “murdering” and “destroying” Yemen, this can evoke a sense of recency, continuity and persistence. Using verbs in the continuous aspect suggests that these actions are extended over time, and, in the current context, points towards an alarming situation caused by the Saudis in Yemen.

The tweets also deploy discursive strategies to represent the Saudis relative to the war in Yemen. Tweets employ nomination strategies to describe the Yemen war: "drone" (four tweets), "barbaric" (two tweets), "futile" (three tweets), and "genocidal" (four tweets), which ascribes a drastic image to the Saudis. The war in Yemen is also described as "overlooked" (nine) and "forgotten" (four), suggesting a conspiracy by the Saudis and others (such as the U.S.) to conceal their crimes against Yemenis. In the following example (22), the tweet comments on a video link and claims that the

Saudis bombed "precious" waterways in Yemen looking for oil. It describes the Saudis as "terrorists", which heightens the illocutionary force of the tweet to paint a vile image of the Saudis and condemn their role in the Yemen war. Tagging the war in Yemen as a "forgotten war", the tweet seeks to draw attention to the situation in Yemen and circulate this (negative) stance against Saudis. For example:

Example 22 Saudis r terrorists. video, Bombing 4 precious waterways that
 Saudi want 2 export oil. Google map #Yemen forgotten war

There are also 11 tweets referring to the war in Yemen as a "Saudi war", whereas six tweets use *war* in collocation with "crimes". Both usages stress the Saudis' sole responsibility for this war, such as in the following tweets:

Example 23 The Saudis are insane and it's causing immeasurable suffering.—
 Saudi war in Yemen impossible to win

Example 24 Some of the Saudis war crimes victims, including father and son
 Laying dead killed by air bombing in Yemen

The tweet in example 23 is a comment on another tweet from *Al-Monitor*, a US-based news website that is concerned with the Middle East. The tweet responds by condemning the Saudis, describing them as "insane", and refers to their role in Yemen as causing "immeasurable suffering". The tweet recontextualises the text of the article to represent Saudis negatively and associates them with insanity so as to represent their role in the Yemen war as one that causes extreme and immeasurable suffering. It also uses the article's title as a direct quote to show endorsement and interaction with

the article. While in example 24, the tweet includes pictures of smashed bodies and claims they belong to a "father and son" who were killed in an airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition. The lexical choice, identifying the victims as "father and son", presents a stark reminder of the human toll of the war crisis and shows the devastating effects of strife and desperation often inflicted on children and families. Associating this image with Saudis highlights the viciousness of the action and portrays them as merciless and abhorrent. This depiction of Saudis as a violent out-group is a strategy that tweets deploy to highlight their negative actions/ qualities (Oktar, 2001). In sum, modifying the war in *Yemen* with Saudis holds them accountable for escalating the humanitarian crisis and portrays them as war criminals.

5.2.1.2. The war in Syria: Terrorism support and refugee crisis

The ongoing war in Syria is another theme associated with Saudis in the WAR category. *Syria* is a strong keyword (801:4,339) and collocate (306:69.7) of Saudis in the FCT. Examining the concordance for *Syria* shows that the tweets focus on three key issues: destroying Syria, arming and supporting terrorists and extremist groups, and the Saudis not taking in refugees but instead building mosques for them in Europe.

As with the first issue, tweets describe the Saudis' role in Syria as one which is hostile and violent: Saudis are represented in material processes related to destruction, such as "destroyed", "bombing", "destabilised", "attack" and "dragged", whereas Syria is presented as a victim of the Saudis. For example:

- Example 25 Funding a bloodbath in Egypt, being a base to bomb Iraq, and now bombing Syria, the Saudis will reap the harvest. Nothing goes unpaid
- Example 26 now the Saudis can attack Syria and Russians.
- Example 27 The US, Israel and the Saudis destabilised Syria and have been actively funding radical jihadists for years, fool.

In these examples, tweets use the material processes "bombing", "attack" and "destabilised" to refer to the Saudis' contribution to the war in Syria. In example 25, the tweet alleges that the Saudis' role in Syria is mainly terrorising and destructive: it uses the idiomatic expression "reap the harvest" to threaten the Saudis with facing the consequences of their (negative) actions, and asserting that "nothing goes unpaid". Similarly, in examples 26 and 27, both tweets use material processes of "attack" and "destabilised" to negatively refer to the Saudis' role in the Syrian war. In example 27, however, the tweet claims that the Saudis (as well as the US and Israel) have been "funding radical Jihadists", which links them with terrorism. In fact, associating Saudis with "radical Jihadists" heightens the illocutionary force of the tweet, in that it poses the Saudis (the US and Israel as well) as another source of threat due to their financial support for extremist "Jihadists" who are often stereotyped in the media as "fanatic and cruel 'Islamist terrorists' who represent the main threat to Western civilians" (Boukala, 2016, p. 261). These negative depictions of Saudis are achieved through grammatical roles (active agents), lexical choices (material processes) and discourse warrants (negative roles in Egypt and Iraq and funding radical Jihadists in Syria).

Tweets also refer to the role of the Saudis in Syria as similar to what they are doing in Yemen, i.e. destructive and terroristic. The Saudis are alleged to be seeking a

scenario in Syria that is parallel to that in Yemen (43 tweets), yet, such a scenario is often neglected by the media. For instance:

- Example 28 the Saudis always wanted a "Yemeni" scenario for Syria) :)
- Example 29 looks like the saudis are turning yemen into another Syria
- Example 30 It`s just because THEY bomb in Syria. What Saudis do in Yemen don`t make it into news. Typical Double standards

In example 28, the tweet claims that the Saudis intervene in Syria to make a similar "scenario" to that in Yemen, that is they plan to destroy Syria and kill civilians. Similarly, the tweet in example 29 claims that the Saudis are working on "turning" Yemen into a state similar to Syria. In example 30, the tweet is in reply to another tweet which condemns the Russian airstrikes for causing deaths among Syrian civilians. Though this tweet does not mention the Saudis, the tweet in example 30 recontextualises it to compare victims of the Russian airstrikes in Syria to those killed by the Saudis in Yemen. It also criticises the media which ignore crimes committed in Yemen and prioritise those in Syria, since they are not committed by Saudis. The tweet describes the media's neglect of the Saudis' crimes in Yemen as "Typical Double standards", which implies a conspiracy and deception to conceal the Saudis' terroristic attitudes in Yemen.

The second issue that links the Saudis to the war in Syria concerns the refugee crisis. The tweets here question the Saudis' unwillingness to accept Syrian refugees fleeing from the war zone and, at the same time, offer to build mosques for them in Europe (particularly in Germany). This issue triggers tweets' concerns about the severe outcomes for refugees fleeing to Europe, such as in the following examples:

- Example 31 Saudis offer to build 200 mosques. In Germany. No joke.
#refugees #crisis #europe
- Example 32 Saudis bomb Yemen, pay ISIS and fund new mosques in EU for
refugees. All as per plan. Infidel Europe being conquered.
- Example 33 Saudis offering Germany millions to build Mosques a disgrace. Just
take migrants don't give money. Long term issues for Europe

These tweets represent condemnation of what is deemed to be a contradiction by the Saudis since, if they can build mosques for Syrian refugees in Europe, they can take them in instead. In fact, *refugees* collocates with *mosques* in 307 tweets in the FTC. These tweets refer to the Syrian refugee crisis, when some of them fled to Europe soon after the war broke out. The Saudis are reported by a Lebanese newspaper to be building over 200 mosques for Syrian refugees in Europe, especially in Germany (see Section 4.2.7). Consequently, this triggered vigorous reactions in tweets, which are mainly condemnatory and negative. Prior to discussing how tweets depict the Saudis in terms of the refugees and mosques issue, the frequencies of both terms as keywords are introduced first.

Both *refugees* (545:2,976) and *mosques* (395:2,730) are among the top hundred keywords and strong collocates of Saudis in the FCT. The collocation of both *mosques* and *refugees* (126 tweets) is posited as problematic and dangerous for the West by some users on Twitter. With the Saudis refusing to take refugees but building mosques for them in Europe, the tweets point to the Saudis' contribution to what is proposed as being a threat to the West, intensified through using metaphors like "invasion" (Goodman & Speer, 2007), "floods" and "extermination". Not accepting refugees is also suggested as being planned (an agenda) by the Saudis as means to Islamise Europe, such as in the following tweets:

- Example 34 Saudis offer to build 200 mosques for "refugees". What, no churches? Could this be more blatant invasion/extermination of West?
- Example 35 **INVASION OF EUROPE ONGOING....** Europeans are **CLUELESS**. Saudis want to build 1 mosque for each 100 Invaders! NoComment
- Example 36 If we had stopped **ASSAD AND ISIS**, Syrians would stay in Syria. Saudis could take Syrians but they don't. **AGENDA= Make Occident a MUSLIM WORLD!**
- Example 37 Europe is flooded with refugees while the Saudis have room for 100,000's of people with A/C tents. They sit empty.
- Example 38 The refugee scam is purely that. If they were real refugees, Saudis would take them, but Saudis need no more jihadis.

Examples 34 and 38 are comments on the news that the Saudis propose to build 200 mosques for refugees in Europe. This news is depicted as alarming in these tweets as they recontextualise the issue of Saudis building mosques for refugees with the refugees' problematic arrival in Europe. Through using "invasion", "extermination" and "flooded" metaphors, tweets warn against foreseen threats inflicted by Syrian refugees fleeing to Europe, such as describing their arrival as "blatant invasion/extermination" and an "INVASION OF EUROPE ONGOING". Tweets also claim that the Saudis deliberately plan to occupy the West and exterminate Westerners by refusing to take these refugees in. Likewise, in example 36, the tweet claims that the Saudis refused to accept these refugees because of their (hidden) "AGENDA", i.e. to Islamise the West, which is referred to as the "Occident". The tweet uses CAPS to emphasise and highlight the risks and threats that the Saudis and refugees constitute to the West. Such negative representations reinforce an 'us' versus 'them' discourse (van Teeffelen, 1994), which constructs the Saudis and Syrian refugees as out-groups who constitute a threat to Europeans and reveal a xenophobic discourse which depicts both as negative out-groups whose presence threatens peace in the West (Zaslavsky, 2017). This negative discourse about refugees is rooted in media discourse and reproduced on Twitter in association with the Saudis who generate perceptions of threat, and

enforces the ideology that the 'other' does not belong (Dunn, Klocker, and Salabay, 2007).

The third issue associates *refugees* with Saudis in term of terrorism. Refugees are perceived as future terrorists since building mosques can breed terrorists (12 tweets). Associating refugees with terrorism also recalls the 9/11 attacks (8 tweets). Tweets stress that the majority of the attackers were Saudis (15 of 19) to warn against an imminent threat which resulting from Saudis building mosques in Europe. These allegations suggest that there are criminal intentions behind the Saudis building these mosques for refugees, noting that *mosques* are labelled as "terror" and "Wahhabi". This issue is further exacerbated when tweets suggest that there are members of ISIS among the Syrian refugees arriving in Germany (5 tweets), which is seen as alarming and threatening. For example:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Example 39 | For the Invaders of Europe: Saudis to build 200 Terror Mosques in Germany |
| Example 40 | Saudis offer 2 build Germany 200 mosques 2 indoctrinate terrorists suppose it makes it OK |
| Example 41 | If 15 of the 19 #September11 terrorists were Saudis, should Germany let Saudi Arabia build 200 Wahhabi mosques for the refugees? |
| Example 42 | Saudis going to build 200 mosques in Germany for Syrian refugees (and ISIS jihadis) but won't take any in their country |

In these examples, tweets visualise both the Saudis and Syrian refugees as a source of terror and threat: the Saudis being the primary source of the threat, the refugees the medium, and the West the eventual victim. This typology builds on two claims: first, tweets perceive the refugees as a problematic issue for the West by describing them as "invaders" and "terrorists". Second, Saudis are depicted as the primary source of

terrorism and threat, as tweets associate them with the 9/11 attacks; this, consequently, embellishes the issue of building mosques for refugees in Europe as these mosques are depicted as terror-producing places.

The last issue that links Saudis to the war in Syria is supporting terrorism (12 tweets) and funding terrorist groups⁸ (73 tweets). Besides building mosques that can sponsor terrorism and breed terrorists, tweets ascribe negative roles to the Saudis in the war in Syria, which include supporting and funding terrorist groups, such as *ISIS* (48 tweets). Saudis are also represented as actively supporting terrorism in Syria through material processes by either "arming" (24 tweets), offering SUPPORT to (28 tweets) or "funding" (16 tweets) groups that are linked with terror or by sending "Jihadists" (seven tweets) directly to Syria. For example:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Example 43 | our allies the Saudis are already in Syria, biggest financial supporters of ISIS |
| Example 44 | What the Saudis mean to say is We will be increasing our funding Towards terrorism in #Syria |
| Example 45 | Saudis think nobody knows they and Gulf friends are funding, arming and sending jihadis "killing machine" to Syria? |

These tweets emphasise the Saudis' role in Syria, being portrayed as supporting and funding terrorist groups financially, such as *ISIS* and "Jihadis". Contrary to their depicted role in the war in Yemen, Saudis are presented as contributing not to the war in Syria itself but to supporting and funding terrorism and terrorist groups. This negative contribution triggers tweets to condemn any alliance with the Saudis, such as in example 43, as the tweet mocks US government relations with the Saudis. The tweet expresses the user's involvement through the use of deictic "our", which situates

⁸ Linking Saudis with terrorism is discussed in detail in section 5.2.4.

the speaker and the government in the same boat (Ivanova, 2016). The user's involvement in the discourse carries an irony that mocks the US alliance with the Saudis by juxtaposing it with the Saudis being the "biggest financial supporters of ISIS". Tweets also postulate Saudi support and funding of terrorism in Syria as either open and public (example 44), or secret (example 45) by sending "Jihadis" who are described as a "killing machine" to Syria. As noted earlier, the term "Jihadis" presents a threatening concept of extremism and danger to the West (Boukala, 2016), and so associating it with supporting terrorism in Syria can re-instantiate a darker and threatening image of Saudis in the FCT.

5.2.2. Mecca events: Saudis' incompetence

The top recurring keywords in the FCT which are related to the two tragic events at Mecca are *Hajj* (1,168 tweets), *stampede* (507), *Mecca* (377) and *crane* (240).

Although the data were collected in the aftermath of both tragic events, the MECCA EVENTS category ranks third among the top dominating categories in the FCT. This suggests less media coverage of both the crane collapse and the Hajj stampede events compared to other categories where the focus is laid on the ongoing war in the region. However, the question raised here is whether both tragic events trigger a certain discourse around Saudis and whether this discourse promotes any negative/ positive representations. To answer this question, the top common keywords *Hajj*, *stampede*, *Mecca* and *crane*, are examined next using concordance analysis.

Hajj, ranking fourth among the top keywords (1,166:8,434), marks an annual religious occasion when Muslims perform the fifth pillar of Islam at Mecca. *Hajj* is most likely to co-occur with *stampede* which collocates with *Hajj* in 274 tweets, whereas *crane* collocates with *Hajj* in only eight tweets. It was during Hajj that the

second tragic event (the stampede) occurred, whereas the crane collapse preceded Hajj by almost two weeks (see section 4.2.3). *Mecca* collocates with *Hajj* in 39 tweets, with *stampede* in 73 tweets, with *crane* 69 in tweets.

Hajj collocates with Saudis in 656 tweets; however, this collocation is mostly one of blame. Saudis are either reported as blaming others (237 tweets) or being blamed for the stampede (155). In the first case, Saudis are reported as blaming either "God's will" or the "pilgrims", especially Africans, who are described as "negroes", "black(s) pilgrims", and "dirt-poor Africans". Tweets argue against blaming (African) pilgrims to highlight the negative ways in which the Saudis deal with foreign pilgrims. For example:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Example 46 | I get angry when Saudis blame God. In every disaster, the Saudis say it is God's will. It is not God's will it is man's incompetence.' |
| Example 47 | Obscenely wealthy Saudis blame dirt-poor Africans for the #HajjStampede |
| Example 48 | Racist Saudis blame blacks for Mecca stampede that killed 717 people |
| Example 49 | LOL Racist fucking Saudis, Prince Khaled al-Faisal, blamed the stampede on "some pilgrims from African nationalities" |

Examining examples 46–49 shows that tweets emphasise the Saudis' responsibility for the stampede and criticise them for blaming others rather than themselves. However, emphasising the Saudis' responsibility for the stampede triggered negative representations of Saudis' racist attitudes towards other groups, such as African pilgrims. Both are presented at binary oppositions: African pilgrims are presented as an inferior and disempowered group, through nomination strategies like "dirt-poor", "negroes" and "blacks"; and the Saudis are depicted negatively, using nomination strategies, such as "obscenely wealthy", "racist" and "fucking". These tweets

stereotype Saudis negatively, as a powerful group, which is manifest in their racist and bigoted attitudes towards other, less powerful groups.

The collocation of Saudis with *Hajj*, therefore, can portray how tweets view them after the stampede event. Furthermore, Saudis are represented as exploiters of Hajj who use it as a means of milking other Muslims and as a money-making (minting) business. This claim is supported by nomination strategies which describe Saudis as "savages", "sick", "disaster", "mother fuckers" and "stupid", which promotes further hostile images of Saudis. These negative depictions suggest that Hajj is unsafe and in the wrong hands, leading some tweeters to urge the internationalisation of Hajj. Tweets claim that the current Hajj management, which is administered by the Saudis, caused the stampede. This claim results in growing demands for "broader participation and power sharing among the major countries that send the largest Hajj delegations every year" (Bianchi, 2015, p. 78). In fact, calls for the internationalisation of Hajj aim at the "tempering of Saudi Arabia's exaggerated claims to sovereignty over the Holy Cities and the pilgrimage" (ibid, p. 78). Tweets suggest designating the "Turks" or "Iranians" to handle Hajj management instead of the Saudis, as in the following examples:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Example 50 | Hardliners in Shiite rival Iran condemn stampede incident, say Saudis should no longer handle annual #hajj |
| Example 51 | If Saudis can't handle Hajj maybe they should hand over its management to Iranians or Turks. |

As for *stampede*, tweets describe it as a "catastrophe" (three tweets), "disaster" (54 tweets), "crush" (27 tweets) and "tragedy" (51 tweets), and it is also referentially referred to as "deadly" (six). The international reaction towards the

stampede is described in binary sentiments: sympathy and "condolences", or criticism and "condemnation". The term "flooded" (62 tweets) is metaphorically used to refer to the immensity of the international reaction to the stampede. For example:

- Example 52 Iranians slam Saudis: International condolences – and condemnation – flooded into Saudi Arabia on Friday ...
- Example 53 New post: "Iranians critical" International condolences – and condemnation – flooded into Saudi Arabia on Friday...

However, in studies on the representation of other groups, water metaphors, like floods, are considered harmful (Baker, 2010; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2009; Parker, 2015) and suggest exaggerated and undesirable effects. When both sympathetic and critical messages are described as "flooding", it entails a negative evaluation of Saudis in relation to the stampede and suggests that although the condolence messages are very numerous, they are also critical and adverse in tone.

The Hajj stamped also interrelates with other themes in the FCT, such as the war in Yemen (eight tweets). Tweets refer to the stampede as a Godly punishment for the Saudis' negative actions in Yemen, as in the following tweets:

- Example 54 the Saudis are in trouble now...it's ALLAH'S wrath on them for what they are doing in Yemen
- Example 55 The hajj culminates at the end of September. The Saudis have killed hundreds of innocent children/women/men in Yemen. Revenge?
- Example 56 Seems Allah is finally taking revenge on Saudis for spoiling his name. Rapist diplomats, Hajj tragedies, oil price crash and Yemen war

Instead of expressing sympathy and compassion towards the stampede event, tweets perceive the stampede as a penalty for Saudi war crimes and violations in Yemen. Negative depictions of Saudis in association with the stampede also touch upon a number of interrelated themes in the FCT, such as the rape case against a Saudi diplomat (Section 7.7) and manipulating oil prices (Section 5.2.5). The tweets discursively perceive the stampede as “karma” or as "ALLAH'S wrath", rather than an accident. Discourse associating the Saudis with the stampede allows for the attribution of blame and ridicule, rather than expressing sympathy towards the victims, who were mostly non-Saudis. Cholerton (2015) expresses his disagreement while describing the reactions of some people in the US to the stampede, stating:

[T]here are almost certainly many across this nation, and middle America, and elsewhere in the West, who secretly feel, and privately express, that the deaths of these religious pilgrims represents some sort of comeuppance for Islam. After all, it’s their brethren cutting off heads in Iraq and Syria, planning and committing atrocities across Europe, destroying the treasures of antiquity, etc., etc. Surely it’s some kind of karma?

It can be assumed that a tragic event, such as the stampede, can be a clue to immersed, racist stereotypes and ideologies about Muslims in general, and Saudis in particular, in the FCT.

Mecca (375:2,730) is also among the top keywords in the five corpora and collocates with Saudis in 124 tweets. Mecca represents the geographic location of both tragic incidents, added to its religious and spiritual value for Muslims. A close concordance analysis of *Mecca* shows that 356 tweets report both tragic events (mainly casualties and investigations). In the remaining 17 tweets, *Mecca* is

represented as a victim of the Saudis through material processes, "ruined", "shredded", "turned into Las Vegas", "changed", "ruled" and "materialised", suggesting that the Saudis are exploiting their control to victimise Mecca. For example:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Example 57 | Saudis have made Mecca into the Las Vegas of religion. |
| Example 58 | I'm not going to apologise for the last few tweets I made. The Saudis need to stop turning Mecca into fucking Disneyland |
| Example 59 | The Saudis have shredded Mecca and many other historical sites. Like they had something to hide |

Going beyond exploiting Hajj and pilgrims, some tweets claim that the Saudis also threaten Mecca in two ways: ripping off its religious sacredness and destroying its historical sites. For instance, in examples 57 and 58, tweets deploy the metaphors "Las Vegas" and "Disneyland" to claim that the Saudis are threatening the religious identity and holiness of Mecca by transforming it into a place of entertainment, rather than worship. In fact, comparing Mecca to Las Vegas and Disneyland carries negative connotations, since Mecca is considered the holiest place in Islam, whereas Las Vegas is considered the world's entertainment capital and known for its casino-associated activities, and Disneyland one of the most renowned amusement parks. This depiction is highlighted in the media (Al-Alawi and Schwartz, 2013; Rogeberg 2017) to criticise the massive expansions which, according to Rogeberg (2017), are claimed to be commercialisation and not for prayer and Hajj. Using these metaphors thus sustains a radical image of Saudis as one that threatens not only the holiness of Mecca but its symbolism for all Muslims.

There are still, however, a few tweets that carry positive sentiments towards the Saudis, appreciating their efforts at Mecca and shifting the blame for the stampede onto pilgrims' lack of awareness or disobedience of the rules. In the examples below,

the tweets stress that the Saudis do their best to manage Hajj and that their efforts to improve Mecca (and Medina) are remarkable. For example:

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Example 60 | What Saudis do in Mecca and Medina is amazing actually. If people follow guidelines then tragedies wont occur. |
| Example 61 | No one can manage hajj better than Saudis. Years of tradition and experience. Pro Iranians stay away |
| Example 62 | King Salman and Saudis 'compete to serve pilgrims' |

These tweets carry positive evaluations and present a resisting discourse which defends the Saudis against the stampede accusations. Tweets argue for the substantial efforts that the Saudis are making for the Holy places and argue that pilgrims' unawareness and disobedience of the guidelines were the real cause of the stampede (example 60). Tweets also criticise the Iranians for detracting from the Saudis' competence to manage Hajj (62 tweets), on their (Saudis') incomparable efforts.

The last keyword in this category is *crane* (240:1541), which is identified as a "collapse" (117 tweets), "crash" (19 tweets), "fall" (28 tweets), "accident" (nine tweets), "disaster" (nine tweets) and "incident" (six tweets), and referentially described as "Mecca" (53 tweets) and "deadly" (28 tweets). Similar to previous keywords in this category, examining the association of Saudis with the crane event reveals negative stances in tweets which condemn their irresponsibility towards the event. The tweets also criticise the Saudis' irrational reasoning regarding the causes of the crane collapse, such as being an "act of God" (19 tweets) or the wind (five tweets). Blaming "winds" is also used as irony in tweets (example 65) to mock the Saudis' incapability and lack of organisation skills. For instance:

- Example 63 Oh. Dear. Saudis blame 'act of God' for crane collapse
- Example 64 It's not the Saudis' fault bro. The crane was an act of God. They're doing a good job. They're the masters of organisation.
- Example 65 Saudis "no surprise" blame winds for the crane disaster that killed scores of humans

Some tweets, however, recall the 9/11 attacks (nine tweets), signalling a conspiracy behind the incident, as there were no Saudi casualties among the victims. Other tweets see the crane collapse as “karma” for the 9/11 attacks and suggesting Godly revenge. Like the stampede event, these tweets did not trigger any compassion but, rather, induced antagonistic reactions in some tweets towards both the Saudis and the victims of the crane collapse, such as in the following examples:

- Example 66 Yaaaaaaaaaaaaa fucking Saudis and others, killed people from all over the world..... today karma came...
- Example 67 Fuck the Saudis, Allah punished them with the crane thing at that big ass mosque #Karma
- Example 68 guess who were killed by the crane...foreigners, non-Saudis, innocents who had nothing to do with 9/11.
- Example 69 Crane collapse in Mecca...Allah blaming Saudis for indifference to Muslim refugees or maybe ISIs sabotage. #conspiracy
- Example 70 with 17/19 hijackers on 9/11 Saudis...we should have nuked Mecca and sent the barbarians a message....

One of the ways of misrepresenting Saudis in the FCT is through the interrelation of themes, i.e. tweets connect two or more themes and associate them negatively with the Saudis, such as the 9/11 attacks and the Syrian refugee crisis. The crane collapse, which occurred on 11 September 2015, coincided with the 14th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001. According to Faith (2016), when the crane collapsed in Mecca, “[s]ome people, including some Americans, saw this event, and its timing, as some type of grand karmic justice against Muslims in general and Saudi Arabia in particular for the original 9/11”. Similar to the stampede event, tweets

refer to the crane collapse as revenge or "karma" for 9/11 and/or for the Saudis' "indifference" towards Syrian refugees. This issue is taken further to assume that the crane collapse was planned by the Saudis, given that the victims were "foreigners, non-Saudis" (example 68). This assumption proclaims sympathy towards the victims, mainly because they were "non-Saudis" and not involved in the 9/11 attacks. However, recalling the 9/11 attacks also promotes an alarming discourse (example 70) as the tweet triggers an intimidating reaction towards the Saudis. The tweet includes a comment on a picture of the crane collapse at Mecca. Using the deontic modality "should", the tweet carries a drastic discourse which expresses a past obligation for a collective action to "nuke" Mecca as payback for the Saudis' contribution to the 9/11 attacks. This example resembles one of the accumulative (serious) effects of media discourse. The 9/11 attacks occurred in 2001, prior to the launch of Twitter in 2006, and when the crane collapse in Mecca coincided with the 14th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the tweet prompted a past obligation to take revenge on the Saudis immediately after the attacks took place. Such a negative ideology vis-à-vis others suggesting "that people are deserving of death simply because of who they are, not because of anything they've done – is what led a bunch of cowardly, murderous bastards to carry out the original 9/11 attacks" (Faith, 2016).

The keywords analysis in the MECCA EVENTS category, accordingly, reveals a negative discourse representation which centres on blame and criticism. Saudis are also negatively constructed as incompetent and uncaring. Neither event triggered any sympathy or compassion towards the events, but rather evoked a sense of mockery in which tweets present the crane collapse as karma for the 9/11 attacks and the war on Yemen. In fact, this was tagged in one tweet which expresses astonishment at the presence of gloating and criticism towards a tragic event which

should only trigger empathy and condolences. In example 71, below, the tweet expresses astonishment at other tweets' reactions that should have been more empathetic and supportive towards the crane collapse. Instead, these tweets either mock the Saudis for the stampede tragedy, as karma for 9/11, or criticise them for blaming Egyptian pilgrims for panicking the crowds:

Example 71 Reading argument over an accident that should incite no emotion other than compassion. Karma for 9/11 & Saudis criticizing Egyptians! #Mecca

5.2.3. Saudis and terrorism

Associating Saudis with terrorism is one of the top recurring themes throughout the FCT: Saudis are associated with terrorism in the WAR, RELIGION and OIL categories in the FCT. Among the top keywords in this category are the lemmas CRUCIFY (501 tweets) and TERROR (660 tweets) in their different forms, such as *crucifying*, *crucifixion*, *terror*, *terrorists* and *terrorist*. The remaining keywords are *behead* (349 tweets) which is related to *crucify*, *fund* (481 tweets) which is linked with *terror*, *barbaric* (94 tweets) and *hijackers* (77 tweets). These keywords link Saudis with violence and terrorism regarding a) the crucifixion case of Ali Al-Nimr, b) funding terrorist groups and c) the 9/11 attacks.

The keywords *crucify* and *behead* associate mostly the Saudis with the crucifixion case against Ali Mohammed Al-Nimr. The keyword *crucify* (340 tweets) relates to the case of Ali Al-Nimr, who is reported to be facing death by crucifixion as a protest penalty. This incident, although not officially declared or stated by the Saudi government, is criticised by tweets linking it to some recurring themes in the FCT.

Tweets' reactions towards the Al-Nimr crucifixion are condemnatory, accusing the Saudis of insanity and brutality. Al-Nimr is referred to as an "activist" (22 tweets), "young" (16 tweets), a "kid" (13 tweets), a "teen" (64 tweets) and a "child" (20 tweets). which seeks to stress his youth and to criminalise the act. In addition, tweets condemn the reasons for crucifying Al-Nimr, which are postulated as trivial and unreasonable, such as opposing Saudi opinions and committing crimes when he was a teenager. Al-Nimr's case has also received considerable attention on Twitter; tweets urge retweeting and circulating the issue to stop the crucifixion, such as the following examples:

- Example 72 RT! Saudis will execute and crucify Ali within 24 hours! Help me save him! #AliMohammedAlNimr #FreeNimr
- Example 73 please retweet Matt, the Saudis have literally sentenced him to crucifixion.
- Example 74 Please try to stop the Saudis from crucifying 17yr old Ali Al Nimr for criticizing his government

The crucifixion of Al-Nimr also interrelates with other common issues in the FCT, such as chairing the UNHRC panel, arms deals and terror and violence, to represent the Saudis negatively. For example:

- Example 75 Young boy to be crucified...UN Human Rights chair... Saudis....you should be able to connect the dots:)
- Example 76 Oh cool the Saudis are CRUCIFYING a prisoner how many deals do we have with them?
- Example 77 So ISIS is bad because they behead, crucify and repress women. Other than their clothes how are Saudis different?

In the above examples, tweets condemn crucifying Al-Nimr by associating other negative issues to criminalise the crucifixion case and relationships with the Saudis.

These issues include condemnation of the UNHRC for allowing the Saudis onto the Council and Western governments (such as the US and the UK) for doing arms deals with the Saudis. Granting the Saudis membership of the Council is not negative in itself; however, tweets condemn the Al-Nimr crucifixion to express opposition towards and disagreement with the UNHRC decision to allow the Saudis a seat on the Council. This association juxtaposes the founding principles of the UNHRC, which promote human rights around the world. The tweet in example 75 shows that allowing the Saudis into the UNHRC while they attempt to crucify a "young boy" is intolerable, pointing to what "seems to be the apogee of political hypocrisy" (Mehdiyeva, 2016, p. 6). Also, crucifying Al-Nimr is challenged while doing arms deals with the Saudis: the tweet in example 76 uses the involvement deixis "we" to mock the US government for dealing with the Saudis despite crucifying "a prisoner". In the last example (77), the tweet refers to crucifying Al-Nimr to conflate the Saudis with ISIS, arguing that both are similar in beheading and crucifying people and oppressing women, and the only difference (the tweet claims) between the Saudis and ISIS is in their outfits.

Examining the concordance of *behead* shows that Saudis habitually carry out beheadings on people for unjustified reasons, except for nine tweets where beheading refers to the Saudis chairing a UNHRC panel. Beheading also echoes similar themes to crucifying Al-Nimr, such as questioning the Saudis' eligibility to be a member of the UNHRC and their resemblance to ISIS in beheading people. Additionally, tweets argue against Saudis for beheading people who dissent from the government, women practising sorcery and drug-dealing. Tweets also perceive beheading as something that Saudis are accustomed to, or as a practice in which they outpace ISIS who behead fewer people compared to the Saudis. The keyword *crucify* collocates with *behead* in

79 tweets, and 62 tweets link both keywords to Al-Nimr's crucifixion. The remaining 17 tweets associate crucifying and beheading with the Saudis as a usual practice. For instance:

- Example 78 The Saudis still behead women for the crime of sorcery. Reminder: this nation sits on the UN Human Rights Council.
- Example 79 The Saudis have been known to behead people over drug charges and Other minor offenses. They are Wahhabis. ...
- Example 80 Saudis are sick of being compared to ISIS re beheadings so in spirit of new #UNhumanrights role will now only crucify dissenters. progress..
- Example 81 last I heard the Saudis had beheaded more people than ISIS. Not an ally.
- Example 82 Ironic given that the Saudis routinely behead and crucify as part of their "civilized" society

Examining the keyword *beheading* reveals several interrelated themes that recur in the FCT, which contributes to presenting Saudis negatively through the other negative-presentation strategy. For example, tweets condemn the beheading penalty to criticise electing Saudis to the UNHRC and to associate them with ISIS. Practising sorcery or dealing with drugs is prohibited globally and, in Islam, can incur the death penalty for the practitioner. Yet, tweets in the FCT shift the emphasis away from penalties and blame the Saudis' extreme ideology (being "Wahhabis"), which adopts beheading as a punishment to condemn allowing them onto the UNHRC (examples 78 and 79). Tweets also highlight the beheading penalty by claiming that Saudis behead more people than ISIS (example 81). This negative depiction is illustrated through images, such as a caricature of people hanged on flagpoles outside the UNHRC building with a large, blood-stained sword behind them. This image suggests a violent and dangerous stereotype of Saudis which contradicts the founding basis of the UNHRC (see Figure 5-3 below).



Figure 5-3: Caricature of Saudis leading the UN on Twitter

What is alarming is that these depictions of Saudis and beheading may promote and sustain a negative stereotype of Saudis outside Twitter. Spreading such negative portrayals can contribute to a ‘Saudiophobic’ discourse which can be evoked offline. For example:

Example 83 There are 2 Saudis visiting US for school. Will they behead me if I say the wrong thing to them!?

The tweet above is a comment on another tweet that criticises the US for its alliance with the Saudis, despite their intention to crucify Al-Nimr. The tweet responds with the user wondering (seriously or sarcastically) if the two Saudis who will visit his/her school are going to behead the tweeter if s/he miscommunicates (says something wrong) to them. The tweet links Saudis beheading people as a trait which they resort

to if they are confronted or opposed by others, suggesting that their reactions and attitudes can be violent and intolerant.

In addition to crucifying and beheading, Saudis are portrayed as providing financial and material support to terror-recognised groups, such as ISIS and AlQaeda, or adopting extreme thoughts/ ideology presented by the material process *fund*. Tweets use *fund* to represent Saudis negatively as active agents in supporting the following: ISIS (162 tweets), terrorism (93 tweets), mosques/ terror (33 tweets), “radical Muslims” (18 tweets), 9/11 attacks (17 tweets), “Jihadists” (15 tweets), “extremists” (14 tweets), AlQaeda (14 tweets) and their “ideology” (five tweets).

Associating Saudis with supporting the terror-classified ISIS and AlQaeda recurs throughout different topics in the FCT, such as WAR (Yemen and Syria), RELIGION and OIL. Yet, it is assumed that the Saudis do not only fund terror through backing and supporting ISIS and AlQaeda groups, but also through funding a radical and extreme ideology as well as sponsoring mosques in the West, which contribute to sustaining terror and breeding terrorists. This issue of radicality and extremism is highlighted in studies on the representation of Islam and Muslims in Western media (Akbarzadeh & Smith, 2005; Ameli et al., 2007; Baker, 2010; Lemmouh, 2008). However, these negative views are reintroduced on Twitter to also link Saudis to a fanatical and extreme ideology which is presented as funding terrorists as well as mosques which also promote their radical concept of terrorism. Adopting this ideology, consequently, evokes a sense of danger that is threatening the culture and values of the West (Akbarzadeh & Smith, 2005, p. 21). For example:

- Example 84 Saudis fund ISIS/AlQaeda to wage proxy wars for Wahhabi domination so if ISIS are our enemy, selling KSA weapons ???
- Example 85 Saudis spreading radical ideology, causing mass murder, destroying state...
- Example 86 Irrelevant. The Saudis fund the theology that breeds terrorism
- Example 87 instead, the Saudis are offering to fund 200 new terrorist factories/mosques - ugh!

Associating Saudis with terrorism is depicted in several ways, such as funding ISIS and AlQaeda and other radical groups, propagating their (Wahhabi) ideology and funding mosques that breed terrorists. The discursive element of "terrorist Saudis" entails a central notion: Saudis construct a source of threat that can extend to others. This argument is presented in two ways, either Saudis funding terrorists to establish "Wahhabi domination" (example 84), which threatens and clashes with the West (Ekman, 2015, p. 1987), or Saudis adopt a radical "theology" that promotes mass destruction, and that breeds terrorists by funding mosques in Europe (examples 86 and 87). In fact, the 9/11 attacks dramatically transformed the media discourse of terrorism around the world. In the US, media discourse resonated with US political "definitions, descriptions, and deliberations on terrorism, generating a 'politics of fear'" (Roy and Ross, 2011, p. 288). According to Salama (2011), the discourse of Wahhabi-Saudi Islam rose to an extreme level in the US when the 9/11 attacks drew attention to two strict Islamic movements: Wahhabism and Salafiyya. This resulted in discursive practices that have "linguistically crystallized via the biased collocations that permeate antagonistic texts, which recontextualize the same discourse topic of Wahhabi-Saudi Islam. This has eventually led to the emergence of 'meaningful antagonism' between anti-Wahhabi and proWahhabi discourses since 9/11" (ibid., p. 315).

The last keyword in this category is *hijackers*. This keyword refers to the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York in 2001, which also corresponds to the date of the first tragic event in Mecca (crane collapse). However, only (19) tweets mention the crane collapse in relation to the September attacks (see section 4.3).

Hijackers only collocates with *crane* in one tweet; this tweet mocks the crane collapse as it corresponds to the 14th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. The tweet in example 88 expresses pleasure at the coincidence of the crane collapse with the 9/11 anniversary, rather than sympathy, since the Saudis allegedly funded the 9/11 hijackers. The tweet concludes with the phrase "let them all die", which indicates a resentful stance towards the Saudis and results in establishing a hate discourse:

Example 88 How fitting that the crane collapses in Mecca on 9/11 since the Saudis funded the hijackers. Let them all die.

Further, tweets refer to the 9/11 attacks and refer to the number of Saudis involved in the attacks, either by using quantifying words (most, many, all, majority), or by referring to the number of hijackers, which is mentioned differently by tweets (e.g. 11, 15, 17, 18, 20), which stresses the Saudis' responsibility for the attacks. In fact, recalling the 9/11 events prompts tweets to represent Saudis adversely: tweets oppose the war on Iraq and Afghanistan (24 tweets), as well as the sanctions imposed on Iran (10 tweets), because, as alleged in the tweets, none of the citizens of these countries was involved in the attacks. Instead, tweets stress the Saudis' 'sole' accountability for the 9/11 attacks. Associating Saudis with *hijackers* in the FCT triggered violent reactions, such as recommending bombing the Saudis after the

attacks (example 89 below). Such violent discourse can be an indication of the effects of negative media stereotypes of Saudis on online public discourse. For example:

Example 89 One should "never Forget" the find out Truth behind 9/11. Why Saudis were not bombed when most Hijackers were Saudis

5.2.4. Sunnis, Wahhabis: Saudis in the religious sphere

Keywords in the RELIGION category tend to classify Saudis on a rather 'extreme' scale in relation to their religion, *Islam*, or their religious identity being *Muslim*, such as *Wahhabi* and *Sunni*, which are used as premodifiers with Saudis in the FCT.

Islam (330:1,496) is one of the top keywords in the five corpora, along with *Islamic*. However, a search for the lemma ISLAM found other forms, such as "Islamism", "Islamist", "Islamification", "Islamization" and "Islamophobia". Tweets in the FCT use "Islamism" and "Islamist" to refer to Saudis' religious identity, which is either extremist or used as a disguise, whereas "Islamophobia" refers to how the Saudis use the term to defend themselves against any criticism or to cover up practising terrorism. "Islamisation" and "Islamification" are used in tweets to warn against Saudis plans to spread Islam into Europe through funding mosques in Australia (Section 7.3), or by building mosques for refugees in Germany (Section 5.2.1.2). The significance of *Islam* as a keyword arises from the fact that Saudi Arabia is considered to be the birthplace of Islam and the site of two sacred cities of Mecca and Medina (see Section 2.3.5). However, a question that might be raised here is how Saudis are represented in relation to *Islam*, and vice versa, and to what extent this

relationship can project positive or negative representations, or both. To answer these questions, I utilise concordance analysis to examine Saudis and *Islam* in context.

In fact, *Islam* collocates with Saudis in 202 tweets: this attribution posits Islam as either a victim of the Saudis, in an asymmetrical status (both are associated positively or negatively, 43 tweets), in a different status with one being negative and the other positive (46 tweets), or finally the relationship of both is neutral, having neither positive nor negative implications (see Table 5-2, below).

| | Victim | Equal | | Different | | Neutral |
|------------|--------|------------|------------|------------|------------|---------|
| Evaluation | — | Positively | Negatively | Positively | Negatively | |
| Tweets | 65 | 40 | 8 | 35 | 11 | 43 |
| | 32% | 19.8% | 3.9% | 17% | 5% | 21% |
| Total | 202 | | | | | |

Table 5-2: Collocation of Islam and Saudis in the FCT

In Table 5-2, above, Islam is mostly represented in the tweets as a victim of Saudis in material processes that represent Islam as "hijacked" (three tweets), "killed" (four tweets), "sold" (two tweets), "ruined" (four tweets), "left" (two tweets) or exported by the Saudis. Other tweets (23.7%) present the Saudis and Islam in an equal partnership, either positively (e.g. misrepresented by the media) or negatively (e.g. both encourage rape). Other tweets (22%) present Saudis and Islam as dissimilar, Islam is presented either positively (e.g. Saudis are not the real Islam) or negatively (e.g. presenting Islam as responsible for adverse outcomes and not the Saudis), whereas 21 per cent of the tweets present Saudis and Islam in a neutral relationship, without positive or

negative connotations. Example tweets for the Saudis-Islam relationship are introduced respectively as follows:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| Example 90 | Saudis have hijacked Islam. Most ppl now think the term Saudi Arabia is synonymous with Islam. Saudis Do NOT represent the Muslims, get it? |
| Example 91 | The Saudis have succeeded in making Islam into a scary doctrine, on how Saudis manipulate the world |
| Example 92 | Saudis follow Islam and Islam means peace. Ahmadiyya Times: India: Saudi diplomat accused of gang-rapes in |
| Example 93 | New... Saudis n rape? Nah! They're the real Islam! |
| Example 94 | It's not Iranians or Iraqis or Saudis or Hamas or Gazans or AlQaeda or ISIS. It's all quite simply ISLAM. |
| Example 95 | Reason Saudis won't take them is wrong. Study Hijra other way Muslims want to spread Islam. Saudis espouse it. |

In these examples, tweets reflect on the association of Saudis with Islam, which is presented as an agentless victim (90-91) that is "hijacked" and vandalised, turning into a "scary doctrine", by the Saudis. The tweets allege that Saudis have their own (corrupt) version of Islam which is deviant and scary, challenging other people who assume that the Saudis represent the real Islam. Other tweets, however, depict both the Saudis and Islam as vile and threatening; tweets associate the issue of Saudis not taking refugees with a conspiracy to spread Islam in Europe, which evokes a sense of threat to the West through Islamophobic (Ekman, 2015) and Saudiphobic discourses.

The second word in this category is *Wahhabi* (91:650),⁹ which is also one of the top hundred keywords, along with *Wahhabism* (122:794); it functions as a premodifier of Saudis in the FCT. Other forms of *Wahhabi* include "Wahhabist", "Wahhabis", "Wahhabism" and "Wahhabilism", which denote the different ways in

⁹ It was taken into consideration the various spelling variations of 'Wahhabi' in the corpora, such as 'Wahabi', 'Wahabbi', 'Wahhab', and 'Wahhabbi'.

which tweets associate Saudis with Wahhabi thought (see section 4.2.6 for the origin of the term). In fact, "extremist" and "terrorist(s)" are collocates that modify *Wahhabi*, which suggests a negative discourse prosody of (dangerous) strong beliefs and violence. Conflating *Wahhabi* with terrorism is also manifest in tweets as users deploy nomination and predicational strategies with which they pre-modify Saudis.

Wahhabi collocates with Saudis in 55 tweets, 15 tweets are in complex phrases with negative modifiers, such as "terror spreading", "extremist" and "terrorists", which carry a negative discourse prosody of criminality and suggest an approach that is not only Islamic but a rather dangerous extremist one. The following examples present *Wahhabi* with Saudis, including complex premodifying phrases:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Example 96 | M East is not the whole world of Muslims as M East is in Turmoil bcos of Wahhabi Saudis who are arming and funding Terror for USA |
| Example 97 | Someone tell me why we should not hate those who preach that we are subhuman, the Wahhabi Saudis? |
| Example 98 | No mistake. *surgical strike* to kill one man that #Wahhabi extremist Saudis wanted dead. Too bad about the others |
| Example 99 | The Wahhabi/terror spreading Saudis should face a military option in my view.... |
| Example 100 | Seriously wondering if some in west are working 2 keep war going to keep selling weapons to Wahhabi Islamist Saudis |

Modifying Saudis with *Wahhabi* is negative in all occurrences of the term. For instance, in the first tweet, the user refers to the Middle East as being in chaos because of Wahhabi Saudis who support and fund USA terror. However, in examples 98, 99 and 100, *Wahhabi* is further attached to other modifiers, such as "Islamist", "terror spreading", "extremist" and "Sunni". Although *Islamist* and *Sunni* are not negative in their own sense, the context in which they collocate with Saudis is a negative one. This negative association of *Wahhabi* with Saudis indicates a prejudiced discourse,

whereby the collocation of *Wahhabi* with other modifiers implies a discourse of intolerance, such as the phrase "why we should not hate". Other tweets urge serious action against the Saudis, such as the phrase "should face a military option".

Another keyword in the religion category is *Sunni*; tweets use the term to either refer to Saudis being Sunnis who follow the Sunni doctrine (opposite to the Shiites), or to refer to other groups which embrace the Sunni doctrine. In the latter case, this includes either negative references to social groups, such as "Sunni extremists", or neutral connotations, such as "Sunni nations/ Muslims". The association of *Sunni* (157:957) with Saudis triggers negative representations, except in two tweets. This negative depiction is manifested through the premodification of *Sunni* in complex phrases, such as "Sunni Wahhabi", "Wahhabist Sunnis", "Sunni Islamists", "Sunni flagbearers" and "Sunni fanatic", all of which place Saudis on a scale of an extreme form of Islam. In addition, when *Sunni* co-occurs with Saudis (82:155), it serves to promote two main points, to condemn the Saudis for joining the UNHRC (38 tweets), or their destruction and killing of civilians (35 tweets). For instance:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Example 101 | Exactly It is ironical that UN made Sunni fanatic Saudis as Human rights chief UN has lost its credibility long ago |
| Example 102 | Really? What about the Sunni flag bearer Saudis? |

According to Dunn (2001), negative constructions of Muslims, such as "fanatics", have been widely circulated in Western media, along with "fundamentalists", "intolerant" and "militants", and these constructions have "had centuries of articulation in the West (p. 291). He also asserts that these negative stereotypes can

maintain "durability" through repetition, and that "[in] a sedimentary-like process the reinscription of social constructions (Muslims as fanatical...) can come to be widely accepted as unproblematic, and as a natural given" (p. 292). Given that Saudis are also constructed as "fanatical", "extremists" and "terror spreading" in tweets can be linked to their negative 'repeated' constructions in the media. These negative stereotypes are consequently reintroduced on Twitter.

However, among 82 tweets which negatively conflate Saudis with *Sunni*, there is one tweet that carries a positive representation. This is a Saudi tweet, referring to a collaged image and encapsulating different photos of Saudi scouts and officers during the Hajj season while helping pilgrims and organising the event (Figure 5-4, below).



Figure 5-4: Positive tweet on the collocation of Saudis and *Sunni*

The tweet comments on this image by asserting the reality of the Saudi identity as authentic Muslim and Sunni (helpful and compassionate to others). The tweet uses images from the Hajj season with Saudi officers and scouts helping elderly pilgrims and children and organising the flow of pilgrims while performing their rituals. The tweet uses these collaged images to postulate a true image of Saudis (in parentheses) and refer to their religious identity as Muslim and Sunnis to stress their reality as compassionate and kind. This tweet, through interdiscursivity, represents Saudis positively through these images and highlights their religious identity as Muslim and Sunni to argue against negative portrayals associated with both terms. This tweet forms a counter-discourse (Causse, 2006) which defies existing negative depictions of Saudis regarding the stampede.

As for agency, a transitivity analysis reveals that Sunnis (plural form) are assigned passive roles and represented as victims of the Saudis in 20 tweets. In this case, tweets seem to recognise Sunnis as a different group who are being exploited by the Saudis. This includes material processes (11 tweets) such as "radicalised", "laid back", "criticize" and "fight", which suggests that there are other Sunni groups who are being oppressed by Saudis, such as in the following tweets:

Example 103

Its war on Sunnis by Wahhabi Saudis.

Example 104

Shame on Saudis too for radicalizing the Sunnis!

In these examples, tweets present Sunnis as a different group who are being exploited by Saudis, though both belong to nominally the same doctrine. In this respect, Sunnis are represented as an 'other' (victimised) group, whereas the Saudis are a negative outgroup who practise abusive power over the other, less empowered group.

5.2.5. Rich but filthy: Saudis and oil

Another topic highlighted in the FCT relates Saudis to oil; *oil* is among the top hundred keywords (836:4,032), and a collocate of Saudis (374:534). Oil represents a historical bond with Saudis, since Saudi Arabia is one of the world's largest oil reservoirs, possessing 18 per cent of the world's oil (OPEC, 2019).

Examining the concordance of *oil* shows that tweets focus on two main points: how the possession of oil empowers Saudis, and their manipulation of oil prices which is often referred to as a "war of oil prices". Further concordance analysis of *oil* revealed some consistent collocates of Saudis, such as "prices" (178 tweets), "war" (51 tweets), "market" (47 tweets), "winning" (47 tweets), "shale" (44 tweets), "money" (31 tweets), "cheap" (24 tweets) and "want" (23 tweets).

The first point which connects *oil* with Saudis concerns their exploitation of oil to maintain their power: tweets assume that oil allows Saudis to control the West and support ISIS and AlQaeda. For instance, tweets argue that possessing oil entitles Saudis to maintain their violent actions and provides them with immunity (by the West) and power with which they can abuse others (64 tweets). For instance:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Example 105 | Saudis will enslave them & abuse them they will have no rights it is Totalitarian regime accepted by WEST b/c of oil |
| Example 106 | Saudis behead = oh no we didn't see that. Where's all the cheap oil at? |
| Example 107 | why is the US / Canada allied with the fundamentalist Salafist Saudis, when they are so unapologetically oppressive? Oil alone? |

In these examples, the tweets present Saudis negatively by associating them with violent attitudes toward other groups, such as Syrian refugees. The tweets allege that

Saudis "enslave" and "abuse" Syrian refugees and deprive them of their rights (if they take them in), as well as behead people unlawfully. However, Saudis are not condemned or charged by the West because they have oil. Tweets deploy negative predicates, such as "Totalitarian regime", "fundamentalist Salafist" or "unapologetically oppressive", as a negative other-presentation strategy (van Dijk, 1999) to highlight the negative qualities of Saudis and, consequently, represent them as a vile, other group who exploit oil to act against others.

Gaining power with oil is also linked to terrorism, through backing ISIS (20 tweets) and AlQaeda (two tweets). In this respect, Saudis are represented as funding and supporting both ISIS and AlQaeda without being condemned or held responsible due to their possession of oil. Oil, as perceived in the tweets, confers power and immunity on the Saudis at the expense of others' security and safety through funding terrorist groups. For example:

- Example 108 No one seems to care that the Saudis fund ISIS and AlQaeda because oil and the arms industry are more important
- Example 109 Read between the lines. It's the Saudis who are bankrolling ISIS. You know, our oil rich chums - mustn't cross them!
- Example 110 Saudi also arms ISIS & Al Qaeda & is fuelling war in Syria. Our oil dollars help fund these groups

Possessing oil is another way that tweets use to associate Saudis with terrorism and supporting terrorist groups. This issue posits Saudis as a source of insecurity and danger stemming from their financial support of terrorist groups and postulates Saudis' possession of oil as hazardous and threatening. Tweets also suggest a conspiracy between the Saudis and some Western countries, which includes, besides

supporting ISIS and AlQaeda, arms deals and "fuelling" the war in Syria, which are ignored by the West because of oil.

The second point which connects Saudis with oil is the manipulation of oil prices (180 tweets) – conflating oil prices with Saudis centres mostly on their control over "oil prices" and how this serves to maintain (in some cases reduce) their power and control. Lowering the price of oil is also labelled as a war launched by the Saudis: out of 75 tweets about the oil war, 27 refer to "war on oil prices". Other tweets (42) include "winning" as a material process in which Saudis are active agents and winners of the oil battle. Saudis are also depicted as "winning" (42 tweets) and "expanding" (4 tweets) their war on "shale oil price(s)" and represented as active agents in 52 tweets. This manipulation of oil prices is manifested through material processes, such as "cutting", "tweak", "jawbone", "drop", "drive down" and "lower", which signify exploitation and deliberate will. For instance:

- Example 111 Saudis Expand Oil Price War - #GoogleAlerts
- Example 112 The Saudis are winning their war on shale oil, though at a massive cost to their foreign reserves.
- Example 113 Saudis tweak crude prices lower in a move that could set up a shaky week for crude and refined products in the U.S.
- Example 114 The Saudis were supposedly retaliating against the Russkis by flooding the market w/ oil 2 drive the price down

Controlling oil prices is portrayed by tweets as threatening, such as describing it as a "war" (examples 111 and 112). Lowering the price of oil is deemed by tweets to be deliberate and cunning, as it will lead to affecting crude oil and other production companies in the US and other countries (example 113). In example 114, however, the tweet uses the metaphor "flooding" to describe how the Saudis react to the

Russians by offering oil in excessive amounts to lower oil prices. Using a water metaphor, "flooding", as in examples 52 and 53, involves an evaluative strategy with a topos of threat and danger (Hart, 2008), which depict Saudis as a manipulative out-group.

However, in representing Saudis with oil, tweets also deploy nomination strategies which dehumanise them, serving a negative discourse prosody of insignificance and unworthiness. Tweets use negative terms to link Saudis negatively with oil possession, such as referring to Saudis as "those pigs", "fracking", "backward", "pig-ignorant", "stupid", "the despicable". In addition, other predicational strategies depict Saudis as insignificant and only having value because of oil, such as "nomads", "Bedouins" (bedwins), as well as lacking human rights and terrorism. For example:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Example 115 | Why, why won't the world boycott the despicable Saudis? All for oil? |
| Example 116 | We wouldn't give these backward, pig-ignorant Saudis house room if they didn't have oil. |
| Example 117 | I disagree. Yemenis have always been Yemenis. Saudis were nomads and bedouins b4 oil. Hold on am trying to find u something |
| Example 118 | Human rights protection depends on those who promote human rights, Saudis have nothing to offer except oil, terrorism |

In these examples, tweets deploy discursive strategies to present Saudis in association with oil. These strategies include nomination strategies which represent Saudis in terms of intolerance, such as "despicable", and barbarism, such as "backward", "pig-ignorant", and predication strategies to link them with primitivity, such as "nomads" and "bedouins". Although "nomads" and "bedouins" are not negative in their meanings, associating them with Saudis and oil suggests negative connotations. The

tweet in example 117 argues against another tweet which compares Saudis to Yemenis. The tweet asserts that Yemenis have a long history in civilisation, whereas the Saudis were nomads until they discovered oil, and thus presents Saudis as 'nouveau riche'. In example 118, the tweet condemns allowing the Saudis into the UNHRC and claims that they do not endorse human rights, but instead offer oil and terrorism. The tweet here recontextualises this issue through disqualifying the Saudis for an absence of human rights and connecting them with terrorism to oppose allowing the Saudis into the UNHRC.

5.3. Summary and Discussion

The aim of this chapter was to answer RQ-1 *How are Saudis represented across the five corpora?* This chapter has also focused on discussing the main keywords that are common in the FCT, using keywords and concordance analyses. These keywords have been categorised into themes adapted from the main categories in Chapter 4.

The dominant themes about Saudis in the FCT that resulted from keyword and concordance analyses are highly interrelated, resulting in a hegemonic, blunt Saudiphobic discourse on Twitter which revolves around one central topic: Saudis are a threat. This interrelation of themes in the FCT serves two objectives. First, tweets reinstate existing negative stereotypes of Saudis through associating past events, such as their involvement in the 9/11 attacks. Second, tweets warn against (foreseen) threats to Western societies, such as allowing the Saudis into the UNHRC, and their plans to build mosques for refugees in Europe, which are alleged to breed terrorists. More specifically, tweets depict Saudis as follows:

- Terrorists: adopting a radical ideology, funding terrorism, terrorist groups and mosques to breed terrorists

- Violent: crucifying and beheading people, sexually abusing women, committing war crimes against innocents
- Sexist: oppressing women and treating other Muslim groups with racist attitudes

These negative depictions did not originate in a political or societal vacuum: many of these depictions are echoed in existing Western media representations of Muslims. Törnberga & Törnberga (2016) state that “Muslims are frequently represented as fundamentalist, terrorist, sexist, militant, undemocratic, violent and fanatical” (p. 140). In studies on the representation of Islam and Muslims in the press after the 11th of September attacks, "Islamist", "terrorist", "extremist" and "fanatic" were found to collocate with Muslims (Hussain & Sherif, 2014; Massey & Tatla, 2016; Moore et al., 2008). Similarly, in associating *Islam* with Saudis in the FCT, these extremist terms are reintroduced on Twitter, echoing perhaps a similar, xenophobic discourse about Saudis as Muslims and as embracers of Islam, pointing to “what the press sees as a problem: radical Islam” (McEnery et al., 2015, p. 245). The term "fanatic", for instance, exists across the corpora in different forms: "fanatics", "fanatical" and "fanaticism". Tweets use these terms, along with "Sunni", "Wahhabi" and "extremist", to connect Saudis to extreme (dangerous) beliefs which are alarming and threatening to Western societies (Ekman, 2015).

Similarly, representing refugees and immigrants as a problem for the West has been highlighted in media research (Baker et al., 2008; Baker & McEnery, 2005; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; KhosraviNik, 2009, 2010b; Moore et al., 2008). Refugees and immigrants are represented as problematic and a national threat/ danger to the West (KhosraviNik, 2009; Pickering, 2008). Tweets’ perceptions of refugees seem to correspond to those views expressed earlier in mainstream media, as they were

represented as problematic and threatening to the West when associated with mosques. Saudis are represented as a source of threat via their alleged plans to build mosques for Syrian refugees in Europe. This issue is seen as an alarming act by tweets which assume that these mosques can be production places (factories) to breed terrorists.

I would, hence, argue for a cumulative effect of (mass) media promoting a Saudiphobic discourse and negative stereotypes of Saudis on Twitter since, and perhaps prior to, the 9/11 attacks in 2001, for the following reasons:

- Negative reporting of the Saudis' role in the wars in Yemen and Syria
- Stressing the Saudis' responsibility for the 9/11 attacks
- Associating the Saudis with the refugee crisis, which is already problematic in media studies

These negative stereotypes of Saudis in the media can be attributed to earlier Orientalist representations of Arabs and Muslims which focused on othering the Arab world (Altwaiji, 2014). According to Abdulhadi, Alsultany, and Naber (2011), various forms of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab (historical) racism:

[A]re constituted by a racialized, Orientalist mind-set that constructs Arabs and Muslims as enemies of the "West." Such [a] mind-set is but a continuation of centuries of Orientalism, or what Edward Said defines as the assumption of a "basic distinction between East and West as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny, and so on" that facilitate settling, ruling, and having authority over it. Combined with the Orientalist

imaginary ... Christian concepts of culture or civilization exclude Islam (and other religious beliefs) and enable the construction of Arabs and Muslims as backward, barbaric, misogynist, sexually savage, and sexually repressive. (p. xxiii)

These negative stereotypes have found their way into mainstream media that normalise a prototypical imagery of Arabs and Muslims as evil terrorists, sometimes driven by political and personal agendas. Moviemakers, for instance, are willing to perpetuate hate and “continue to indict Arabs on movie screens for as long as unjust images are tolerated” (Shaheen, 2003, p. 189). Consequently, media consumers are likely to be exposed to recurring negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims (as well as others), which can ultimately shape their conception and ideologies of others, and eventually their acceptance and tolerance of others.

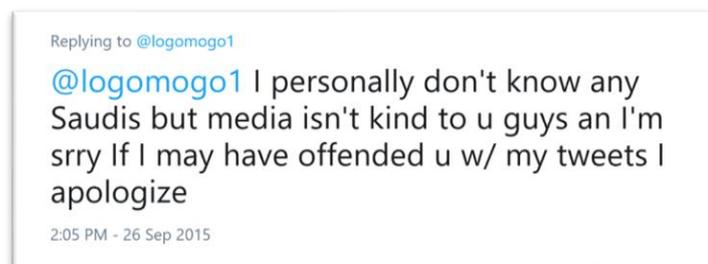
What is alarming is that promoting such xenophobic discourse and adverse stereotypes can lead to fuelling Saudiphobia and racism against Saudis (as in examples 88, 97, 99). As Ekman (2015) states, Islamophobic discourse can lead to “street politics and the use of violence ... The politics of fear manufactured by [online Islamophobic discourse] is reflected in the increasing use of violence against European Muslims” (p. 1998). In fact, this negative typology of Saudis and Muslims in the media can incite offline violent attitudes and hate crimes. As mentioned earlier, in Chapter 1, several hate and religious-motivated crimes have been committed against Saudis in Europe, America and Australia. For instance, the murder of the Saudi student Nahid Almana in 2014 in Colchester, Essex was reported by the British police to be a possible religious hate crime. Duggan (2014) quotes the police, stating that Nahid’s “distinctive clothing is a key line of inquiry and contributed to the possibility that the "frenzied" attack was religiously motivated”. Flaming hate speech

and promoting negative stereotypes in media outlets can result in aggressive and serious actions being applied against the negatively-presented group (see section 2.4.4.2), such as in the following tweet which resents the Saudis' plan to build mosques for refugees instead of taking them in, threatening ultimately to "burn them all down", referring to mosques built by the Saudis:

Example 119 Saudis are offering to build 200 mosques in Germany. No wonder they're not taking refugees. If it were up to me i'd burn them all down

In fact, media involvement in the representations of Saudis on Twitter is expressed by a tweet in which the tweeter's prejudiced stance against Saudis is prompted not by what the s/he has experienced, but rather by what has been presented through the media:

Example 120



Chapter 6. The discursive strategies used in representing Saudis in the FCT

6.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to answer RQ-3 *What discursive strategies are employed by tweets in the representation of Saudis?* by exploring the collocates of Saudis in the FCT. To do this, I utilised the same tool used for Keywords, i.e. WordSmith. However, WordSmith generated thousands of collocates (6,677), most of which were function words so numerous and varied in their patterns, and cotext dependent, that, individually, each could present thousands of potential avenues of investigation. Understanding and analysing collocates well requires extensive analysis of their concordance lines so that their context and cotext can be taken into careful consideration. Thus, to undertake a manageable and systematic analysis, only the top 20 lexical collocates are investigated.

The analysis includes lexical patterns that tend to collocate with Saudis, as opposed to keywords that are prominent due to comparisons between the five corpora. However, some of these collocates have already been discussed in the previous chapter (e.g. *Yemen, terrorist, bomb*), as they were part of the top keyword categories in the FCT. Also, the collocates list included different forms of the same lemma, such as *bomb, bombing, bombed, bombs*, which were examined during the keywords analysis stage. However, upon further inspection of these words through collocation, I found out that they associated similar themes generated through keywords analysis and consequently triangulated the findings in Chapter 5. Hence, and to avoid repetition, only words not addressed in the previous chapter are examined here.

Collocates are calculated within a span of ± 5 left and right of the node, as significant lexical collocations tend to occur within these limits (Section 3.4.4). Log-

likelihood (LL) and Mutual Information (MI) measures are also used in assessing the strength of the collocates (see Section 3.4.4). The resulting collocates are examined and then categorised based on their cotext meanings. These collocates are represented in Table 6-1, below:¹⁰

| Category | | Collocates |
|------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Processes | Mental | <i>think, know, love, hate</i> |
| | Material | <i>helping, get, make, treat</i> |
| | Relational | <i>are</i> |
| Attributive predicates | | <i>friends, allies, rich, wealthy</i> |
| Modality | | <i>should, can, must</i> |
| Quantifiers | | <i>many, some, most</i> |
| Other | | <i>women</i> |

Table 6-1: Top 20 lexical collocates of Saudis in the FCT

Examining Table 6-1 shows that the process and attributive predicate categories contain the highest numbers of collocates of Saudis. These processes refer to collocates involving transitivity, such as verbs, in which Saudis are assigned grammatical roles (as participants), such as mental, e.g. *think, love*, material, e.g. *get, helping*, and relational processes, e.g. *are*. The attributive predicates category contains collocates that are either attributive, occurring to the left of the node (e.g. *wealthy Saudis*), or predicative, occurring to the right after a copula verb (e.g. *Saudis are rich*). Addressing these collocates is carried out in two ways: first, colligation analysis (Section 6.2) can be helpful particularly in the investigation of the roles that Saudis

¹⁰ A detailed list of the collocates of *Saudis* are found in Appendix F.

tend to play as social actors. Second, collocations, in which the remaining three categories, Modality, Quantifiers, and Other, which include lexical collocates with Saudis, are analysed in detail in Section 6.3.

6.2. Lexical colligation: Transitivity and verb processes

One way to address RQ-3 is by examining the grammatical features in which tweets represent Saudis as participants. Through colligation, the parts of speech in which Saudis are assigned grammatical roles are investigated; this facilitates locating how Saudis are represented through different grammatical patterns using transitivity analysis. Transitivity can also offer important insights into the different ways in which tweets represent Saudis, as well as the grammatical roles in which they act as participants. One of the grammatical categories is verb processes in which Saudis function as the objects of verbs: these include the following processes: mental, such as *think, know, love, hate*, and material, such as *support, helping, give*. Saudis also function in subject positions, in relational processes, such as (be) *are*, and material processes, such as *get, make, treat*. In relational processes, the verb *are* functions as either an auxiliary (or equative) expressing verb processes, e.g. "Saudis are killing", or an attributive process, e.g. "Saudis are barbaric". The following subsections conduct a transitivity analysis of verb processes (sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2) and predicative adjectives (Section 6.2.3).

6.2.1. Saudis as objects in verb processes

In mental processes where Saudis are the object of a process (verb), tweets deploy their senses to represent or reflect upon Saudis, exemplified by the cognitive processes *think* (252 tweets) and *know* (280 tweets), as well as the emotive *hate* (96 tweets) and *love* (34 tweets). Tweeters, through these mental processes, employ the

discursive strategy of perspectivisation, a strategy which, according to Wodak (2009a), allows “speakers [to] express their involvement in the discourse, and position their point of view in the reporting, description, narration or quotation of relevant events or utterances” (p. 42). Using *think* and *know* enables users to position themselves in relation to Saudis’ performance. It can also reveal the type of knowledge and/or appraisal that tweets share or intend to share with others about Saudis. Whereas *hate* and *love* are emotive processes used to express emotions and strong sentiments (see Figure 6-1).

heard was ammunitions deal...!! God *knows* the Saudis aren't the first problematic, questionable here this is so funny 3shan i *know* there are black saudis im not saudi? yaaah right:S Saudis bunch of dunk . My comment was sarcastic keeping in view the Saudis suffocating situation *Think* of it. You believe , proposes to bomb Syria and sell arms to the Saudis ? *Thought* not I suppose the question is: would English is horrible Your dislike and *hate* for Saudis is quite clear, and it's apparent that you will ne but I don't speak Arabic so I don't *know* ? These Saudis are root cause of terrorism in whole middle east accent? I love saudis i swear ya5iiii💎💎 I *love* Saudis man I love Saudis ok 💎💎 they can come to bahrain give way, break lines, push others. I *hate* the Saudis ... Personally I think they are a waste of space stuff needed to take on air defences. I *think* the Saudis have the Brits beat. This new arms (face?) race terrorists is through Turkey We *know* the Saudis paid and trained Bin Laden... but oil, you see. is closer to ours! Those who *think* the Saudis are humane, should ask Yemenis. ": #Saudi of the Bush family...weird how they *love* the Saudis but all others a threat? I think an inquiry would obvious that the Saudis have Oil prices make Saudis *think* before spending #DYK #OPEC Oil prices . Saudis are too embedded. I don't *think* the Saudis will be happy with the name of their country. I do USA brutality primitivism ignorance. We *love* Saudis . They are our stooges Insightful article about nothing to do with a peace deal? I *thought* the Saudis have managed to contain the Russians I thought US guilty of war crimes for selling weapons to Saudis that they *know* are being used on Yemeni Saudis Of course No justice, don't you *know* the Saudis are never guilty. They have OIL #tytlive Of

Figure 6-1: Concordance of *think*, *know*, *love*, *hate*

The processes of both *think* (252:3.25)¹¹ and *know* (280:3.43) are significant as they present users' opinions and estimated knowledge and, consequently, the representation of Saudis in the FCT. Tweets use the verb *think* with Saudis mainly to discuss the themes of war, terror and violence (60 tweets), and immorality and corruption (183 tweets), whereas nine tweets carry positive meanings. The sensors in

¹¹ The collocation value is represented by the notation (frequency: MI score) and will henceforth be used throughout the chapter to save on space.

mental processes are personal pronouns, such as “I” (113 tweets), “we” (25 tweets) and “you” (59 tweets), the latter suggesting a conversational thread. By using the process *think*, tweets deploy the strategy of perspectivisation which is realised by deixis (I, we, you), as it positions the users' point of view through the expression of involvement, e.g. “I *think* Saudis are barbaric”, “you *think* Saudis are Wahhabi”. Other tweets also express others’ involvement by quoting other social actors, such as “HMG *thinking* Saudis are allies” and “Bernie Sanders *thinks* the Saudis should kill more”.

Similarly, tweets use the process *know* to link Saudis to war, violence and terrorism (71 tweets), and immorality and corruption (209 tweets). Through the process *think*, tweets also deploy a strategy of perspectivisation realised by the deixis of involvement “I” (90 tweets), e.g. “I *know* Saudis are not innocent”, and “you” (50 tweets), e.g. “you *know* the Saudis are never guilty”, as well as the passive voice “Saudis are *known*” (20 tweets), e.g. “Saudis are *known* to be medieval”. The resulting predicates of both processes are shown in Table 6-2, below.

| Topic | Predicates | |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| | <i>think</i> * | <i>know</i> * |
| War | hijacked Islam, benefit from war (Yemen), did it (Yemen war), not taking Syrian refugees, can't win Syrian war, brutally attacking Yemen, kill innocents, kill more people, holding international probe (Yemen war) | benefit from war deliberately targeting civilians, |
| Terror & violence | supporting Wahhabism/Salafism, like ISIS, Wahhabis cult, promote ISIS, carryout barbarism, despicably barbaric, financing 200 mosques in Germany, alliance with ISIS, adopting terrorist refugees, barbaric, danger to Islam, uphold human rights, cause Hajj problem | fund ISIS/AlQaeda, paid/trained Bin Laden, death to us all, fund terror groups, racist to their own kind, funding 9/11, choppers, mistreating their maids, fund rebels, medieval beasts, Islamising Europe, mistreat foreign workers, not counselling rape victims, inhumane ways of life |
| Immorality & corruption | most evil people on earth, allies, bribing (arm deals), too lazy to lift cranes, lying about refugees, behead UN, owning UNHRC, owning Twitter stake, inhuman, diplomatic immune | never guilty, overwhelmed with burning issues, cryptic Jews, don't revere white people, compulsive liars, paid their way to Human Rights panel, ignorant, not caring, dealing in blood money |

Table 6-2: Predicative attributes of Saudis with the collocates *think* and *know*

In Table 6-2 above, the predicative strategies triggered by the verbs *think* and *know* are mostly negative. Both verbs associate Saudis with issues of war (e.g. killing innocents and targeting civilians), terrorism and violence (e.g. promoting ISIS, funding 9/11, Islamising Europe, barbaric) and immorality and corruption (e.g. compulsive liars, paid their way to the UNHRC). For example:

- Example 121 When I think Saudis I will remember all the days and nights they brutally attacked Yemens people this year destroying everything.!
- Example 122 Everyone knows Saudis fund ISIS. So why Muslim-hatred instead, cause no one can criticize Saudis, not even media.
- Example 123 I think the Saudis are the most evil people on earth. I'm pretty sure they knew about, financed, and helped plan 9/11.
- Example 124 the more I know about Saudis the more unsympathetic

Through the mental processes of both *think* and *know*, tweets reflect on the ways in which they perceive Saudis according to some pre-existing or acquired knowledge. In other words, tweets use *think* and *know* to assert certain information or qualities that Saudis are alleged to possess, such as "brutally" destroying Yemen, funding ISIS, being the evilest people on earth, planning 9/11 and being non-deserving of any sympathy. Tweets deploy an 'other' negative presentation, which reinforces negative stances and perceptions of Saudis. In example 121, for instance, the tweet stresses the Saudis' brutality in Yemen as a 'constant' portrayal in the user's opinion. In example 122, the tweet blames the Saudis for initiating hatred towards Muslims. It also affirms global knowledge that Saudis fund ISIS to argue that Saudis should be the subject of hatred, not Muslims. The tweet here constructs Muslims as a separate group who suffer hate crimes initiated by the Saudis. It also depicts Saudis as a vile and powerful group, protected against any criticism, even from the media. In the last example (124), the tweet argues that any further knowledge of the Saudis triggers only 'unsympathetic' feelings towards them. Such negative perceptions can be alarming if they are acted on or practised offline. Patton, Pyrooz, Decker, Frey, and Leonard (2019) state that profound "evidence suggests that social media can exacerbate tensions among [users] that ultimately lead to violence" (p. 205). According to Awan (2014, p. 134), if online cyberhate and Islamophobic discourse are promoted and not confronted in social media, they can "lead to an escalation of online abuse and the normalization of such behavior, including physical attacks". For the victims of anti-Muslim hostility, it is "often difficult to isolate the online threats from the intimidation, violence and abuse that they suffer offline" (Awan & Zempi, 2016, p. 1).

There are a few tweets, however, which carry positive sentiments, nine with *think* and five with *know*. These tweets defend the Saudis against claims of

destabilising the region (example 125) and exploiting pilgrims' money (example 126), as in the following tweets:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Example 125 | she definitely knows the Saudis play an important role in keeping the region safe. |
| Example 126 | it's for the holy mosque expansion. Do u seriously think that Saudis are doing this for the money?! Be fair once, for god sake |

Using both the mental processes in the examples above serves to fortify positive stances towards Saudis by challenging the negative perspectives of other tweets. However, the overall collocation of *think* and *know* with Saudis tends to have a negative discourse prosody, linking their knowledge and perception of Saudis to similar negative depictions recurring in Chapter 5. What tweeters think (96%) and know (97%) about Saudis mainly portrays them adversely, echoing themes of war crimes, terrorism support and abuse of wealth and power.

The emotive processes *love* and *hate* carry similar representations of *think* and *know*. Both verbs concern the expression of emotions and strong sentiments, and although both processes present juxtaposed sentiments and feelings, when collocating Saudis, both processes exhibit similar sentiments, i.e. extreme negative feelings towards Saudis. Examining the concordance of *love* (136:3.64) shows that tweets do not only express sentiments which they like about Saudis (19 tweets), but also use *love* to postulate negative stances (57 tweets). When used in a positive sense, tweets express love towards Saudis themselves or to some external qualities they possess, such as their accent and their blogs. In fact, these are to Arab tweets, mainly from Bahrain and Egypt. For example:

- Example 127 What is your impression on Saudis? — I love their accent!! And they're the nicest people, love them!...
- Example 128 I really love Saudis' blogs on Tumblr

Alternatively, 75 per cent of the tweets tend to use *love* to refer to Saudis negatively, by disapproving and questioning others' love for them and countering their (Saudis') terrorism, violence, Al-Nimr crucifixion, wealth and oil. Love, in this sense, is ironic and is used by tweets to mock either aligning with the Saudis or turning a blind eye to their violent actions, for instance:

- Example 129 OK, I'm appalled: where is the outcry? Oh yeah, we love the Saudis – they have oil.
- Example 130 Love the Saudis."@BostonGlobe: Saudi national who attended college in Indiana allegedly used lewd pictures to blackmail Danvers teenager
- Example 131 leftist liberals love Saudis. Obama bows down to them. I don't have a problem wiping them out.

In example 129, the tweet uses *love* in a sarcastic manner to intertextually associate Saudis with the crucifixion of Al-Nimr. The tweet mocks the US government for its silence over the crucifixion of Al-Nimr, as in "where is the outcry", and uses the process of *love* mockingly. Love serves to support the tweet's negative stance, which also links Saudis with oil. The tweet uses the deictic "we" to stress collective involvement and position the user's negative viewpoint vis-à-vis Saudis, which entails an 'Us' versus 'Them' discourse (van Dijk, 1997). The tweet negatively associates Saudis with the US through the process of *love* to condemn the US' silence over crucifying Al-Nimr, thus rendering the current context of *love* material and false, existing only because of oil. In example 130, the tweet uses *love* sarcastically to point

to an incident reported by the Boston Globe¹² account about a Saudi student alleged to have blackmailed a teenager through sexual pictures. The tweet implements irony through the process of *love* which is challenged in relation to the reported incident. However, condemning love for Saudis can also trigger resentful discourse, as in example 131. The tweet condemns "leftist liberals" (as well as Obama) for loving the Saudis and reacts accordingly with a bigoted utterance which expresses a willingness, "I don't have a problem", to destroy the Saudis, "wiping them out". This tweet is an example of an online negative-other presentation, promoting hate discourse and negative stereotypes of Saudis on Twitter.

Love also carries negative discourse prosody which suggests conspiracy and wickedness of those who love the Saudis. In this respect, tweets use deictic "you" and "they" to refer to other social actors to show distance and involvement, constructing both others and the Saudis as separate, yet similar, groups. More specifically, using deixis with the process of *love* contribute towards what van Dijk calls negative-other presentation (1997, p. 36). Tweets challenge others' love (e.g. the Bush family's) for the Saudis to emphasise and highlight some negative qualities about them, such as "beheading", "stoning", "whiplashing" and threat. For instance:

Example 132 you love Saudis...beheading, stoning, whiplashing is very sensible...

Example 133 I think Americas had enough of the Bush family...weird how they love the Saudis but all others a threat?

¹² The Boston Globe is an American, daily newspaper based in Boston, USA.

In example (132), the tweet addresses another user using the second person pronoun "you", highlighting a discrepancy and constructing this user as another deviant group. Loving the Saudis is also attested to by the tweet as something to be rejected and unacceptable, supported by predicative attributes that link Saudis to terror and violence, such as "beheading", "stoning" and "whiplashing". Similarly, in example 133, the tweet condemns the relationship of the Bush family with the Saudis. The tweet uses the personal pronoun "I" and the mental process *think* as a perspectivisation strategy, which enables the user to express involvement and point of view. The tweet refers to both America and the Bush family as two separate entities, representing America as being affected by the Bush family, e.g. "had enough of". The Bush family is, thus, represented as an out-group which puts America at risk, supported by the tweet's claim "weird how they love the Saudis". The tweet condemns the Bush family for demonising others while loving the Saudis who constitute a real threat to national security. In both examples, tweets construct Saudis and those who love them as an out-group through a negative-other presentation strategy, which emphasises what is negative about the Saudis to criticise those who love them.

The last mental (emotive) process is *hate* (73:3.69), via which tweets link their sentiments regarding Saudis being rich, the Hajj stampede, the war in Yemen, violence and hating Saudis for no reason. Expressing hate is delivered through deictic "I" (34 tweets), "we" (two tweets) and "you" (four tweets), or through other social actors, such as "Iran", "Africans" and "Shia". For example:

- Example 134 this is a regular event. Ugh I hate the Saudis so much I get mad
 just talking about it
- Example 135 Iran and the Shia have always hated the Saudis for some reasons.
 I need to add to my bio: I hate Saudis.

Examining the context of *hate* shows that tweets use this collocate to express feelings of dislike and resentment aroused by tweets reporting on the victims of the stampede, the war in Yemen, or expressing hatred towards Saudis for unspecified reasons. There are tweets, however, in which hating Saudis is exaggerated through an intensification strategy, using intensifying words such as "fucking", and expressions like "hate with passion" and "hate that hurts". For instance:

- Example 136 I fucking hate Saudis...why don't they just stay in their damn
 country...
- Example 137 I fucking hate stupid Saudis so much it actually hurts ..

Both tweets above use the process of *hate* to express hatred for Saudis, which is also amplified by the intensifier "fucking". These tweets are not part of any conversational threads, replies or comments, suggesting perhaps a racist discourse based on unacceptance and rejection. Using both perspectivisation and intensification strategies enables tweets to position Saudis as a deviant, hateful and intolerable group. In fact, according to Oboler (2014), hate content can go viral in aggregate with social media platforms, which can lead to not merely spreading hate but also virtually normalising it. Expressing hate for Saudis on Twitter can also be expressed in everyday life, and this can result in “problems of intimidation, exclusion, and ultimately violence resulting from incitement” (ibid., p. 10).

As with the material process of GIVE (142:3.34), Saudis are depicted as the primary recipients/ beneficiaries of these actions. Examining the concordance of GIVE shows negative presentations of Saudis that associate them with war, terror and corruption. For instance, tweets oppose giving Saudis a free pass in the Yemen war, and unlawfully giving them a UNHRC seat. As recipients of the process, Saudis are represented as beneficiaries who are given: a "(free) pass" in Yemen, "a face", "credit", an "HR chair", a "greenlight", "sovereign immunity" and a "blank check". These attributes are linked to recurrent themes in the FCT, such as the war in Yemen, the 9/11 attacks and joining the UNHRC, which render their meaning negative. Saudis are also assigned negative roles as beneficiaries: tweets suggest that they are aided by other social actors (the US, for instance) to ignore rules and act recklessly. Tweets condemn *giving* Saudis a "pass" in the war in *Yemen*, the weapons with which they kill Yemenis and bomb weddings, immunity against lawsuits by 9/11 victims' families, and a chair in the UNHRC. For example:

- Example 138 The courts gave the Saudis sovereign immunity a couple days ago, regarding 9-11.
- Example 139 What were the UN thinking, giving the Saudis the chair of a human rights panel?
- Example 140 We wouldn't give these backward, pig-ignorant Saudis house room they didn't have oil.

The process GIVE also entails negative depictions of Saudis through the interrelation of themes already highlighted in the FCT. For example, tweets condemn the US courts for rejecting lawsuits by victims' families of the 9/11 attacks, using the phrase "sovereign immunity", which implies a conspiracy and deception between the US government and the Saudis (example 138). In example 139, the tweet challenges the

UNHRC for giving the Saudis a seat on the Council, implying contempt and rejection. In example 140, the tweet uses deictic "we" to collectively express involvement and discreet responsibility for "allowing Saudis house room", a reference to the US' alliance with the Saudis. This expression indicates a bigoted and racist discourse towards the Saudis, supported by nomination strategies which refer to Saudis as "backward" and "pig-ignorant", i.e. extremely ignorant and uneducated, only possessing oil. This negative depiction is detected in Western media representations of Muslims, who are presented as "'liar[s]', 'ignorant[s]' and 'arrogant[s]'", which manifest stereotypes "that exemplify [a] negative attitude towards Islam and Muslims" (Yusha'u, 2015, p. 184).

6.2.2. Saudis as subjects in verb processes

In addition to functioning as objects/beneficiaries in verb processes, Saudis are also represented as agents (actors) in the following processes: relational, e.g. *are*; material, e.g. *get*, *make*, *treat*; and Mental, e.g. *think*. Examining how Saudis function as agents in different verb processes can facilitate locating the discursive strategies that tweets tend to associate with the Saudis in the FCT. The verb *be*, represented by the indicative plural form *are*, can function in two different processes: as a helping verb with the present participle in a material process, and as linking verb preceding a subject complement in a relational process (see Section 6.2.2).

The function word *are* ranks among the top keywords and is one of the strongest collocates of Saudis (3,255:3.65) in the FCT. Though function (grammatical) words are sometimes overlooked in corpus analysis, Pearce (2014) states that they can:

[O]ffer insights into the representation of ideology ... political meanings and values which might not have been accessible if ... only the apparently semantically “richer” lexical words had been considered. The fact that much CDA work is concerned with exploring aspects of discourse which are not immediately obvious to the casual reader (thus rendering their effects more powerful ideologically) means that function words must be worth considering in corpus-assisted critical discourse analysis. (p. 24)

One of the most commonly recurring patterns with *are* is the cluster “Saudis are” (2,020 tweets). This pattern is significant as it functions in both material and relational processes: in material processes, tweets refer to actions carried out by Saudis, e.g. “Saudis are killing”, whereas in relational processes, they assign them certain attributes or qualities, such as “Saudis are awful”. Hence, the “Saudis are” cluster can locate some significant patterns that serve to unveil some of the discursive strategies which tweets deploy in representing Saudis (Figure 6-2).

Saudis should come together. Unforgivable! Saudis are butchers! unfortunately I think that was Yemen their still entitled assholes. I mean if the Saudis are n't taking people, just giving money, the Saudis are blaming black Muslims for it. The Saudis are bout to behead and crucify a kid (in that order) in nepal... how long can world last like this Saudis are terrorists too wanker #Cameronspeech Saudis #oil prices That is quite possible, as far as Saudis are concerned. That is Saudia for you guys. My blink Times Saudis Good ! let them sweat. The Saudis are slippery snakes. Good ! The sooner the Saudis bombers to bomb Yemen-how true this is? You said Saudis are the worst, is it about the endless list ? you countries Saudis, Qatar -killers Syrians say Saudis are arming ISIS but the US are turning a blind eye to Saudis - Al Qaeda - ISIS they are ALL the same The Saudis are about to crucify the world..anon, Mr robot . But want 200 mosques in Christian Germany. so Saudis are admitting Yemeni presence Inside Saudi Arabia is heading UN panel on human rights, while most Saudis are only animals on two legs. this all hinges on the The saudis are having a nightmare this year The Saudis are hopping mad. The CIA is in full retreat. IS people in the entire world SAUDIS ARE PIGS SAUDIS ARE PIGS - Death toll from airstrike on Yemen Price Cut Since 2012 Tarik In that sense, if saudis are racists then every rich person in the world is a allude and insinuate for difficulties. We as saudis are solicitude and nonstopping heed- We Found pisses me off is the little things like only Saudis are allowed to play sports in the Saudi league The : please don't forget more than 700 are dead. The Saudis are responsibel for it. If U can't manage it let this are just pointing up the fact that the Saudis are Wahaabist nutcases... I think Merkel deserves is closer to ours! Those who think the Saudis are humane, should ask Yemenis. ": #Saudi foreign control Whilst being best buddies with the Saudis are lobbying off more heads than ISIS? Makes perfect

Figure 6-2: Concordance lines of *Saudis are* cluster

In material processes, Saudis are represented as active agents, indicated by the frame "Saudis are", and verbs in the present continuous form, which indicate ongoing or unfinished actions. Saudis are depicted as being involved in continuous actions related to recurring themes in the FCT, such as the war in Yemen (153 tweets) and in Syria (53 tweets), terrorism (80 tweets), joining the UNHRC (82 tweets), oil (72 tweets), Hajj stampede (44 tweets), refugee crisis (32 tweets), crucifying Al-Nimr (32 tweets) and corruption (22 tweets). These processes also reinforce a blunt racist discourse and brutal images of Saudis in the FCT, such as inhumanity, cruelty and wickedness.

Table 6-3, below, presents examples of verbs with the 'Saudis are v-ing' frame.

| Topic | Processes (v-ing) |
|----------------------------|---|
| War in Yemen | destroying, targeting, bombing, killing, inflicting, annihilating, starving, raiding, torching, butchering, doing, wiping out, copping, pushing |
| War in Syria | bombing, fighting, supplying, shooting, funding, paying |
| Terrorism | supporting, funding, terrorising, bankrolling, offering, sponsoring, sending, backing, financing |
| Al-Nimr crucifixion | crucifying, going to, planning, getting ready to, executing |
| Assigned to UNHRC | running, heading, chairing, leading |
| Refugee crisis | taking, refusing, hosting, lying, offering, ignoring |
| Violence | doing, pulling, demanding, doing, trembling, throwing, turning, going to, shielding, causing |
| Hajj stampede | blaming, doing, bulldozing, denying, facing, trying |
| Oil | winning, driving, dumping, keeping, panicking, flooding |

Table 6-3: Verb processes with the frame Saudis are v-ing

Table 6-3 above shows examples of verb processes that collocate Saudis with the “Saudis are -ing” frame. In fact, the lexical choices, verb tenses and active (agentive) roles that Saudis occupy contribute towards establishing another adverse portrayal echoed by common themes in the FCT. For instance, the contribution of Saudis in the Yemeni war is depicted as inhumane and brutal, one which targets civilians and

destroys infrastructure in Yemen, added to (blind) airstrikes which cause deaths among women and children. Allocating agency to Saudis also amplifies the severity of their role as one that is deliberate, ruthless and destructive, given that the victims of these material processes are not powerful objects but innocent people, such as women and children. Similarly, the war in Syria conveys a threatening image of Saudis that links them to supporting terrorism and terrorist groups, as well as backing several proxy wars in Syria. In fact, constructing Saudis as a threatening source is highlighted through a problematised issue, i.e. the refugee crisis. Tweets claim that the Saudis did not take in any refugees and at the same time offered to build mosques for them in Germany (see Section 5.2.1.2). This issue is speculated by tweets as alarming and threatening, since, as tweets claim, building mosques means harbouring the "Wahhabi", which will transform refugees into terrorists. In fact, linking refugees with terrorism is spotted in several studies in which the media present them as invaders and an intimidating other who threatens national security (Hynie, 2018; KhosraviNik, 2010b; Laney, Lenette, Kellett, Smedley, & Karan, 2016; Parker, 2015). On Twitter, however, Saudis are depicted not only as foreseeing the alleged threats caused by Syrian refugees, but also as contributors sustaining this threat by funding mosques and sponsoring terrorism, such as the 9/11 attacks (examples 141–145). This also contributes towards promoting a Saudiphobic discourse in which Saudis are also constructed as a negative other which poses a threat to Western security. For example:

- Example 141 where is the Peace Day in Yemen while Saudis are killing ppl every day and night
- Example 142 On top of that Saudis are offering to build mosques. Plan to Islamize Germany at faster rate.
- Example 143 So the Saudis are going to crucify some kid for dissent on his blackberry. and these ghouls head the UN human rights council? alrighty then

- Example 144 The Saudis are cracking down at home while spreading and funding terrorism abroad.
- Example 145 I heard that Saudis are blaming African pilgrimages for the deaths in Mecca. When will idiotic Africans learn that Arabs don't GAF about YOU

Highlighting negative presentations of Saudis on Twitter is mainly achieved through two strategies: the association of irrelevant issues or the interrelation of different themes. This means that tweets tend to either refer to Saudis while replying or commenting on other tweets which do not mention them, or misrepresent Saudis by associating them with negative themes. For instance, in example 141, the tweet replies to another tweet that tagged the International Day of Peace to describe a peaceful day in Mogadishu (Somalia). The tweet then comments on the Saudis' role in Yemen and asserts that Yemen cannot celebrate Peace Day as the Saudis "are killing" people daily. Similarly, in example 142, the tweet replies to another tweet claiming that Syrian refugees are all men, there are no women among them, assuming an upcoming threat to Europe. The tweet in example 142 comments by referring to the Saudis' plans to build mosques for refugees in Europe and claims that they plan ultimately to "Islamize" Germany. This tweet uses both strategies, first linking the Saudis to the refugees issue, and second demonising the Saudis by claiming that they plan to "Islamize" Germany, thus employing a topos of threat. Other associated issues also include linking the crucifixion of Al-Nimr with giving the Saudis a seat on the UNHRC (example 143), associating a local crime in Saudi Arabia with the Saudis "spreading and funding" terrorism to other countries (example 144), and linking the stampede event with the racist attitudes of Saudis and Arabs against Africans (example 145).

The remaining collocates, *get*, *make* and *treat*, are material processes in which Saudis are also presented as active agents. Tweets use the process *get* (90:3.24) to link Saudis negatively to recurring issues in the FCT, such as illegitimately giving them a UNHRC seat (39 tweets), the war in Yemen (23 tweets), terrorism (12 tweets), beheading/ flogging people (10 tweets), arms and weapons (six tweets). Tweets, for instance, assume that Saudis *get* a free pass to act as they want in Yemen, i.e. committing crimes against Yemenis. They also condemn giving the Saudis a seat on the UNHRC and selling them arms and weapons. The process *get* also links Saudis with supporting terrorist groups, e.g. ISIS, and getting away with the 9/11 attacks. Similarly, the material process *make* (55:12.9) is used by tweets to represent Saudis in negative terms, such as exploiting pilgrims' money (23 tweets), disregarding their safety, going for nuclear energy (13 tweets) without being sanctioned and acting negatively towards others (18 tweets), such as interfering in the Middle East and misusing the sponsorship system. However, only one tweet with *make* carries a positive sense. The last material process which collocates with Saudis is *treat* (54:3.87): tweets use the verb *treat* to represent Saudis negatively regarding their attitude towards other social actors, such as pilgrims, Muslims, dead (bodies), Indians and women. Examining the concordance lines for *treat* shows that tweets deploy predicational strategies that serve to characterise Saudis as racist, scornful and heartless in 28 tweets. Most of all, these material processes are used to communicate negative aspects of Saudi representations (see Table 6-4, below).

| Material process | Positive | | Negative | | Neutral | |
|------------------|----------|------|----------|-------|---------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| <i>get</i> | 0 | 0 | 89 | 98.9% | 1 | 1% |
| <i>make</i> | 1 | 1.8% | 44 | 80% | 10 | 18% |
| <i>treat</i> | 4 | 6.6% | 50 | 93.3% | 0 | 0 |

Table 6-4: Collocation of Saudis with *get*, *make*, *treat*

When *get*, *make* and *treat* collocate with Saudis, these processes communicate negative depictions which account for 91.9% of the total frequency of three processes, while 5.5% accounts for neutral meanings. However, among the total occurrences of these three collocates, only five tweets (2.5%) carry positive connotations with *make* and *treat* (e.g. examples 149 and 150), which present Saudis with a positive attitude towards others. Example tweets for the collocates *get*, *make* and *treat* are presented below:

- Example 146 America's Allies. Truly disgusting, but the Saudis get away with everything, including 9/11
- Example 147 Saudis make \$8.5B from hajj; 700 dead is collateral damage, just like their support of Terrorists since 1970s.
- Example 148 Last country where apartheid still in practice. Saudis treat foreign workers like shit.
- Example 149 "females have no rights in Saudi" We can't drive. But the king is altering that. Bitch, Saudis treat us like QUEENS.
- Example 150 Saudis make best possible arrangements for pilgrims. Allah, the Almighty knows who is behind the incident.

When these material processes collocate with Saudis, they are reinforced with discursive strategies, as well as interrelated themes, that amplify negative portrayals of Saudis in the FCT, such as linking the rape case of a Saudi prince to the 9/11 attacks, exploiting Hajj money with supporting terrorism, and the Saudis' role in conflicts in the Middle East with racial segregation and attitudes towards other social

groups. However, the two positive tweets are defensive acts, one from a Saudi female, in which they defend the Saudis against two issues. The first issue concerns women's rights and driving: the tweet defends the Saudis against claims of denying women their rights. The tweet asserts that banning Saudi women from driving will be revoked by the King and uses a positive-other presentation to present the Saudis, describing their treatment of women as "QUEENS". The second issue concerns the Hajj stampede: the tweet defends the Saudis against blame for the stampede by stressing their efforts to accommodate the pilgrims. The tweet also deploys a positive-other presentation to represent the Saudis, acknowledging their efforts in Hajj and suggesting that the stampede was instigated by someone else.

Extensive concordance analysis of these three collocates shows that positioning Saudis as active agents results in a manifest categorisation of two distinct groups: on the one hand, the Saudis are an empowered and vile group who inflict danger on others and, on the other hand, they are represented as disempowered and victimised. Assigning Saudis agency is not only empowering but rather serious and alarming. This, in fact, is supported by predication strategies (Table 6-5, below) which contribute to sustaining an 'Us' versus 'Them' discourse delivered via a negative-other presentation strategy (van Dijk, 1997) which emphasises how the other's "nature is dangerous or incompatible with "our" cherished local values" (Hynie, 2018, p. 3).

| Meaning | Predicative strategies with <i>get, make, treat</i> |
|-----------------|--|
| Negative | enslave, treat others (shit, worse than dogs, inhumanely, trash, subhuman, garbage, worse than pigs, animals, dirt, rats), get a pass in violating HR, eternal orphans, known to all, horribly, worse than Israelis, plain disgusting, enemy, disrespectful & hateful, third class, very badly, enemy, get away with everything, |
| Positive | treat like queens, make best Hajj arrangements |

Table 6-5: Predication strategies with material processes *get, make, treat*

So far, discursive strategies have been examined in which Saudis are represented as subjects and objects realised through a system of transitivity and verb processes. In addition, Saudis are also represented through predicative adjectives presented by the relational process *are* and realised by the frame *Saudis are*, which is discussed in the following section.

6.2.3. Predicative attributes

The predicative adjectives following the relational process *are* form part of what functional grammar refers to as relational or attributive processes, in addition to its function as a helping verb (or auxiliary) which expresses other processes of transitivity (Section 6.2.1). These attributive processes are represented by adjectives which ascribe Saudis certain qualities or attributes, represented by the frame *Saudis are+adjective* (1,611 tweets). In fact, according to Oktar (2001, p. 326), a relational process represents “acts of classification and judgement ... interpreted as a typical sign of power ideology which expresses the activities and goals of a social group against others”. This ideology, she adds, foregrounds the struggle or difference between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ (ibid.).

Examining the concordance lines shows a predication pattern which involves the use of the determiner "a" with the "Saudis are" cluster in 30 tweets. Using the determiner "a" serves to collectivise Saudis and generalise certain features or qualities about them. This pattern results in predicative adjectives which ascribe Saudis negative qualities related to terrorism, the war in Yemen, the Hajj stampede, domestic violence and the refugee crisis. Hence, using the determiner "a" is significant in identifying some of the discursive strategies that tweets deploy in representing Saudis. For example:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Example 151 | The Saudis are a barbaric, medieval nation who should be figuring out how to defeat ISIS rather than copying them |
| Example 152 | Very sad and awful Saudis are a black spot in the name of humanity. #shameless |
| Example 153 | Saudis are a breeding base of Jews terrorist soldiers - Salafi, Sufi freemasons |
| Example 154 | My goodness. Saudis are a brutal bunch. So entitled to treating everyone else like shit! |
| Example 155 | Saudi Arabia is taking-in no refugees WHY??? Saudis are a murderous two-faced greedy bunch of desert rats - wealthy scum / trash!!! |
| Example 156 | The Saudis are a despicable and perfidious enemy of the West you Saudis are a joke |

In the examples above, tweets use the "Saudis are a" pattern to describe Saudis as a single attribute, which is either negative in its own, e.g. "black spot", "disgrace", "joke", inferior or less significant, e.g. "bunch" or "lot", or modified by negative complex adjectives, e.g. "barbaric", "medieval nation", "despicable and perfidious enemy", which all suggest a racist and bigoted discourse. In example 151, for instance, the tweet describes Saudis in a complex adjective phrase "barbaric" and "medieval nation", as it mocks their support for ISIS instead of defeating them. In example 154, the tweet comments on an Indian news website which reported a

fabricated case of a hand-chopped-off maid (section 7.7). The tweet responds by condemning Saudis and describes them in negative predicates, such as "a brutal bunch" and "treating (others) like shit". Example 155 posits a hostile attitude and the adverse reaction of the tweet: the tweet questions why Saudi Arabia is not taking in any Syrian refugees and uses "WHY" in CAPS, which indicates annoyance and contempt. This issue triggers a repulsive reaction in the tweet, as it describes Saudis with negative, complex attributes, such as "murderous", "two-faced", "greedy", "bunch of desert rats", "wealthy", "scum" and "trash". Saudis are also depicted as "despicable and perfidious" and an "enemy of the West" (example 156), which also constructs the Saudis as a vile enemy threatening the West. The image of an enemy has also been attributed to Muslims and Arabs in Western media, especially films, which depicts them as "bloodthirsty savages, obstacles to progress, predators on [the] peaceful 'West', and [they] are portrayed as enemy "hostiles" of the U.S. and the West" (Ameli et al., 2007, p. 95). Using the determiner "a" thus serves to collectivise Saudis as a deviant-other group, while the negative predicative adjectives contribute towards sustaining a negative-other presentation through emphasising information that is negative about them (Oktar, 2001, p. 319), contributing towards a Saudisphobic discourse in the FCT.

Other patterns emerging with the "Saudis are" cluster include the use of intensifiers "so" (24 tweets), "too" (15 tweets) and "fucking" (12 tweets) with predicative adjectives (either negative or used negatively). In fact, tweets use intensifiers to amplify the meaning of these predicative attributes to represent Saudis negatively, such as "so annoying", "so evil", "so cruel" and "too busy bombing/hammering", as well as "fucking horny", "fucking rapists" and "fucking disgusting". Tweets use predicative intensifiers to highlight some recurring issues in the FCT, such

as supporting terror, the war in Yemen, the refugee crisis, and alleged immunity and protection by the West. For example:

- Example 157 ok folks there is no fireworks tonight, the Saudis are so happy for us that they fire missiles and bombs, too much celebration though
- Example 158 yeah those Muslims should help Syrian refugees but Saudis are too busy giving money to ISIS and Al-Qaida, right???
- Example 159 typical Saudis are fucking disgusting I hate you all

Using intensifiers is also accompanied by metaphor, such as in example 157, in which the tweet claims that Saudis are extensively bombing Yemen through airstrikes. The tweet uses the metaphor "fireworks" and "too much celebration" to describe the immensity and severity of the airstrikes. The function of metaphor in this context is to delegitimise (Lawton, 2013) the Saudis' role in Yemen, as well as victimising the Yemenis. The tweet also uses the intensifier "so" with the predicate "happy" to portray the Saudis' extreme dislike and hostility for the Yemeni people. Combining these strategies (intensification, metaphor and predication) serves to elevate the illocutionary force of the tweet, presents the Saudis as a brutal enemy and, consequently, constructs them as violent out-group. In example 158, the tweet condemns the Saudis for not taking in Syrian refugees while giving money to ISIS and AlQaeda and uses the intensifier "too busy", which indicates strong commitment and allegiance. The tweet in example 159 expresses resentment towards and hatred for Saudis by claiming that they are typically "disgusting" and, for this reason, the user hates them all, thereby rendering the content of the tweet a racist and bigoted discourse.

In addition, tweets use the frame “Saudis are” with predicative adjectives that describe the Saudis according to their religion (32 tweets), such as “Muslims”, “Sunnis” and “Wahhabis”. Yet, this association links Saudis to an extreme form of religion represented by the predicative attributes “fanatics”, “Jihadis” and “extremists”. Tweets assume that Saudis embrace an extreme form of Islam that is either deviant from it, e.g. “not taking refugees” or “bombing Yemen”, or one that embraces terrorism, e.g. “like ISIS”. For example:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Example 160 | Correction: Saudis are Wahhabi-Islam, same ideology of ALL Terror orgs, they also fund Terror openly since 1970s. Iran backs |
| Example 161 | Shiite groups. The Saudis are Sunni. ISIS are Sunnis. So who is funding them captain obvious? |
| Example 162 | Saudis are fanatic Muslims. Offering to build mosques instead of houses is sick insult to Germany and Muslim migrants. |
| Example 163 | well that's because the Saudis are jihadist loving war mongering idiots– that theatre has changed forever with Russia and Iran |

In the examples above, tweets present Saudis negatively by associating them with a deviant form of Islam, one that funds terrorists, e.g. "Wahhabi", "Sunni", and that is contradictory and antithetical, e.g. "fanatic". This association, in fact, brings forth similar stereotypes of Muslims (and Islam) in the Western media (Akbarzadeh & Smith, 2005; Ameli et al., 2007; Baker, 2010; Dunn, 2001) where “Muslims are often represented and perceived as fundamentalists, extremists and terrorists. Accordingly, these labels seem to be an inherent part of the perception of Muslims” (Lemmouh, 2008, p. 226). Similarly, Saudis in the FCT are depicted not only as embracing an extreme form of Islam, but also adopting a theology that is alarming and threatening, represented by the predicates "terrorists", "fanatics" and "Jihadists", which are used in the Western media to warn against Muslim individuals or groups who are represented

as terrorists “fighting a ‘holy war’ or ‘jihad’ against Western culture and values” (Akbarzadeh & Smith, 2005, p. 21).

In addition, tweets represent Saudis by using dehumanising predictive attributes which associate them with diseases and animals through a discursive strategy of metaphors. This strategy and collocating predicates are discussed in the following section.

6.2.3. Metaphors and the representation of Saudis

In addition to predication strategies, tweets also use another strategy with the cluster "Saudis are", one which involves the use of metaphors. According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980), metaphors can shape human experience and form realities, particularly social realities. Khan & Nawaz also state that using metaphors in political discourse can not only "embellish the discourse, but also perform discursive functions" (2015b, p. 50). However, when exploited in discourse, “the dominant nonchalant attitude to the meaning value of metaphors allows speakers to express and insinuate even the most extreme views under the guise of ‘subjectively’ coloured figurative speech” (Musolff, 2012, p. 303). In other words, people use metaphors when they think they can conceal or exaggerate a message or viewpoint and embed it in discourse. These embedded viewpoints can be detected through the kinds of metaphors used by tweets while tweeting about Saudis in the FCT.

In fact, these metaphors are used to construct some dark and undesirable images of Saudis which dehumanise them, by comparing them to either animals or diseases. Other metaphors link Saudis with deception and immorality (sexual), which suggests an extreme racist stance of tweets against Saudis. Metaphors of disease link

Saudis with two fatal diseases: “cancer” (nine tweets) and “plague” (five tweets). For example:

- Example 164 Thank you. Houthi's whole purpose was to fight off Al Qaeda in Yemen. The Saudis are a cancer.
- Example 165 The Saudis are a vile cancerous tumour. The world knows it, and it's high time they were force-fed their own tincture.
- Example 166 Saudis are a plague

The tweet in example 164 refers to the ongoing war in Yemen, it defends the militant group "Houthis" and justifies their role in Yemen as they are merely fighting AlQaeda. However, the tweet then concludes by stating that "Saudis are a cancer", which describes their role in Yemen as merely destructive. Cancer is a “group of more than 100 distinct diseases characterized by the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the body” (Costa, 2019). Comparing Saudis to "cancer", therefore, paints an image of an uncontrolled, destructive force which in itself is deviant from normal human beings. Although cancer is curable in some cases, the tweet in example 165 uses the phrase "cancerous tumour" to emphasise the malignant nature of cancer which can spread into neighbouring tissues, i.e. countries, individuals. The tweet proclaims that the world acknowledges this claim, and adds a threatening act, using the idiomatic expression "force-fed their own tincture", which denotes the tweet’s urgency to take serious action against the Saudis. The last example (166) represents another adverse metaphorical expression, a "plague" metaphor, which refers to diseases that resulted in some fatal epidemics in history and were responsible for the death of one-third of the population of Europe in the 14th century (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018). The tweet replies to a Russian news account which tweets about a Saudi woman posting a video of her husband as he was sexually abusing a maid. The tweet responds by stating that "Saudis are a plague", to reflect on Saudis generally, rather than applying

it to a single case (the man in the video). The plague metaphor also sustains a similar image of a tumorous cancer, as both correlate Saudis with epidemics that evoke a sense of contamination and disgust, and whose impairment extends to others.

In addition to diseases, Saudis are also portrayed through dehumanising metaphors, such as animals (22 tweets). These metaphors include comparing Saudis to "pigs", "donkeys", "monkeys", "fucking horny dogs", "holy cows" and "animals on two legs". Although these types of animals are not classified as disliked, they are still considered offensive and humiliating (Haslam, Loughnan, & Sun, 2011). For example:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Example 167 | Saudis are animals, donkeys and terrorists. no kindness for beings. no women's right |
| Example 168 | Saudis are pigs. Complaining about Russia attacking AlQaeda when they're in Yemen supporting AlQaeda and the government |
| Example 169 | Saudis are still monkeys and savages... they have not evolved as human beings as yet... |

In these examples, tweets use animal metaphoric expressions to stress the dehumanised and degraded nature of Saudis when associating them with the Nepalese woman's rape case and the war in Yemen. In example 167, for instance, the tweet uses multiple predicates, including the two metaphors "animals" and "donkeys", to represent Saudis adversely in relation to terrorism (e.g. terrorists) and cruelty, and the oppression of people and women, in response to a tweet about the rape case. In example 168, the tweet uses the metaphor "pigs" to criticise the Saudis' role in the war in Yemen and condemn their support for AlQaeda. Whereas in the last example (169), the tweet describes Saudis as "monkeys" and "savages" and, using the adverb "still", stresses their (persistent) inhuman nature and contends that they have not yet "evolved as human beings". Since humans are considered superior to animals, relating

Saudis to animals deprives them of human traits like civility, intelligence and morality and ascribes flaws to them to deprive the Saudis of human virtues. According to Demjén and Hardaker (2016), animal metaphors are viewed as “more dehumanising/degrading, and therefore more offensive, if they equate rather than compare the target with an animal” (p. 357). van Dijk (1995) asserts that “[r]acist, sexist and other inegalitarian ideologies ... may typically be expressed, not only by derogating lexical items ... but also by demeaning metaphors that belittle, marginalize or dehumanize the others. Thus, Nazi propaganda associated Jews, communists and other ethnic and social minorities with dirty animals (rats, cockroaches)” (p. 29). According to Steuter and Wills (2010), there is a consistent pattern of dehumanising metaphors that dominates Western media’s depictions of Muslims post the 9/11 attacks, and that newspaper headlines have:

[I]nfluentially compressed narratives replicating and recycling key metaphors that systematically figure the enemy as animal, vermin, or metastatic disease. These dehumanizing media representations, which have historically prefigured abuse, oppression, and even genocide, are being circulated as uncritically through newspaper media headlines as Bush’s war framing was initially and... now requires the same critical dismantling. (p. 152)

Equating Saudis with dehumanised metaphors and relating them to terrorism reflects a bigoted and racist discourse and poses a warning regarding the propagation of such negative stereotypes on Twitter.

Tweets also use immoral (sexual) metaphors to link Saudis and others (such as the West) with corruption. These include the following metaphoric phrases: "in bed with" (52 tweets), "prostitute themselves for" (two tweets) and "kisses ass" (two

tweets). Using sexual metaphors associates Saudis with others (such as the West and USA) regarding secret deals and *oil*. For example:

- Example 170 The West is in bed with Saudis all the way up to and over our eyeballs. Lots of sins forgiven for the love of oil and landmass
- Example 171 Bit better than prostituting political favours to Saudis for millions given to an HRC money laundering Foundation
- Example 172 Sadly, true, the western leaders prostitute themselves for Saudis as long those pigs have OIL!

The tweet in example 170 uses the metaphor "in bed with" to describe the relationship between the West and Saudis in reply to a tweet about the silence of the media over the stampede in Mecca. Using this metaphor is reinforced by an idiomatic expression "up to and over our eyeballs", which signals the intensity of this relationship. The tweet then condemns the West's relations with the Saudis that led to this silence and asserts that the West forgives the "sins" of Saudis for the sake of oil and landmass. The second example (171) deploys another (coarse) sexual metaphor which involves "prostitution": the tweet replies to another tweet that mocks US Republicans for business failure. The tweet then responds by defending the Republicans and criticising the Democrats' relationship with the Saudis, which is described as 'prostitution'. The tweet compares the deals that US officials offer to the Saudis to a prostitute who sells her body for money (referring to the money they received to support the Saudis having a UNHRC seat). In the last example (172), the tweet deploys two metaphors: sexual, such as "prostitute themselves", and animal, such as "those pigs". Using both metaphors serves to elevate the illocutionary force of the tweet and present the Saudis in an offensive and degraded image. According to Riabova and Riabov (2015), the prostitution metaphor is "traditionally used to signify political inconstancy, unreliability, fickleness, a lack of firm values and integrity" (p. 104).

Using sexual metaphors, along with others, thus reinforces negative portrayals of Saudis and contributes towards sustaining a hostile and racist discourse about Saudis in the FCT. van Dijk asserts that metaphors are used in discourse to highlight negative information about the disfavoured group and that using a distinct type of metaphor “may enhance the negative opinion we have about Others” (1999, p. 148). In fact, metaphors like “plague, cancer, pollution and wild animals are familiar notions to evoke a boundary threat to an ingroup” and, given their flexibility to fit in different contexts, they allow for both amplifying the racism of an 'Us' versus 'Them' discourse as well as patterns of incongruity and contradictions (van Teeffelen, 1994, p. 385).

6.2.4. Friends or foes: The collocates *allies* and *friends*

As shown in Table 6-7, tweets use lexical collocates to represent Saudis by associating them with recurring issues and themes identified earlier by the top common keywords in the FCT (Section 4.2), such as the wars in Yemen and Syria, terrorism, the Hajj stampede and the refugee crisis. These issues are reintroduced through the collocates *allies* and *friends*.

Tweets use the collocates both *friends* (203:3.63) and *allies* (221:3.65) to refer to the Saudis' relationship with Western governments, especially the US. In fact, representing Saudis as friends and allies constitutes negative portrayals of them. Tweets condemn aligning with and befriending the Saudis, given their (Saudis') affiliation with the following issues: terrorism (such as ISIS and 9/11), the wars in Yemen and Syria, not accepting Syrian refugees, and crucifying Al-Nimr. Referring to Saudis as friends is, in fact, ironic: tweets deploy nomination and predication

strategies to represent Saudis negatively as both *friends* and *allies*, as in Table 6-6, below:

| collocate | Nomination strategies | Predicative strategies |
|------------------|--|---|
| <i>friends</i> | our, bad, Bush's, best, good, great | secret, good, USA's bestest, terrorists, busy crucifying, full of wisdom, such great people, behead more people, arm ISIS, sponsor 9/11, horrible, bombing Yemen, force women to cover up |
| <i>allies</i> | our, glorious, great, key, lovely, beloved, so called, close, such great | terrifying, awful, manipulators, fund terror, corrupt, oppress women, starving Yemenis, bombing wedding, awkward, fund Islamists terrorists, racist, murdering, maniacs |

Table 6-6: Nomination and predication strategies with the collocates friends and allies

In Table 6-6, above, tweets use the collocates both *friends* and *allies* to represent Saudis negatively. Saudis are referred to as "our friends" (31 tweets) and "good friends" (19 tweets), an irony that is directed towards political members and representatives for their relationships with the Saudis. Befriending Saudis is challenged by tweets against issues of supporting terrorism, such as funding ISIS, planning the 9/11 attacks, and crucifying and beheading people (specifically Al-Nimr). Tweets also use the adjectives "best", "good" and "great" as modifiers of *friends* to ironically mock governments for having Saudis as friends. These nomination strategies are further supported by predicational strategies which highlight similar issues, such as describing the Saudis as "terrorists", "horrible", sponsoring the 9/11 attacks, bombing Yemen, and oppressing women. Similarly, *allies* is also used to convey a corresponding (negative) meaning like *friends*: tweets describe Saudis as

"our" (58 tweets), as well as "glorious", "great" and "key", allies, which are used ironically to mock any alliance with the Saudis. Tweets' opposition to having the Saudis as allies is also delivered through predicative strategies which present Saudis in an adverse way, such as associating them with funding terror (ISIS), oppressing women, bombing and starving Yemen, and being manipulators and horrible. For example:

- Example 173 our "friends" the Saudis are horrible. Women cannot drive, they punish via barbaric methods AND ISIS finance bakers
- Example 174 US allies & parents of AlQaeda & ISIS murder 27 in Yemen. Well done Saudis. Hope Russians start bombing you too
- Example 175 why are Saudis our allies, they fund terror and oppress women

In example 173, the tweet refers to Saudis as "our "friends"", using quotation marks around *friends*, which condemns having them as friends and implies disagreement and opposition. The tweet uses the predicative attribute "horrible", followed by a number of issues that are often held against the Saudis in the FCT, such as banning women from driving, punishing people through "barbaric methods" and financially backing ISIS. In example 174, however, the tweet comments on an online article in the *New York Times* which reported on an airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition that killed dozens of Yemenis attending a wedding. The tweet comments by referring to Saudis negatively, using nomination strategies, such as "US allies" and "parents of AlQaeda & ISIS"; this indicates condemnation and criticism of the US alliance with the Saudis, which is supported by associating the Saudis with parenting AlQaeda and ISIS. The tweet also uses the expression "well done" to sarcastically denounce killing civilians in Yemen and, consequently, wishes bad karma on the Saudis for this criminality, i.e. they should be bombed by the Russians as in Syria. In the last example (175), the tweet condemns aligning with the Saudis, using the interrogative question "why?" and

describing Saudis as "our allies". The tweet supports this negative stance by associating the Saudis with negative predicates, such as "fund terror" and "oppress women", which posit Saudis as a violent and intimidating ally.

Despite their positive meanings, the collocates *friends* and *allies* are used both negatively and sarcastically to represent Saudis as a threatening 'friend' and 'ally'. Using the modifier "our", tweets position users as being at risk and warn against a threat to national security, due to the harm inflicted by the Saudis, by presenting Saudis as a vile 'Other', reinforced through stressing their negative attributes (e.g. terrorists, horrible). Hence, "the resulting disharmony between the victimizer and the victim can boost in turn the process of [legitimising violent actions]" (Tekaya, 2016, p. 168). The recurrence of such negative presentations can result in intimidating feelings (example 188) and can inflame a discourse of hatred and intolerance that may stimulate negative responses against Saudis offline.

6.2.5. The collocates *rich* and *wealthy*

Associating Saudis with negative issues is also delivered through the collocates *rich* and *wealthy*. *Rich* (111:3.63) collocates with Saudis in 101 tweets, 50 of them deploy nomination strategies in which *rich* modifies Saudis as a simple and complex modifier, e.g. "filthy rich", "cash rich", "mega rich". Other modifiers signal similar meanings, like "oil rich", "very rich", which suggest a semantic preference for the concept of extreme wealth. Attributing this concept to Saudis is, in fact, negative. Tweets associate *rich* with Saudis in terms of questioning their ability to organise Hajj safely (46 tweets), funding terrorists (38 tweets) and not taking in refugees (17 tweets), as in the following tweets:

- Example 176 I doubt that. No one wants to upset the rich Saudis do they
- Example 178 I think not! #SyrianCrisis The filthy rich Saudis contribution to the poor refugees is to build them mosques!
- Example 179 Lets face it, he was granted bail so he could evade justice. The law doesn't apply to rich Saudis. Remember Bin Laden family on 9/11

In these examples, tweets use the collocate *rich* to present Saudis negatively in terms of alleged inhumane treatment towards the pilgrims and demands to reclaim the pilgrimage from the Saudis' patronage (example 176). Another tweet (example 178) condemns the Saudis for not taking in any refugees but instead building mosques for them in Germany, whereas in the last example (179), the tweet refers to a news story about a Saudi prince who was cleared by a US court in a rape case to generalise a claim about Saudis. The tweet contends that the Saudis are protected by the law against any crime. Through intertextuality, the tweet links this incident with the 9/11 attacks and claims that Bin Laden's family was similarly not charged for the attacks but rather allowed to leave the US freely.

The negative concept of being *rich* is also delivered through an argumentation strategy. This includes deploying (fallacious) arguments which are seek to either post criticism or generalise a claim. For example:

- Example 180 Filthy rich Saudis who have toilets made of gold in their palaces have no respect for ordinary Muslim haji's lives!
- Example 181 Saudi diplomat left the country. Nobody's bothered because they are rich. Saudis can get away with anything. Living charmed life!

In the first example (180), the tweet associates the alleged stacking of dead pilgrims' bodies in the Hajj stampede with Saudis through a fallacious argument. According to

the tweet, Saudis are extremely rich, but they do not respect the lives of Muslim pilgrims because these Muslims are not equally rich. The tweet deploys a nomination strategy to set a boundary between the Saudis and other Muslims based on the concept of wealth, by referring to Saudis as "filthy rich" and Muslim pilgrims as "ordinary". To support this claim, the tweet also depicts Saudis negatively through a fallacy which sustains the idea that they are extremely rich and disrespectful towards others, using the phrase "have toilets made of gold in their palaces". Also, in example 181, the tweet posits another fallacy which claims that Saudis have immunity from prosecution, indicated by the phrase "get away with anything" because they are rich. This relates to a rape case against a Saudi diplomat in India who was reported to have got away with it (see section 7.7). In fact, Slade (1981) states that researching the media image of the Arabs as a threat to the US showed remarkable effects on the public consciousness of Arabs. It also revealed that "the Saudis are termed "rich" by 70 per cent" and that very few people assumed Saudis are friendly. However, according to Slade, "it is not the perception of wealth that causes low opinion, but rather the understanding that Arabs are "hostile" or "mistreaters of women" (p. 151).

Wealthy (31:4.07) is another lexical collocates of Saudis in the FCT, another term equivalent to rich. Saudis are also referred to as "super-wealthy", "obscenely wealthy" and "powerful wealthy", which all suggest a sense of extreme wealth. Like *rich*, representing Saudis as wealthy draws negative portrayals, since the context is negative in all 84 tweets. Allocating *wealth* to Saudis corresponds to *rich* in terms of supporting terrorists (22 tweets) and mismanaging Hajj (four tweets). However, regarding Syrian refugees, Saudis are claimed to be sexually abusing young Syrian girls (five tweets). Other tweets claim that Saudis do not take in refugees because they

recognise that terrorists exist among them (refugees are described as "wolves" in disguise), for example:

- Example 182 Obscenely wealthy Saudis blame dirt-poor Africans for the #HajjStampede
- Example 183 Wealthy Saudis sexually abuse young #Syrian girls: Report
- Example 184 Wealthy Saudis KNOW better than to take the wolves in refugees' clothing!

In these examples, the association of *wealth* with the Saudis portrays them as a negative, vile out-group who victimise and abuse less powerful groups. Besides blaming African pilgrims for the Hajj stampede and sexually abusing Syrian girls, tweets also highlight the issue of the Syrian refugees. The tweet in example (184), recontextualises the refugee issue, using the idiomatic expression "wolves in refugees clothes", to warn against the disguised danger of these refugees who threaten Europe. This issue reinstates a negative discourse that is often linked with refugees in the media, which depict them as threatening and dangerous to the West (Abid, 2015; Baker & McEnery, 2005; Gabrielatos, 2008; Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008; Hart, 2008; Parnell, 2016; Törmä, 2017). Saudis are assumed to reject Syrian refugees despite their ability to host them, owing to their recognition of the hazard posed by these refugees.

Consequently, the semantic preference for both richness and wealth suggests a negative discourse prosody of immorality and violence. Possessing wealth can also provide Saudis with immunity to evade legal prosecution. When collocating Saudis in the FCT, the collocates both *rich* and *wealthy* pertain to Shaheen's four basic myths about Arabs in television shows, which stereotype them as "fabulously wealthy, they are barbarians and uncultured, they are sex maniacs with a penchant for white slavery,

and they revel in acts of terrorism” (1984, p. 4). Both collocates promote negative portrayals and manifest cynical stereotyping and prejudices about Saudis on Twitter. Conflating *rich* and *wealthy* with Saudis can “construct an arbitrary image of an ‘enemy within the walls’ ... the terrorists who ‘live among “Us” and ‘are wealthy’”(Boukala, 2016, p. 264). The concept that Saudis are wealthy can "only intensify the perception that they are a threat" (Slade, 1981, p. 148).

6.3. Lexical collocation

The colligation analysis so far has provided fruitful insights into some of the discursive strategies deployed by tweets while representing Saudis. However, examining the lexical collocates of Saudis can also be another way to explore the discursive strategies employed by tweets in the FCT. These collocates are extracted from Table 6-1 and presented in Table 6-7, below:

| Category | Collocates |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Modality | <i>should, can, must</i> |
| Quantifiers | <i>many, some, most</i> |
| Social actors | <i>women</i> |

Table 6-7: Consistent collocates of Saudis in the FCT

The categories in Table 6-7 include collocates signalling modality, such as *should*, *can*, *must*, collocates functioning as quantifiers, such as *many*, *some*, *most*, and the Other category, which includes the collocate *women*, which refers to women generally as a group affected by the Saudis, rather than referring to a specific group. These

categories are examined thoroughly in the following subsections using collocation and concordance analyses.

6.3.1. Nomination strategies with quantifiers *many, some, most*

Among the lexical collocates of Saudis in the FCT is the use of quantifiers as a nomination strategy to refer to Saudis, such as *many* (77:3.89), *some* (83:3.89) and *most* (50:3.90). These quantifying collocates are used to quantify Saudis with negative attributes, actions and affiliations, such as terrorism, inhumane behaviour and immorality. Results of a concordance analysis of these quantifiers are summarised in Table 6-8, below:

| Quantification of | <i>many</i> | <i>some</i> | <i>most</i> |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Terrorism | 21 | 19 | 10 |
| Inhumane/ immorality | 25 | 22 | 17 |
| Positives | 6 | 7 | 11 |
| Neutral | 25 | 35 | 12 |

Table 6-8: Quantifying collocates with Saudis in the FCT

In Table 6-8, tweets deploy ‘vague quantifiers’, such as *many, some* and *most*, to refrain from (over)generalising (van Dijk, 2002) some negative representations of Saudis in the FCT. However, these quantifying collocates still represent Saudis mainly regarding some recurring issues in the FCT, such as terrorism, inhumane attitude and immorality. In Table 6-8, the number of tweets allocating Saudis with negative issues is higher than positive and neutral ones. For quantifying collocates

which indicate numerosity, such as *many* and *most*, Saudis are assigned negative predicates (54 out of 127 tweets) related to terrorism, such as "supporting ISIS" and "on 9/11 planes", immorality, such as "have sex slaves" and "animals on two legs", and absurdity, such as "narrow-minded" and "stuck in the 50s". Fewer tweets, though, relate positive (three tweets) or neutral (70) predicates with Saudis. However, with *some*, which indicates a smaller quantity, Saudis are associated with negative and neutral predicates in almost equal numbers of tweets, although positive predicates indicated by the three quantifiers are equally low. Tweets use *some* to relate Saudis to terrorism, such as "celebrate 9/11" and "engage in terrorism", immorality, such as "nefarious purposes", and "savages", "ungrateful" and a "rotten mentality". Positive quantification with *some* relates Saudis to desirable predicates, such as being good neighbours, supporting their wives, being cute and funny. Figure 6-3, below, illustrates example tweets of these three quantifying collocates:

abic but it's so hard for me to understand *some* Saudis , and I speak Saudi Arabic 💎 Weird questions
 royal jokes WH actually said " *most* telling" Saudis as opposed to Iran oppose Russian strikes. WH
 . the public aren't the government I fact *most* Saudis actually support their wives but what a
 want human rights, they walk to Europe. *Some* Saudis are F💎#savages When Nixon altered true focus of
 m and Kabza group of holy shrine Where *some* Saudis "allegedly" crashed into our towers and we
 ade this hashtag or not there are clearly *many* Saudis speaking against it . Don't generalize Whether
 in the name of law like this? Why are *most* Saudis so salty and narrow minded smh 💎 why are pakis so
 is because Saudis told them to? Why do *many* Saudis marry their maids? Blaming the women, yet again
 :ome to their lands. There are *many* extremist Saudis . WHY do Saudis have more influence on USA energy
 h UN to accept their brethren? Why do *some* # Saudis engage in #terrorism? writes #SaudiArabia Why
 #terrorism? writes #SaudiArabia Why do *some* Saudis engage in terrorism? via Why do the Saudis Offer
 and crucifixion? why ISIS killed *many* Saudis in Saudi Arabia because they believe Saudis are
 ault of the saudis !!! Why so *many* people hate Saudis 💎 I thought all Muslims respect each other #
 . Arrogance of savages. I know way too *many* saudis that sound exactly like this. Wow man wow Saudis
 English is very good. I've got a feeling *many* Saudis don't speak English at all... wow. " Save your
 a bunch of Brazilian skillers and *some* fye ass Saudis playing Y'all piss me off when u choose one group
 in Iraq/Libya. Yes yes yes ... and so *many* Saudis make a living by simply being kafeels. Not

Figure 6-3: Concordance of the quantifying collocates *many*, *some*, *most*

Tweets use the quantifying collocates *many* and *most* to suggest that a high number/
 proportion of Saudis conform to the (negative) qualities and predicates realised in the

tweets, such as terrorism and immorality. These vague quantifying collocates are used not only to avoid generalising negative attributes of Saudis but also as a “discursive strategy of vagueness [which contributes] to a macro-strategy of positive self-presentation” (Mohammadi, 2009, p. 141) and negative-other presentation.

6.3.2. Modality with *should*, *can* and *must*

Other lexical collocates of Saudis in the FCT also include the use of modal verbs: *should* (197:3.48), *can* (135:3.41) and *must* (127:3.31). The question that arises here is what function does modality serve in the discourse about Saudis in the FCT? To answer this question, a distinction needs to be made between the three types of modality that prevail in the FCT:

1. Epistemic modality, which includes the Possibility and Certainty modalities and refers to tweets’ perception and opinions of Saudis, e.g. "Saudis can be harsh", "Saudis must be desperate" and "Saudis should be panicking".
2. Deontic modality, which includes Obligation modality, and refers to moral and religious obligations that Saudis should accomplish, e.g. "Saudis should apologise for deadly Hajj stampede" and "Saudis must take in refugees". It also includes the Necessity modality in which tweets demand certain actions against Saudis, e.g. "Saudis should be bombed off", "Saudis *must* pay dearly".
3. Dynamic modality, in which tweets refer to Saudis’ ability or disposition to act in favour of or against others, e.g. "Saudis can accommodate millions of people" and "Saudis can buy and change the world".

The results of a concordance analysis based on these categories are summarised in Table 6-9, below:

| | Epistemic | | Deontic | | Dynamic |
|---------------|-------------|-----------|------------|-----------|---------|
| | Possibility | Certainty | Obligation | Necessity | Ability |
| <i>should</i> | - | 5 | 109 | 83 | - |
| <i>can</i> | 44 | 32 | - | - | 59 |
| <i>must</i> | - | 21 | 36 | 70 | - |
| Total | 44 | 58 | 145 | 153 | 59 |

Table 6-9: Epistemic, Deontic and Dynamic modalities in the FCT

In the FCT, modal verbs and their negations are used to highlight religious and moral obligations and necessities that Saudis have to respond to, such as apologising for the Hajj stampede and securing pilgrims' lives, as well as their obligation to accept Syrian refugees arising from their Islamic and neighbourhood bonds. In Table 6-9, above, Deontic modality occurs more frequently in the FCT than Epistemic and Dynamic modalities; more specifically, Necessity is more frequent than Obligation modality. Tweets use modality to refer to certain duties and requirements that Saudis should accomplish to ensure others' safety and well-being, such as pilgrims and Syrian refugees. Whereas Obligation modality links Saudis to the stampede (166 tweets), for which they are obliged to "apologise" and "answer for" the carelessness and mismanagement of Hajj that led to it. Other tweets (21) concern Syrian refugees: tweets require the Saudis to take in refugees instead of building mosques for them in Europe. However, some tweets include the use of necessity, *should* and *must*, to express certain negative actions to be applied to or taken against Saudis, such as suing them over the stampede and banning them from the UNHRC over human rights violations. For instance:

- Example 188 Saudis can buy and change The world leaders opinions but they can't buy and change the opinions of the whole mankind.
- Example 189 Saudis must be sad on destruction of IS as they had created it with great efforts and investment
- Example 190 The #Saudis can be harsh at times.

In these examples, tweets use the modal collocates *can* and *must* to attest to their assessment of Saudis being corrupt, such as manipulating political leaders (example 188), creating and financing ISIS (example 189) or being violent and repulsive (example 190). In fact, according to Vâlcea (2016, p. 93), “modality stands out as a major criterion in the encryption and decryption of the message beyond words”. In the FCT, Epistemic modality is glossed to indicate a sense of threat and intimidation, which, in turn, reinforces the notion that Saudis represent a negative-other group whose presence is alarming and threatening.

Finally, there is Dynamic modality, which refers to either ability, such as "Saudis can take all of the them", possibility, such as "Saudis can be trusted" or certainty, such as "Saudis can't be Muslims". In fact, Dynamic modality is used in some tweets (59) to portray Saudis' ability to be alarming and threatening. Tweets use *can* to highlight Saudis' ability to act brutally against others. In fact, using *can* in this context does not only indicate ability, but also tweets' certainty that Saudis are capable of (vile) actions against others. For example:

- Example 191 These are the words of a true Hussein. Saudis can carry on murdering people. The world is seeing it!
- Example 192 unfortunately the biggest genocidal terrorist states Israel and Saudis can get away with anything while others punished for nothing

Through the modal collocate *can* and nomination (example 191) and predicative (example 192) strategies, tweets assert their negative evaluation of Saudis being terrorists with immunity. In fact, using modality collocates in the FCT with its different types is useful as it is an important part of how tweets identify Saudis and ascribe them agency in relation to terror, violence and corruption.

6.3.3. Saudis and *women*

The last lexical collocate of Saudis in the FCT is *women* (84:3.68). This collocational relation reveals aspects of the representation of Saudis in the discourse related to women. Examining concordance lines shows that the kind of association existing between Saudis and *women* centres mainly on what they (Saudis) do or think about both Saudi and non-Saudi women, as illustrated in Figure 6-4, below. More specifically, it associates Saudis with either committing acts relative to war and violence, or their (negative) attitude towards *women* (both Saudis and non-Saudis).

| | | |
|--|-------------------------|--|
| ble standard takes money donations from | SAUDIS but women | ◆s rights? SHAME Hillary bad news always, LIAR |
| or Hinduism Women are commodities for | Saudis. women | can't have freedoms Boys get sentenced |
| mes... Why do we tolerate the sins of the | Saudis? Women | in the World in Association with The New York |
| ried, hesitant and lost? - #ICYMI why do u | saudis hate women | ?why cant women drive or walk alone in the |
| doing than murdering Syrians? Sex maniac | Saudis Put women | in Burka and their culture of rape Sex, sodomy, |
| apons and money Taliban, Pakistan, Iran, | Saudis kill women | who defy Hijab or Burma. I m sure it is |
| t to your donor friends Qatar, Oman, and | Saudis where women | are raped and killed w/o consequence? Why |
| udi human rights expert. Tis a misnomer. | Saudis subjugate women | . Purposefully. #GenderIslamists there's no |
| ttacking yazidiz n enslaving their women, | Saudis oppressing women | etc. it hasn't been a year since the Saudis war on |
| orders2Muslims NODEAL what !fatwa even | saudis have women | representative now !! r they following isis but |
| ut of our kafir Internet, use pigeons. #ksa | Saudis chase women | with light skin. White, Asian, and Syrian |
|) Tories opposed to choice, but fine with | Saudis beheading women | . Tories promoting Saudis on #UNHRC. No |
| , I think all Saudis know this. ? This whole | Saudis and women | thing is just shocking. We're SHOCKED. # |
| cepted us and wants 2 help de radicalise | Saudis treat women | like they treat in Saudi, Arab lands.. Saudis |
| ut #SaudiArabia - sending #support to all | Saudis? Women | have no value for Saudis therefore they can kill |

Figure 6-4: Concordance of Saudis and *women*

Generally, tweets depict Saudis as doing the following to women:

- **war crimes:** "butchering", "murder", "bombing", "kill", "slaughtering"
- **violence (sex abuse/trade, Sharia law):** "treat like shit/dogs", "rape", "hate", "being cruel ", "torture", "abuse", "behead", "stoning", "flog"
- **oppression/abuse (including dress-code enforcement):** "oppress", "keep as second-class citizens", "ban from jobs", "subjugate", "limiting/deciding what women wear"

However, women are passivised in all the tweets and are assigned patient roles as victims, while Saudis are assigned (negative) roles as active agents (see Table 6-10, below).

| Women collocating with Saudis | Role | Frequency |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| Sexual violence, sex trade | Victims/patients | 26 |
| Breaking Sharia law: sorcery/witchcraft | ≈ ≈ | 16 |
| War crimes | ≈ ≈ | 13 |
| Violent attitude | ≈ ≈ | 12 |
| Dress-code enforcement | ≈ ≈ | 8 |
| Oppression | ≈ ≈ | 9 |
| Total | | 84 |

Table 6-10: Women's roles in collocation with Saudis

Women are represented as passivised victims and assigned the roles of patients in material processes, whereas Saudis are active agents. In terms of violence, Saudis are accused of committing violent acts against women, including the sex trade, slavery

and rape. They are also depicted as practising cruelty on women, such as "treat like shit/dogs". Even when applying Sharia Law, which prohibits sorcery and adultery, Saudis are condemned for practising it. Tweets do not refer to Sharia Law itself, but rather focus on how Saudis practise it against women, shifting the emphasis onto the punisher not the punishment. Saudis are also accused of oppressing women, such as banning them from jobs and imposing certain dress codes and covering their faces. The latter, although being a part of their religious identity, tweets condemn enforcing dress codes, such as modest clothing, as it is against women's will and freedom, implying women's rejection and submission. In fact, studies of the representation of Arab and Muslim women in Western media have confirmed such findings, highlighting issues of violence, suppression, victimisation and discrimination by Muslim and Arab men against women (Al-Hejin, 2012, 2015; Eltantawy, 2007; Falah & Nagel, 2005; Manley, 2009; Mishra, 2007a; Mustafa-Awad & Kirner-Ludwig, 2017; Tissot, 2011; Wilkins, 1995; Zempi, 2016). Similar depictions of Saudis are also echoed on Twitter: tweets portray Saudis as cruel and oppressive towards women. For example:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Example 193 | Saudis treat their own women like shit, no point in hoping that they would cooperate in giving justice to Nepali women. |
| Example 194 | The Saudis still behead women for the crime of sorcery. Reminder: this nation sits on the UN Human Rights Council. |
| Example 195 | the Niqab is NOT religious! It's an oppressive symbol invented by the Saudis to keep women 2nd class citizens. |

These tweets depict women as agentless, oppressed and victimised by Saudis, either through physical abuse, such as "treat ... like shit" and "behead ... for the crime of sorcery", or through enforcing certain dress codes, such as "niqab". In example 193, the tweet associates Saudis with the rape case of a Nepalese woman (section 7.7) to

condemn their inhumane and violent treatment of *women*. In example 194, the tweet associates the Saudis with beheading women for sorcery (reported in an article in *The Herald Sun* online newspaper linked to the tweet) to condemn and criticise allowing Saudis onto the UNHRC. In the last example (195), the tweet criticises the Saudis for imposing "niqab" on Saudi women and asserts that it is not a part of religion but rather a symbol of male patriarchy and oppression that is created by the Saudis to trivialise women. The tweet's stance identifies "niqab" not as a "traditional Islamic dress code for women" but ,on the contrary, as "significant evidence of [their] oppression" (Yasmeen, 2013, p. 256)

Saudis are also depicted as committing war crimes, specifically in Yemen, against women and children. Tweets condemn how Saudis (with ISIS in two tweets) target *women* deliberately with bombs and blind airstrikes. This includes material processes like "killing" and "bombing", further promoted through using verbs like "butchering" which indicates brutality and indiscriminateness, as in the following examples:

Example 196 #Saudis and #ISIS team up to kill women and children in #Yemen.

Example 197 The Saudis has no moral right to talk about innocent people while they are butchering women and children's in Poor country Yemen.

When they associate Saudis with *women*, tweets deploy nomination and predication strategies which promote further negative representations. These strategies include referring to Saudis in the following terms: "Wahhabi", "typical", "barbaric murderous", "sex maniac", "heartless", "fucking", "disgusting", "arrogant". Similarly, predication strategies seem to coincide with a nomination strategy, echoing similar postures of violence and immorality. Tweets use predication strategies to

ascribe to Saudis the following negative qualities: hating women, abusers, war criminals, matching ISIS in dealing with women, denying women freedom (such as enforcing certain dress codes and denying women jobs) and lacking morality. These all promote additional hostile stereotypes that augment the overall negative portrayal of Saudis in the FCT. In fact, these negative depictions of Saudis as regards women resonate with similar findings in media studies which associate Muslim men negatively with women: according to Al-Hejin (2015), research on Western media “corroborates a misconception observed by a number of scholars that all that is negative or hostile in the Muslim ‘Other’ is perpetrated by men, while women are merely passive victims moving with the tide” (p. 12).

The collocation analysis of *women* with Saudis is generally negative: women is not restricted to Saudi women only, it also includes women from other social groups, such as domestic maids and refugees. Saudis are depicted as violent, oppressive and slavers. Women, on the other hand, are represented as victims, agentless, oppressed and abused. Issues of dress-code enforcement and banning them from jobs are also highlighted and condemned in tweets. These negative depictions echo similar findings in Western media studies which depict Saudi women as “oppressed, deficient, subordinate, submissive, and non-agentive women who unquestioningly accept patriarchy and domination” (Alharbi, 2015, p. iv).

6.4. Summary and discussion

This chapter has addressed RQ-2 *What discursive strategies are employed by tweets in the representation of Saudis?* by focusing on collocation features that are associated with Saudis in the FCT. The focus is on the lexical collocates of Saudis that maintain a certain level of statistical significance and effect size. To identify the

discursive strategies utilised in representing Saudis, I use the collocation and concordance analyses offered by WordSmith.

RQ2 was addressed from two angles. The first was to analyse colligation and transitivity patterns which focus on the roles that are assigned to Saudis as objects and subjects in verb processes: this facilitates identifying the grammatical roles that tweets assign to Saudis. The second angle was to analyse the most frequent lexical collocates with Saudis. Both analyses proved useful in locating some discursive strategies that tweets deployed, as well as aspects of Saudis' representation in the FCT.

Results from the colligation analysis triangulated the findings from the keyword analysis in Chapter 5. Themes highlighted by the keyword analysis were reinforced through colligation and collocation analyses, such as war, terrorism and corruption, and also found to be highly interrelated. The discursive strategies deployed by tweets in representing Saudis do not only echo similar findings in Chapter 5, but also reinforce the negative stereotypical presentations of Saudis on Twitter.

The analysis of colligational patterns showed negative evaluations in the form of transitivity roles assigned to Saudis. Saudis are portrayed as active agents in 869 tweets (60%) and represented negatively in 1,406 (97.5%), while only 36 tweets (2.4%) associate with Saudis positively. These results are supported by nomination and predicative strategies which also reinforce similar negative depictions, such as associating Saudis with extremism and terrorism where Saudis are presented as radical Muslims who pose a national threat to the West. Similar to representing Muslims in Western media, Saudis are represented as "fanatics" who aim at a religious war, targeting Western countries, values and democracy (Arif & Ahmad, 2016; Indah & Khoirunnisa, 2018; Moore et al., 2008), thereby promoting an 'Us'

versus 'Them' discourse which presents Saudis as a threatening and dangerous out-group.

The colligation analysis proved helpful in identifying another discursive strategy, i.e. metaphor (identified by the frame "Saudis are") which revealed adverse portrayals of Saudis on Twitter, such as dehumanising and sexual metaphors, which resulted in evoking a racist, prejudicial discourse (examples 167,168 and 1695). In fact, metaphor has become a key notion in racism studies as many metaphors rely on Western dichotomies of 'Us' versus 'Them' in which race is the ultimate outcome (van Teeffelen, 1994). This sort of positioning of 'Us' versus 'Them' becomes fertile ground for creating and establishing stereotypical and hostile attitudes, as a consequence of which hatred becomes an acceptable reality (Arcimaviciene & Baglama, 2018).

The collocation of Saudis with women also disclosed nomination and predication strategies which represented them negatively. Nomination strategies include referring to Saudis as "Wahhabi", "barbaric murderous", "sex maniac", "heartless", "fucking", "disgusting" and "arrogant". Similarly, predication strategies echo similar depictions of violence and immorality. Tweets use different predication strategies to ascribe Saudis with negative qualities, such as abusers, hating women, war criminals, matching ISIS in dealing with women, denying women freedom (such as dress-code enforcement and banning them from jobs) and lacking morality. In fact, these negative depictions echo similar findings in Western media studies which depict Saudi women as "oppressed, deficient, subordinate, submissive, and non-agentive women who unquestioningly accept patriarchy and domination" (Alharbi, 2015, p. iv). Using both discursive strategies promotes additional hostile representations that augment the overall negative stereotypes of Saudis in the FCT.

Concurrently, the xenophobic discourse on Twitter resulted in adverse depictions and misconceptions that incited extended violent (examples 165, 186 and 187) and racist attitudes (examples 134, 135 and 137) of tweets against Saudis. What is alarming is that such discourse prompts Saudiphobia and intolerance, which may be practised in reality. This can fuel violence and hate crimes, such as online Islamophobia discourse which, according to Ekman, targets people associated with Islam, thereby stirring “street politics and the use of violence” (2015, p. 1998). The immersed negative stereotypes of Saudis in the media can have a significant influence on how others perceive them on Twitter and, consequently, be carried out or practised offline.

Chapter 7. Exploration of differences among the corpora

7.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the differences between the five corpora to answer RQ-3 (To what extent are Saudis represented differently by tweets in Australia, Canada, GB, the USA and the rest of the world corpora?). To do this, I compare each corpus with the other four corpora together. I also incorporate keywords and concordance analyses, as well as discursive strategies, intertextuality and interdiscursivity analyses, to scrutinise the findings. The analysis yields two types of differences among the corpora: keywords unique to each corpus and keywords unique to some corpora more than others. The first sections start with keywords that are unique to each corpus, starting with the smallest corpus (AUSC) and ending with the largest (RWC). The last sections tackle keywords which are common to some corpora but not others.

7.2. Keywords unique to each corpus

To investigate differences in the representation of Saudis among the five corpora, each corpus will be compared against the other corpora together. In this respect, the AUSC is compared with the CAC, the GBC, the USC and the RWC grouped together in order to arrive at a keywords list unique to the AUSC. A further step is undertaken to validate the results, which involves comparing two sets of corpora together, and the resulting keywords lists are then compared. It should be noted that the comparison is restricted to the top 200 keywords in each corpus. The resulting unique keywords for each corpus are presented in Table 7.1, below:

| | AUSC | CAC | GBC | USC | RWC |
|-----------------|---|---|---|------------------------|---|
| Unique keywords | <i>Australia</i> (13), <i>#auspol</i> (14), <i>tips</i> (7) | <i>Harper</i> (111), <i>#cdnpoli</i> (86), <i>Canada</i> (57), <i>wheat/board</i> (32), <i>#BarbaricCultural-Practices</i> (14), <i>niqab</i> (16), <i>#MunkDebate</i> (11), <i>Trudeau</i> (6), <i>Duceppe</i> (7), <i>vehicles</i> (13), <i>Canadian</i> (18) | <i>Cameron</i> (79), <i>UK</i> (111), <i>MOJ</i> (18), <i>Corbyn</i> (22), <i>Tories</i> (20), <i>#newsNight</i> (14) | <i>#GopDepate</i> (21) | <i>India</i> (142), <i>Haji*</i> (42), <i>Indian</i> (90) |

Table 7-1: Keywords unique to each corpus

Table 7.1, above, lists the keywords that are unique to each corpus when compared to the other corpora. It does, however, exclude keywords that are already common among the five corpora; an initial investigation of some of these keywords¹³ shows that their significance is due to differences in corpus sizes. Unique keywords, however, are not unique in the sense that they never occur in any of the other corpora, but they are unique to the top 200 keywords in each of the five corpora, and thereby “a good indicator of topics and concepts that a particular [corpus] is concerned with” (Baker et al., 2013). The AUSC has three keywords unique to it, one of which is a hashtag, whereas the CAC has the highest number of unique keywords, including three hashtags. The GBC also includes a high number of unique keywords, including one hashtag, while the USC has a single hashtag only and, finally, the RWC contains three unique keywords. The question arising here is whether these differences among the corpora signal different themes and consequently project different representations

¹³ I decided on the random selection of ten common keywords to investigate whether their significance is due to differences in corpus size and whether this significance yields new themes or topics that are not addressed in Chapters 5 and 6.

of Saudis. To answer this question, I utilise concordance analysis to examine these unique keywords.

7.3. Keywords unique to the AUSC

The three keywords unique to the AUSC are *Australia* (29), *#auspol* (28) and *tips* (7), with *Australia* and *#auspol* being among the top 100 keywords in the AUSC.

Concordance analysis of these keywords shows that tweets centre around the following issues:

- Saudis posing a threat to Australia (through Islamisation)
- Saudis being given a UNHRC seat despite their terrorism/violence
- Both Australia and the Saudis having similar human rights records

Tweets use the keyword *Australia* to refer to Saudis' role in the Islamisation or "Islamification" (four tweets) of Australia through funding and building mosques and conspiring with Australian politicians to promote "Jihadism". This issue has already been highlighted in Chapter 5, where Saudis are alleged to be Islamising Europe through building mosques for Syrian refugees (Section 5.2.1.2). For example:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Example 198 | This mosque is being funded by the Saudis, all part of the plan to #islamification Australia |
| Example 199 | The deal cut by Aussie politicians, Bankers with the Saudis to Islamise Australia by birthrate jihadism. |
| Example 200 | Absolute insanity for Australia to align itself with the UN. Saudis funding the spread of Islam throughout the West. |

Constructing the Saudis as a threat to Australia (and the West as well) is stressed by tweets in terms of funding mosques (to spread Islam) and promoting "Jihadism". Both

issues are associated with two common themes in the FCT: arms deals and allowing the Saudis onto the UNHRC. For instance, in example 198, the tweet points to a mosque in Australia and condemns the Saudis for funding it. The tweet then claims that Saudis, through funding mosques, plan at the "Islamification" of Australia. It also tags "Islamification" in a hashtag to highlight and circulate what may be considered a threatening act by the Saudis. The "Islamification" of Australia is also highlighted through associating some common themes in the FCT, such as arms deals between Saudis and Australian politicians and bankers (example 199), which are perceived by the tweet as Saudi plans to "Islamise" Australia, hence echoing a sense of threat and intimidation. The tweet hints at the Saudis' sponsorship and promotion of terrorism, represented by the phrase "by birthrate Jihadism", which, according to Western academics, carries a negative sense of extreme violence and struggle (BBC News, 2014). In fact, warning against Saudis sponsoring an "Islamification" process is extended by the tweet in example 200 to threaten the West as well. The tweet criticises Australia for joining the UNHRC since the Saudis are already a member of the Council. The UNHRC is ultimately represented as illegitimate and sceptical, as it allows the Saudis membership, and they are alleged by the tweet to fund the spread of Islam in the West. This claim prompts the tweet to warn against the Saudis as a threatening source, not only to *Australia* but to the Western world as well.

#Auspol is a hashtag launched in 2015 and refers to trending political topics in Australia. According to Bogle (2016), *#auspol* (a short term for Australian politics) is one of the most trending hashtags in Australia and the third globally. It has also been used to tag all recent and controversial issues and debated topics in Australia. However, what is of importance here is the ways in which this hashtag correlates to Saudis and the sort of topics that are highlighted around them in Australian-specific

hashtags. A concordance analysis reveals that tweets use the hashtag *#auspol* to condemn allowing the Saudis onto the UNHRC: tweets oppose this since the Saudis have a long history of beheading people and their human rights record is much worse than that of ISIS. For example:

- Example 201 Saudi elected head UN Human Rights panel Saudis worst HR record More beheadings than ISIS *#auspol* Example 220
- Example 202 The Saudis are ISIS with solid gold toilets @cybermogul *#Auspol*

Both tweets comment on a tweet by *The Independent* twitter account reporting the furious reactions following the news of Saudi Arabia chairing a UNHRC panel (see Figure 7-1 below).



Figure 7-1: Tweet by The Independent about Saudis chairing a UNHR panel

The tweet in example 201 responds by criticising the Saudis’ human rights record, which is described as the “worst”. It then claims that the Saudis behead more people than ISIS and uses the hashtag *auspol* to tag the tweet. The tweet in example 202,

however, uses the hashtag *auspol*, as it responds to *The Independent* tweet and uses a metaphoric expression that analogises Saudis with ISIS in terms of their criminal behaviour, except that the Saudis are different in being rich and owning “solid gold toilets”. Both tweets warn against allowing the Saudis to head the UNHRC panel by linking them directly to terroristic behaviour and comparing them to ISIS. Both tweets also recontextualise *The Independent* tweet, which also embeds a weblink to the article’s webpage, about the rage over electing the Saudis to head the UNHRC panel and linking them to terrorism by comparing them with ISIS. This is also achieved through using the hashtag *#Auspole*, which is basically devoted to tagging controversial and political Australian issues. This hashtag is used by tweets to disseminate negative representations of Saudis to the wider (Australian) public and gain the solidarity of corresponding views.

A concordance analysis of *tips* (seven tweets) reveals that tweets address two key issues: criticising the *Australia* human rights records and its political members' relationships with the Saudis. Tweets assume that Saudis share a similar human rights record with the Australians and refer to this resemblance as a means of “swapping torture tips”. They also condemn allowing the Saudis a seat on the UNHRC, despite their plans to “behead” Al-Nimr for what they assume are irrational reasons, as in the following tweets:

- Example 203 How about Australia close its Concentration Camps before swapping tips on 'How to Torture' with the Saudis...???
- Example 204 Asbestos is planning on swapping torture tips with the Saudis who behead more people than any other country...
- Example 205 Do America's key allies, the Saudis, take tips from ISIS on crucifying teens? Or are they already highly skilled?

Tweets use *tips* basically to highlight the asylum-seekers issue in *Australia*, which has provoked broad concerns and debates about the mandatory detention of asylum seekers that correlates to Australian national policy (Newman, Proctor, & Dudley, 2013). Associating Saudis with *tips* results in further negative discourse about them: tweets assume that the relationships with Saudis can only incur further hardship for the already distressed detainees. This issue is exaggerated by the tweet in example 203 which urges the closure of “Concentration Camps”¹⁴ before their condition becomes worse, presented by the phrase “swapping tips on 'How to Torture' with the Saudis”. The tweet here mocks Australia’s detention camps, which may become worse if the Australians align with the Saudis, who will impose further hardships on these “Camps” that are already condemned and criticised. In example 204, the tweet criticises the Foreign Minister (FM), Julie Bishop, for defending Australia’s human rights at the UNHRC in a plea for a seat on the council. To mock current Australian human rights issues, the tweet claims that the FM (referred to as “asbestos”) plans on “swapping torture tips” with Saudis who are to be on a UNHRC panel. The tweet suggests that both Australia and the Saudis share similar human rights records and, with both joining the UNHRC, the Saudis can perpetuate Australian human rights problems, given their history of beheading people. The last example (205) correlates *tips* with the crucifixion case of Ali Al-Nimr; the tweet mocks the Saudis (described as “America’s key allies”) for crucifying Al-Nimr. The keyword *tips* associates Saudis with ISIS, as both crucifying and beheading people. These depictions, in fact, echo similar representations to those brought up in Chapter 5. Tweets in the AUSC seems to express similar views to those expressed in the FCT, such as associating

¹⁴ Anthony Levin defines a concentration camp thus: “the concentration camp enables the nation-state to expunge unwanted or threatening social elements from the body politic. In the case of contemporary Australia, that element is the asylum seeker” (2017).
<http://rightnow.org.au/opinion-3/australias-concentration-camps/>.

Saudis with terror and corruption, introduced not only through the unique keywords but also through hashtags that are mainly devoted to Australian politics.

7.4. Keywords unique to the CAC

The Canadian corpus has the highest number of unique keywords. These include the names of political figures, including *Harper*, *Trudeau*, *Duceppe*; hashtags, including *cdnpoli*, *BarbaricCulturalPractices*, *MunkDebate*; keywords related to politics, including *wheat/board*, *vehicles*, *niqab*; and the keywords *Canada* and *Canadian*. The following paragraph presents brief background information about these keywords.

October 2015 signalled Canadian elections for Parliament and, during this period, tweets mainly focused on three main political figures: the prime minister S. Harper, the Liberal party leader J. Trudeau, and the former Opposition Party Leader G. Duceppe. These members are criticised by tweets for selling *arms* (vehicles) and *wheat board* to the Saudis. Hashtags were also generated in correspondence to the elections, such as *#cdnpoli*, which is short for Canadian politics, and *#BarbaricCulturalPractices*, which is a hashtag created on Twitter following the Conservative Party's proposal to launch a 'tip line' for Canadian citizens to report any barbaric cultural practices performed on Canadian lands. However, this service was later criticised by tweets for its racist and discriminatory purposes, such as banning *niqab* in Canada. Finally, *#MunkDebate* is a hashtag referring to a debate programme launched in 2008, and considered to be "Canada's first-ever federal election debate devoted to foreign policy issues" (Kindornay, 2015).

The question posed here then is how Saudis are associated with and represented in these Canadian-specific issues and hashtags, and whether this involvement projects them positively or negatively. Examining the concordance of

these unique keywords discloses negative discourse and adverse portrayals that associate Saudis with one or more of the following issues: terrorism (e.g. affiliating with ISIS and the war in Yemen), human rights violations (e.g. crucifying Al-Nimr and oppressing women, and manipulating Canadian Parliament members (e.g. arms deals and selling the wheat board). These issues are interrelated, i.e. a single keyword can coexist throughout different issues. For instance, *arms* relates Saudis to secret deals with government members (PM Harper as an example) and to terror, such as killing Yemenis, which is carried out with arms and weapons sold to the Saudis by the Canadian government. Tweets also use the hashtag *#BarbaicCulturalPractices* to tag the issues of banning niqab, selling arms to the Saudis and ignoring Saudis' oppression of women. Tweets condemn these issues and argue that they exemplify the 'real' barbaric practices of Conservative Party members.

The first issue that Canadian tweets associate with Saudis is terrorism and supporting ISIS (14 tweets). This issue pertains to Harper, Duceppe and Trudeau, who are represented as being involved in selling weapons and arms (armoured vehicles) to the Saudis. This issue is also tagged in the hashtags *#cdnpoli* and *#BarbaricCulturalPractices*. Tweets also condemn selling arms to Saudis and claim that they will fund and support ISIS with these weapons to kill Yemenis. For instance:

- Example 206 According to R Fisk, Saudis are providing materiel to ISIS – Harper sells arms to the former and bombs the latter - and the winner is ...
- Example 207 *#BarbaricCulturalPractices* Harper giving weapons to Saudis to kill innocent civilians in Yemen.
- Example 208 yes, everyone knows Saudis fund ISIS. Your war on Terror is a sham! All stories. You send arms to Saudis, dirty. *#cdnpoli*

Tweets use Canadian-specific hashtags to present Saudis negatively by condemning selling arms to them for two reasons; first, Saudis are alleged to arm and fund ISIS; and second, Saudis use these weapons to kill civilians in Yemen. Selling arms also triggers the tweet's concerns over the validity of the war on terror (example 208), which is described as a "sham". The tweet proposes a conspiracy between the Saudis and PM Harper, who provides them with arms, though, the tweet claims, it is well-known to everyone that the Saudis fund ISIS.

The second issue that relates to Saudis in the CAC is violations of human rights, especially the case of crucifying Ali Al-Nimr (10 tweets) and oppressing women (seven). Tweets criticise MPs for selling arms to the Saudis despite, allegedly, being supporters of ISIS and crucifying Al-Nimr. Women's rights are also challenged by Canadian tweets which suggest that Saudis oppress women and deny them their rights and freedom. Tweets refer to women as passive victims being "oppressed", "suppressed", "subjugated" and "forced" by the Saudis to follow specific dress codes, such as covering their bodies. For example:

- Example 209 #MunkDebate Nothing about the 15b in arms to the ISIS supporting, head chopping Saudis and the boy who will soon die?
- Example 210 #BarbaricCulturalPractices Harper and Tories selling weapons to help Saudis oppress women! Women forced to dress 'modestly'! Why help defend?
- Example 211 why are Saudis our allies, they fund Terror and oppress women: #cdnpoli

Tweets in the CAC use hashtags not only to address national (Canadian) issues but also to present Saudis adversely through the interrelation of some of the current themes in the FCT, such as funding terror, beheading people, crucifying Al-Nimr and

oppressing women. These issues are challenged by tweets against selling arms and aligning with the Saudis. Even when the hashtags are devoted to Canadian elections, (e.g. #MunkDebate) or Canadian national security (e.g. #BarbaricCulturalPractices), they involve the Saudis by condemning selling arms and wheat to them. Consequently, tweets represent Saudis as a national concern and a critical issue that should be addressed during Canada’s elections.

The last issue that connects Saudis to the CAC’s unique keywords is the manipulation of Canada’s MPs through selling weapons and arms deals (43 tweets) and selling the *wheat board* (33) to the Saudis. Tweets criticise the Canadian government (MPs) for doing arms deals with the Saudis, these being described as “big”, “massive”, “billion worth”, “ridiculous” and “in-secret”. Similarly, selling arms to the Saudis is also opposed in parallel with selling the wheat board: tweets reject trading the Canadian wheat board for arms deals with the Saudis. *Wheat* is pre-modified with the possessive pronoun “our”, which stresses the polarisation of us (Canadians) against them (Saudis). Selling wheat is portrayed as challenging the tweets’ identity, which will be at stake by the MPs if they give the wheat board to the Saudis. And although the Saudis are assigned a passive role (beneficiaries) in the process of selling wheat and arms, they are represented as empowered since they can exploit Canadian MPs. Selling arms and the wheat board, in turn, suggests that the Saudis pose a threat to Canadian ‘identity’ and national security. For example:

- Example 212 First, #Saudis buy #CWB co, now buy arms in mega deal w/o transparency. What else has Harper done?? #cdnpoli
- Example 213 Harper sold our wheat Board to the Saudis for this arms deal. Stripping Canadians off their identity. He must lose on Oct 19
- Example 214 So Kenney lying again about Saudis, who are ok to sell arms and wheat board too, but apparently laggards and beheaders. #cdnpoli

Tweets condemn PM Harper and the politician Kenney for selling the Saudis both arms and wheat, as well as other undisclosed issues. These issues are deemed unlawful, alarming and executed without “transparency”, suggesting secrecy and corruption. In example 213, the tweet accuses PM Harper of selling the wheat for arms deals with Saudis and presents this act as a threat to Canadian “identity”. The tweet suggests that Canadian identity is at risk of being stripped off by the Saudis if they buy the wheat board, implying a sense of threat and contempt, and, consequently, constructs the Saudis as a source threatening Canadians’ identity and safety. This negative stance triggers a tweet to demand that PM Harper lose the federal elections.

Selling wheat to the Saudis is posited as alarming and treacherous. In fact, wheat is represented as being given to the Saudis (11 tweets), which indicates that Canadians’ MPs have sacrificed Canadian wheat for the Saudis. This also triggers some concerns in tweets about wheat prices, which will be under the control of the Saudis, as in example 223 below:

Example 215 Hey Harper: Canada Wheat Board price controls are in the hands of the Saudis. Did you KNOW-tice that? Yeah, them. NOT you. Them.

The tweet addresses PM Harper and reasserts concerns that the Saudis will control the wheat prices, and emphasises the risks of giving their wheat away through repeating the anaphoric pronoun “them”. Using the pronoun “them” presents the Saudis as a negative and threatening other and highlights the discourse of a (threatened) ‘us’ versus (vile) ‘them’ dichotomy.

Further, the three Canadian-specific hashtags are used by tweets to recontextualise and highlight other issues. For instance, *#BarbaricCulturaPractices* is recontextualised and used as a hashtag on Twitter only to mock the Conservative Party's contradictory attitudes towards some issues like niqab. Tweets use this hashtag to interdiscursively introduce other topics, such as condemning the decision of banning niqab in Canada while making arms deals with the Saudis, who impose it on women. The hashtag *#cdnpoli*, which is devoted to Canadian politics, is also recontextualised by tweets to represent Saudis negatively; tweets condemn the Canadian MPs alliance with the Saudis to highlight other issues, such as their support for terrorism (ISIS) and their oppression of women.

Additionally, these unique keywords disclose some discursive strategies with which tweets in the CAC represent Saudis. For instance, tweets deploy nomination strategies which refer to Saudis in relation to terrorism, such as “terrorist spawning”, and to violence, such as “human rights violators”. In addition, tweets also employ predicational strategies which also serve to ascribe negative qualities to Saudis related to terrorism and violence, such as “beheading”, “crucifying”, “stoning”, backing ISIS and AlQaeda, oppressing women by imposing niqab and modest clothing, and practising slavery. Saudis are also represented as “tyrants” and ironically portrayed as “ally”, “pals” and “good guys” to mock MPs' alliances/relationships with them. Hashtags in the CAC serve to promote additional negative stances held by Canadian tweets against Saudis. Within these hashtags, tweets employ nomination strategies to represent Saudis regarding these issues. These strategies are listed in Table 7-2, below:

| #MunkDebate | #cdnpoli | #BarbaricCulturalPractices |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| beheading/crucifying, head-chopping, ISIS inspiring, | murderous, terrorist- spawning | Pre-middle ages, war criminals, barbaric, business partners, despotic, warmongering, Wahhabi, champion torturers, beheaders |

Table 7-2: Nomination strategies used to refer to Saudis in the CAC hashtags

Examining Table 7-2, above, shows that tweets use adverse terms to refer to Saudis that are mainly related to terror and violence. Since hashtags are meant to promote and share specific topics, employing these negative strategies to refer to Saudis in Canadian-specific hashtags suggests that tweets intend to reconnect with the larger public to address their concerns about Parliament members during the election period. Tweets tend to tag Saudis with such adverse portraits in reaction to ongoing debates (TV debate series for instance), which highlight certain issues such as arms deals and selling the wheat board, that Canadian tweets reject and view as alarming. Selling wheat is an example that is regarded as jeopardy by the PM Harper: tweets condemn selling wheat to the Saudis as they assume it threatens their Canadian identity. Tweets also presuppose that the Saudis will control the wheat prices, and this is foreseen as another upcoming hazard for Canadians.

In sum, the issues and themes that recur through the unique keywords in the CAC suggest a hegemonic ‘negative’ discourse that affiliates with the dominating discourse in the FCT (see Chapter 5).

7.5. Keywords unique to the GBC

Looking back at Table 6-1, the keywords unique to the GBC are *Cameron*, *UK*, *MOJ*, *Corbyn*, *Tories* and *#newsNight*. All these keywords are limited to political themes. D.

Cameron was the Prime Minister of the UK from 2010 to 2016, J. Corbyn was the leader of the Labour and Opposition Party from 2015 to 2020, and Tories stands for Conservative Party members. The MOJ is short for the UK Ministry of Justice, whereas #newsNight is a hashtag referring to a BBC2 TV programme, broadcast on weeknights, which identifies its goal as being “to explain the complexities of the modern world ... and hold the powerful to account” (Newsnight, 2018). It also has a Twitter account with over 5,000 followers.

Tweets including PM *Cameron* (79 tweets) mainly tackle two points: condemning his deals with the Saudis (65 tweets) and contrasting his attitude against Corbyn’s, who is favoured and praised for his stance opposing dealing with the Saudis, especially in terms of the crucifixion of Al-Nimr (14 tweets). Tweets criticise Cameron for doing arms deals with the Saudis, using terms like “sells”, “standing up to”, “supports”, “loves cosyng”, “helps” and “being bribed by the Saudis”. These deals, as tweets suggest, only contribute to supporting terror, such as backing ISIS or killing Yemenis. Tweets also contrast Cameron’s relationship with the Saudis with the stance of Corbyn, who holds an opposing position, especially in terms of the crucifixion of Ali Al-Nimr. Example tweets are as follows:

- Example 216 SORRY but David_Cameron calling Jeremy Corbin a TERRORIST sympathiser is a bit rich as Cameron supports ISIS funding Saudis!??
- Example 217 And @david_cameron is selling the bombs for the #Saudis to bomb #Yemen every night for 6 months...
- Example 218 Fantastic speech Corbyn. Can you imagine Cameron standing up to the Saudis for sadistically crucifying & beheading a 21 yr old. NEVER

Tweets paint a negative image of Saudis by associating them with arming ISIS, bombing Yemen and crucifying Al-Nimr. Tweets in the examples above express their resentment at PM Cameron for aligning with the Saudis, who pose a threat to the UK since they fund ISIS (example 216). Cameron's relationship with the Saudis is also challenged as regards two other recurring issues in the FCT, the non-stop bombing of Yemen (example 217) and "sadistically crucifying & beheading" Al-Nimr (example 218). These issues pertain to the strategy of a negative-other presentation (van Dijk, 1999), which emphasises that the Saudis are a threat to British people, and highlights the Saudis' negative qualities to criticise Cameron's (illegitimate) relations with them. This strategy is also used to praise Corbyn for taking an opposing (negative) view of both the Saudis and Cameron, who does not stand against them, especially regarding the crucifixion of Al-Nimr.

The keyword *UK* is mentioned in 111 tweets, collectivized in 70 tweets, whereas the remaining 41 tweets refer to the *UK* as a geographic location. In the former case, tweets use the *UK* as a collectivised term to refer to the UK's government and its representatives. This includes referring to arms deals, supporting the Saudis having a UNHRC seat and how Saudis "undermine" UK law. However, *UK* as a place is used either to refer to UK-made weapons, military training and supporting the Saudis in their wars against civilians (especially in Yemen), or to refer to the threats that Saudis are supposedly posing to the UK, such as spreading their ideology, funding mosques and gradually owning British lands. The crucifixion case of Al-Nimr also triggers tweets' concerns over the Saudis' plans to spread their ideology to the UK and raises security concerns. For example:

- Example 219 Saudis Aided by UK military for training and weapons supply!
- Example 220 UK made 'secret pact' with Saudi Arabia for human rights council place... this is a joke the UK is owned by the Saudis
- Example 221 @jeremycorbyn will you stop the Saudis funding their ideology in the UK?

In examples 219 and 220, tweets express their resentment at the UK government for both the military training for and “weapons supply” to the Saudis, as it led to the deaths of Yemeni civilians in an airstrike on a wedding. However, tweets’ condemnation of helping the Saudis gain a UNHRC seat and Al-Nimr’s crucifixion (example 221) triggers their concerns about UK national security. The tweet in example 221 assumes that the Saudis pose a threat to the UK if they are allowed onto the UNHRC, by controlling it, such as “UK is owned by the Saudis”. Whereas in example 229, the tweet supposes that the Saudis threatens the UK, through the expression “funding their ideology”, which claims that the Saudis will spread a beheading ideology in the UK if Corbyn does not stop the Saudis from crucifying Al-Nimr.

The last unique keyword is the hashtag *#newsnight* (14 tweets): tweets with this hashtag criticise the UK government (MPs) for selling arms to the Saudis, supporting them joining the UNHRC and condemning the Saudis for manipulating MPs to defend the Saudis. Additionally, tweets condemn Saudi-UK relations by commending the Newsnight presenter Emily Maitlis for standing up against what they describe as a hypocritical attitude of Saudis in the UNHRC. For example:

- Example 222 Why is #newsnight not talking about Cameron being bribed by the Saudis with arms deal to get them on the UN human right...
- Example 223 I wonder how much the Saudis will pay #kawczynskimp for defending them on #newsnight...

Example 224 Go @maitlis. Going in for the kill on the outrageous hypocrisy of the Saudis on human rights #Newsnight

Involving the Saudis in political, UK-specific hashtags is an indication of how tweets deploy hashtags to disseminate negative stances and attitudes about Saudis. The *#newsnight* hashtag is linked with some of the common themes in the FCT to stress one main issue, that the Saudis constitute a hazard to the UK. This issue is also highlighted through the interrelation of themes, such as in example 222, in which the tweet criticises the Newsnight programme for not discussing how the Saudis “bribed” Cameron via an “arms deal” to get a UNHRC seat. Tweets also use the keyword *#newsnight* to condemn UK MPs, such as Daniel Kawczynski, claiming that they are bribed by the Saudis to defend them (example 223). Tweets also praise the Newsnight presenter, Emily Maitlis, for her resentful attitude towards the Saudis in an interview with the Saudi ambassador to the UN (example 224).

Tweeting about Saudis while tagging the *#newsnight* programme also reveals how intertextuality and interdiscursivity are used through hashtags to portray the Saudis and highlight certain negative aspects of their representations. Tweets deploy the *#newsnight* hashtag to address issues of corruption that link UK MPs with the Saudis, such as bribery and hypocrisy. Tweets also recontextualise the hashtag to address other topics, such as the manipulation of MPs to help the Saudis gain a UNHRC seat, thereby constructing further negative portrayals of Saudis in association with UK politicians.

Using both transitivity and discursive strategies analyses also reveals how these unique keywords can be helpful in unravelling aspects of the representation of Saudis. A transitivity analysis shows that Saudis, although assigned patient roles in

material processes, are covertly empowered and represented as controlling and penetrating the UK’s legal system, such as “US/UK suck up to Saudis”, “UK cosying up with Saudis”, “UK bullied by Saudis” and “Saudis coerced UK gov”. This depiction entails a discourse of corruption and plotting and promotes further negative portrayals of Saudis, such as constructing them as a national threat and international terrorists. However, when the UK is collectivised, it is assigned an active role as an agent in material processes (29 tweets) including “support”, “made”, “give”, “back” and “selling”: these processes trigger acts of condemnation towards the UK’s role in promoting the Saudis’ violence and presuppose an alarming and threatening (Saudi) danger that may be inflicted on the UK and its people.

Tweets, using unique keywords, also employ nomination and predicational strategies via which they refer to Saudis and ascribe specific characteristics to them. Tweets use the same strategies while tweeting about deals in which some UK government members (MPs) are involved with the Saudis. These are listed in Table 7-3, below:

| Discursive strategy | Saudis | ... deals |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Nomination | terror-funding, ISIS funding, fucking, terror exporters, child-beheading, criminal, barbaric, abusive, | hideous, shady, back-room, squalid, secret, dodgy, bloody, backhand, backdoor, alleged, grubby, commercial, |
| Predicational | murderous, tyrants, less popular, bias, paying terrorists, sadistically beheading/crucifying teen, slaughtering Yemenis, execute gays, biggest funders/supporters of Hamas | disgraceful, erroneously |

Table 7-3: Discursive strategies in GBC unique words

As seen in Table 7-3, above, tweets use nomination strategies to refer to Saudis and their deals with some UK government members. Saudis are mostly represented in terms of terror and terrorism support, such as “terror-funding” and “ISIS funding”, or of violence, such as “abusive”. These strategies promote both themes of terror and violence which seem to be persistent qualities attributed to Saudis across the corpora. The deals are also described as indecent, filthy and dark (e.g. “dodgy”, “hideous”, “shady”), indicating a negative discourse prosody of corruption and conspiracy.

7.6. Keywords unique to the USC

The USC has only one unique keyword: the hashtag *#GopDebate*. The term refers to one of the two main political parties in the USA, which are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party (the latter is also referred to as the Grand Old Party or ‘GOP’). The hashtag basically tags a debate show for Republican Party members to choose the top ten presidential nominees. Tweets post their feedback on the debate tagging the programme in their tweets. The question then is how these tweets connect Saudis to *#GopDebate*, and how they are represented within this hashtag.

Using concordance analysis, the *#GopDebate* occurs in 21 tweets. Examining each tweet shows that tweets refer to Saudis with reflection on the topics being debated by GOP members and the tag *#GopDebate* in their tweets. More specifically, three candidates are in focus: Jeb Bush, the 43rd Governor of Florida, Lindsey Graham, a Senator from South Carolina, and Rand Paul, a Senator from Kentucky. Tweets associate these figures with the Saudis, mainly in terms of the 9/11 attacks and the war in Yemen.

Tweets condemn US relations with the Saudis despite the latter being responsible for the 9/11 attacks: this involves both Bush and Graham who are accused

of supporting the Saudis, either by befriending them, concealing their involvement in the 9/11 attacks or supporting them in the Yemen war. For example:

- Example 225 @JebBush Your family's BFFs are Saudis. 15 of the 19 terrorists named on 9/11 were Saudis. #HeKeptUsSafe #GOPDebate
- Example 226 Uh @LindseyGrahamSC tripping right now next 9/11 coming from Syria? Common Son #GOPDebate last one came from Saudis
- Example 227 Iraqis weren't bound to kill us, it was the Saudis under bin Laden #GOPDebate

Tweets in the USC use the hashtag *#GOPDebate* to criticise US politicians for (still) aligning with the Saudis despite their responsibility for the 9/11 attacks. By associating the Saudis with the 9/11 attacks, tweets suggest that the Saudis are a source of threat to the US and, consequently, question the credibility of candidates who align with them. For instance, in examples 225 and 226, both tweets address the 9/11 attacks to counter Jeb Bush and Lindsey Graham, who are among the presidential candidates in the GOP debate show. Both tweets recontextualise the 9/11 event to critically reminds both candidates of the Saudis' role in those attacks. In example 225, the tweet mocks Bush for his family's close relationship with the Saudis using the acronym 'BFFs', which means that they and the Saudis are 'best friends for sure/forever sincere'. It then refers to the 9/11 attacks, stressing the number of Saudis among the attackers, and linking this event to the Bush family's relationship with the Saudis. Associating the Saudis with 9/11 carries both a sense of mockery and fear since, despite their responsibility for the attacks, the Bush family still maintain relations with the Saudis, and this is postulated as alarming and threatening to the US. This sense of threat is further highlighted by using a hashtag generated as irony of J. Bush's statement in which he defends his brother, former US President George W.

Bush, saying “he kept us safe” (Prevolos, 2015). This statement was tagged on Twitter to mock Bush’s presidential campaign. In example 226, however, the sense of danger is highlighted by the tweet, which disapproves of Lindsey Graham statement during the debate and warns against another 9/11 style attack coming from Syria if the US does not intervene and stop ISIS. The tweet describes Lindsey’s statement as a foolish act and mocks him by saying that the original 9/11 was caused by the Saudis, who constitute a real threat, and not ISIS—constructing the Saudis as a threat is also linked to the US-led invasion of Iraq following the 9/11 attacks as a part of the war-on-terror coalition. The tweet in example 227 points to the illegitimacy of the war on Iraq and states that the Iraqis are not a threat to the US, rather it was the Saudis who were responsible for the attacks. The tweet claims that the Saudis represent the real threat, given that Bin Laden, the planner of the attacks, was a Saudi. Tagging the GOP debate programme, the tweet addresses the Republican candidates and hints at their alliance with the Saudis, despite their responsibility for the 9/11 attacks, suggesting a conspiracy and corruption, as well as putting US national security at stake.

On the other hand, tweets express their congruence with presidential candidate Rand Paul, who holds a strict and negative stance towards the Saudis, and praise him for standing up against them regarding their terrorism support and the Syrian refugee crisis. For instance:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Example 228 | Example 247 Rand Paul the only candidate to call out Saudis on their terrorism financing, arguably more taboo in the US than abortion. Bravo. #GOPDebate |
| Example 229 | Yes! Go Rand Paul on Saudi Arabia! #GOPDebate force Saudis to take the refugees and make them bring peace to middle east |

Tweets also use the #GOPDebate hashtag to acclaim those politicians who hold a negative stance vis-à-vis the Saudis. In the USC, the only candidate who is acclaimed by tweets for his stance against the Saudis is Rand Paul. In example 228, the tweet admires Paul for being the only candidate who stands up to the Saudis and criticises them openly for supporting terrorism. It also claims that criticising the Saudis is an act of bravery by Paul since, it claims, no one can talk about this issue that is considered “more taboo in the US than abortion”. In this context, the tweet warns against the Saudis by presenting them in a powerful position and condemns US politicians who turn a blind eye to their terroristic affiliations. Similarly, in example 229, the tweet aligns itself with Paul as he attacks the Saudis on the GOP debate show. It also urges him to “force” the Saudis to accept Syrian refugees and stabilise the Middle East. In this respect, the tweet perceives the Syrian refugees as a problem elevated by the Saudis who do not receive any of them. It also assumes that the Saudis play a role in destabilising the Middle East and urges that action be taken against them in order to restore peace in the region.

In fact, the discourse surrounding the Saudis in the USC is homogenous with the discourse in the FCT: this is indicated by the hashtag #GopDebate that is deployed by tweets to promote other tweets’ endorsement of the existing ‘negative’ discourse about Saudis in the USC.

7.7. Keywords unique to the RWC

The unique keywords in the RWC are *Hajis*, *India* and *Indian*. The term *Hajis* (42 tweets) is the plural form of *Haji*, which is taken from Hajj and refers to someone who has successfully performed Hajj or pilgrimage in Mecca. This term is mainly used in Malay-speaking countries (Ruthven, 2012). Tweets in the RWC use this

keyword to highlight two main points: blaming the Saudis for the casualties in the stampede at Mecca and how they treated the deceased “Hajis” (pilgrims’) bodies. In the case of the former, tweets emphasise the Saudis’ responsibility for the death of pilgrims in the stampede, which could have been avoided if the numbers of pilgrims had been controlled, and blame the Saudis’ reckless behaviour and greed for money. This issue triggers tweets to proclaim Saudis’ incapability to handle Hajj and ensure pilgrims’ safety. For example:

- Example 230 Saudis proved twice this year they are incapable of managing Hajj and ensuring safety of Hajjis.
Reduce number of Hajjaj, maybe? #MinaStampede
- Example 231 Shame on you for hiding facts about #mina tragedy where innocent #hajjis were killed by reckless #saudis
- Example 232 Saudis treat Hajj as theme park, pull in as many tourists as possible, if anything goes wrong, blame the Hajjis

Using the keyword *Hajis* triggers tweets to react to the stampede event by blaming the Saudis for the tragic event. Tweets not only assign Saudis the responsibility for the stampede but also accuse them of mismanagement and being incapable of handling the Hajj event and maintaining pilgrims’ safety. Saudis are referred to as reckless and accused of hiding the facts about the stampede (example 230) and being incapable of managing Hajj (example 231). Saudis are also accused of exploiting the Hajj season. The tweet in example 232 compares it to a “theme park”: this comparison positions the Saudis in an adverse light as it offends the sacredness of the holy season and its guests. Saudis are presented as exploiting the pilgrims’ money without ensuring their safety and, at the same time, blaming these pilgrims if something goes wrong, suggesting that the Saudis pose a threat to the pilgrims and so they should be disqualified from managing the Hajj season.

As with handling the bodies of dead pilgrims, tweets represent Hajjis as victims of the Saudis who are reported as treating the deceased pilgrims with disrespect, such as treating the dead bodies like a “pile of shit”, “pulled by JCB”, “stacked in heaps”, “dump bodies without informing relatives” and “hiding actual number of the deceased pilgrims”. Hajjis are referentially described as “poor”, “Muslim”, “martyred”, “innocent” and “deceased”, which draws further sympathy towards the dead pilgrims and criminalises the Saudis. For instance:

- Example 233 Saudis are Planning to Dump all dead bodies of Hajjis without informing their relatives
- Example 234 Thousands of African troops crossed into Yemen to die for Saudis while their dead Hajjis treated like piles of shit.
- Example 235 Have u seen the pics of how they stacked the deceased Hajjis in heaps. Saudis have failed on many fronts.

Tweets in the examples above proclaim that the Saudis treated the dead pilgrims terribly (by burying them without notifying their families). Using the words “dump” and “stacked” while handling the dead bodies carries negative semantic prosody since “dump” refers to unwanted ‘worthless’ things and “stack” refers to inanimate objects. These tweets indicate that the Saudis were disrespectful towards the dead bodies on the one hand, and to their families on the other. The tweet in example 234 associates this issue with the war in Yemen, arguing against the Saudis for the disrespectful manner with which they treated the bodies of African pilgrims while thousands of African soldiers are being killed in Yemen while defending the Saudis in their war. This negative presentation of the Saudis goes beyond treating the pilgrims’ dead bodies inhumanely and also suggests that their attitude towards (living) pilgrims can be racist and cruel.

Examining both keywords *India* (142 tweets) and *Indian* (90 tweets) suggests that tweets were originating from India or from Indian tweeters.¹⁵ This may be due to the themes that dominate the tweets of both keywords, which are summarised in the following points:

- A domestic Indian maid whose hands were chopped off by a Saudi employee
- Saudis protected by Indian police (in the case of a Nepalese rape victim)
- Saudis raping Indian women
- Indian workers treated like slaves by Saudis

The first issue seems to trigger the other following points. The story that spread in the media was about a domestic Indian maid working for a Saudi citizen who tried to escape from a second-floor apartment window using a long cloth. The maid fell down onto a sharp electric box that immediately amputated her arm (AlHaidar, 2015). However, this story was fabricated, accusing the Saudi sponsor of deliberately chopping off her arm, as well as abuse and harassment. This incident triggered several hostile reactions on Twitter and raised other issues, such as accusing the Saudis of immoral behaviour towards Indian maids (including rape), an inhumane attitude towards Indian workers and corruption of the Indian police who covered for the Saudis. The latter is associated with the case of the rape of a Nepalese woman, in which a Saudi diplomat in India was involved (Section 5.4.1). The Indian police are accused of manipulating the case and allowing the diplomat to escape. For instance:

¹⁵ This was achieved by tracking the geolocations of 20 random tweets through identifying their latitude/ longitude. Among these, 16 tweets originated from India. Besides, India is among the top ten countries in the data.

- Example 236 Its unacceptable to us, but for Saudis such ghastly acts appear to be Normal and Quite Acceptable if it's done against Indians!
- Example 237 Saudi diplomat left the country. Nobody's bothered because they are rich. Saudis can get away with anything. Living charmed life!
- Example 238 I've been hearing a lot of stories about the #saudis raping or rather mauling (Indian) women since a long time.
- Example 239 Saudis having been for long ill treating Indian workers, raping Indian maids and now even chopping their hand off

In example 236, the tweet replies to an Indian breaking news account that posted a picture of the Indian maid in hospital after her hand was amputated (see Figure 7-1, below). The image quotes the word “unacceptable” as said by ‘India’, referring to the Indian community.



Figure 7-1: Image of the Indian maid in hospital after her hand was amputated, as posted on Twitter

The tweet reacts to this image by voicing rejection and contempt towards this incident. It quotes the word “unacceptable” and uses the plural pronoun “us” to collectively represent the Indian people. The tweet also claims that Saudis are familiar

with such horrific acts and only practise them on Indians, and consider it acceptable and normal. The tweet's response suggests the racist and aggressive behaviour of Saudis against others, especially Indians. However, in example 237, the tweet refers to the rape case against a Saudi diplomat who it is claimed fled the country with the assistance of the Indian police. It then posits an argument claiming that Saudis can escape this case and any other such issue because they are "rich". The tweet eventually concludes by stating that Saudis live a "charmed life!", suggesting their indifference, cruelty and selfishness towards others. Both tweets recontextualise the two events of the amputated-arm maid and the Nepalese rape case to represent all Saudis negatively. For instance, the tweet in example 238 replies to an Indian account that includes an image and a weblink to an article referring to the maid's case. However, this account also recontextualises the event into a fabricated text accusing the employer of deliberately chopping off the maid's arm. The tweet's reply also recontextualises the event to accuse the Saudis collectively of violence and suggests that they often commit these acts and considers them part of their routine, especially against Indians. Similarly, the tweet in example 239 recontextualises the rape case against the Saudi diplomat to claim that Saudis are empowered by their wealth to act against others without any accountability.

A further discursive strategies analysis shows that tweets in the RWC deploy nomination strategies to refer to Saudis in adverse ways, such as "fucking" and "shameless", and predicational strategies that reflect how they depict Saudis, such as "savages", "dictators", "disgusting" and "rape terrorists". In fact, the unique keywords in the RWC indicate a negative discourse that is homogenous with the other four corpora, which present Saudis as dangerous and a threat to less-empowered others.

7.8. Keywords more common to some corpora than others

This section discusses the keywords that are more common in some corpora than others. This is achieved through manually comparing the keyword lists of each corpus with the remaining corpora individually, and any keywords among common to two or more corpora are grouped together. Each keyword is then examined in context using extensive concordance analysis. The resulting common keywords are discussed in the following sections.

7.8.1. The RWC and the USC: Saudis and women driving

Both the RWC and the USC share the word *drive** which collocates *women* in 23 tweets; the collocation of *drive** and *women* is associated with the issue of Saudi women driving ban. Although the government announced a lifting of the ban in 2015, Saudi women were only allowed to drive in 2018, so these tweets were during the period of the ban. The first tweet tackling the issue of Saudi women driving dates back to August 2010 and was posted by an anonymous account in an interrogative form (see Figure 6-1). This time it corresponded with the month of Ramadan and, ironically, the tweet posited ‘a Ramadan’ riddle, asking the Saudis about the reasons why women cannot drive and whether it is a law that applies only to Saudi Arabia. Since then, frequent reference to this issue has been made by different tweets.



Figure 7-2: First tweet mentioning the ban on Saudi women driving

What concerns the present research is the ways in which Saudis are associated with the Saudi women driving issue and how tweets employ this issue to represent Saudis. To do this, I rely on concordance analysis to investigate the correlation between the two. In fact, tweets in the RWC (19 tweets) link Saudis negatively with the ban on women driving, recalling assumptions of oppression, contradiction, terrorism and violence. Saudis, in light of this issue, are presented as either hating women, avoiding Sunnah, oppressing women, “horrible” or “primitives”. The issue of preventing women driving also prompted tweets to condemn the Saudis chairing the UNHRC, increasing oil demand, using barbaric methods for punishment and financing ISIS. For example:

- Example 240 Our "friends" the Saudis r horrible. Women cannot drive, they punish via barbaric methods AND ISIS finance backers
- Example 241 why do u Saudis hate women?why cant women drive or walk alone in the streets? Y is it a male dominated country
- Example 242 the Saudis will chair the un human rights commission ...are women allowed to drive now?

Women being banned from driving is problematised by tweets in the RWC which associate it with some of the issues co-occurring with Saudis in the FCT, such as beheading people, backing ISIS and allowing them onto the UNHRC. Banning women from driving entails further negative depictions of Saudis, such as describing them as “horrible”, hating women and violating human rights. Saudi women are thus presented as agentless, abused and subjugated by Saudi men and forced to live in “a male-dominated country” (example 241). Tweets use the issue of women being banned from driving to oppose aligning with the Saudis and condemn allowing them onto the UNHRC (example 242). These negative qualities resemble a negative-other presentation strategy in which tweets in the RWC link Saudis with some of the common topics in the FCT, along with the issue of Saudi women driving, to present them as a vile and negative outgroup. This strategy also poses the Saudis as a threatening source in terms of having them as allies and a member of the UNHRC.

In the USC, however, there are four tweets addressing the driving ban, three of these highlight the driving ban issue by associating it with negative issues with the Saudis in the FCT, such as crucifying dissidents and beheading women for sorcery, as well as posting sarcastic images of how Saudi women will eventually drive their cars after being banned for such a long time. For example:

Example 243 Dissidents are crucified and/or beheaded in Saudi Arabia, women are banned from driving. Tell me why Saudis gave \$\$\$ to Clinton Foundation?

Example 244 And women are not allowed to drive. And this
http://nbcnews.com/id/4836244/ns/world_news/t/saudis-forced-confront-issue-wife-abuse/#.VgjeYY9Viko

Tweets refer to the Saudi women driving ban in the USC to raise some conflicting issues often linked with Saudis in the FCT. Tweets claim that Saudi women are not

only banned from driving but are also subjected to oppression and violence. The tweet in example 243 proclaims that these issues are neglected by US Democrats, such as Clinton, because the Saudis are reported to fund her organisation and election campaign. In example 244, the tweet quotes another user who opposes approving of the Saudis having membership of the UNHRC, though they still behead women for sorcery and practising witchcraft. The tweet comments on an *NBCnews* article in 2004 about a Saudi female presenter who was subject to domestic violence, being beaten by her husband. The tweet suggests that banning women from driving is not the only issue that Saudi women suffer from, as it also hints at other issues of violence that Saudi women endure. Both tweets also recontextualise the driving ban to highlight other negative issues associated with the Saudis to present them negatively.

Even when tweets report that the Saudis will be allowing women to drive, this is tweeted ironically (through images and GIFs); tweets claim that the Saudis, when they allow women to drive, will enforce conditions that hinder their driving, as in Figure 7-3, below:

Finally, the **Saudis** are allowing **women** to **drive**. With a few conditions. . .



Figure 7-3: A tweet's response to allowing Saudi women to drive

In Figure 7-3, above, the tweet reacts to the news that Saudis will be allowing women to drive, and states that this decision is applied with “a few conditions”. These conditions are represented multimodally, in a moving image ‘GIF’ which depicts a presumably Saudi woman dressed and fully covered in black, driving her car and breaking the garage gate and fence while reversing. The car is also totally covered by a black cloth, which sarcastically refers to the strict rules the tweet claims the Saudis are going to impose on women driving. From an intertextuality and interdiscursivity perspective, the tweet also recontextualises the Saudis’ decision to allow women to drive into a sarcastic one. Although not expressed in words, the tweet uses a moving image (GIF) to recontextualise the few conditions which Saudis are going to impose on women driving into ironic ones, presuming that these rules will obstruct their freedom and safety.

However, there is a tweet which seemingly represents Saudis in a positive sense in relation to women driving. The tweet quotes another tweet which belongs to

a magazine account (*The Economist*) and which also provides a link to an online article on its website about the decision to allow Saudi women to vote in local elections for the first time. Apparently, this tweet preceded the decision to allow women to drive in Saudi Arabia. For example:



Figure 7-4: The only positive tweet about Saudi women driving

In Figure 7-4, above, the tweet comments on *The Economist* tweet, which refers to the news about Saudi women being allowed to vote for the first time. The tweet then expresses its pleasure with the tweet through the phrase “Awesome news!” and stresses that educating Saudis abroad has reflected positively on their attitude towards women, which resulted in allowing them to vote. The tweet also encourages the Saudis to continue with their ‘positive’ attitude towards women by allowing them to drive. The tweet implies criticism of the Saudis, as it claims that this decision was made only because Saudis have been educated abroad. It implicitly suggests that Saudis impose restrictions on women and deny them their rights, and it is mainly due

to foreign education that Saudis are now more enlightened and able to deal positively with women.

7.8.2. The CAC, USC and RWC: *ISIL* and the *Islamic State*

Other keywords in common between the CAC, the USC and the RWC are *ISIL* (60 tweets) and *Islamic State* (23 tweets). Both keywords are used synonymously to refer to what is recently known as the Islamic State (IS) or ISIS: these different terms do, in fact, have different meanings linked to the geographic expansion of the group. The group, recognised as Jihadists militants, first identified itself as *ISIL*, then as *ISIS*, which is abbreviated in Arabic as *Daesh*, and finally as the *Islamic State (IS)* since June 2014 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). However, what is of interest is how tweets associate Saudis with these keywords and whether using these different words for the same group can entail different presentations of Saudis in the corpora. To answer these questions, each keyword is examined using extensive concordance analysis.

ISIL is an acronym standing for the *Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant*. The *Levant* is used to refer to Greater Syria, which traditionally includes Palestine, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait and Jordan. By using this term, Laub and Masters (2015) state that the group has expanded its ambitions as “its fighters have crossed into neighbouring Syria to challenge both the Assad regime and secular and Islamist opposition groups there” (p. 1). The keyword *ISIL* occurs in 59 tweets, dispersed across the three corpora as follows: six tweets in the CAC, six in the USC, and 47 in the RWC. *IS*, however, is mentioned in only one tweet in the CAC, seven in the USC, and 15 in the RWC. These tweets are examined extensively in the following

paragraphs to highlight, in particular, how tweets correlate *ISIL* with Saudis in each corpus.

In the CAC, examining the concordance lines of *ISIL* shows that tweets tend to postulate Saudis as backing ISIL or questioning their intention to fight them. More specifically, tweets oppose the Canadian government making arms deals with Saudis, implicitly referring to their ISIL support. The *Islamic State* keyword, however, occurs in only one tweet, which refers to the Saudis' financial support for ISIL to condemn the arms deals made by PM Harper with the Saudis. In this respect, ISIL is used synonymously with ISIS. For instance:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Example 245 | Unbelievable hypocrisy. Next time you hear Harper [whine] about ISIL, think about the deal he made with the Saudis,... |
| Example 246 | Wahhabi Saudis are bankrolling Sunni Islamic State terrorists in Iraq and Syria. As Harper sells arms to Saudis |

Tweets use both the *ISIL* and *Islamic State* keywords to highlight one of the recurring issues in the CAC (and the FCT): selling arms to the Saudis. Selling arms is used in tweets as a means to criticise the PM, Harper, and MPs for selling arms and weapons to the Saudis, who are alleged to arm and fund ISIL/Islamic State. In example 245, however, the tweet responds to a weblink in an article from *The Huffington Post* (Canadian edition), which harshly criticises the Conservative Party for selling arms to the Saudis and calling them “allies”. The writer also refers to issues of human rights, beheadings, the war in Yemen and the 9/11 attacks to condemn Canada’s relationship with the Saudis. The tweet recontextualises the article to condemn PM Harper’s relationship with the Saudis by linking them to funding and arming ISIL. Meanwhile, in example 246, this tweet claims that the Saudis are “bankrolling” the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and compare this to PM Harper who, despite this claim, still sells

arms to the Saudis. This association serves to criminalise the Saudis and condemn PM Harper for maintaining dealing with them despite the Saudis conspicuously sponsoring the Islamic State. The tweet uses a nomination strategy to refer to Saudis as “Wahhabi” and the Islamic State as “Sunni”, and it also refers to its followers as “terrorists” to highlight their mutual religious doctrine.

In the USC, however, tweets use *ISIL* synonymously with *ISIS*: both terms also suggest that the Saudis (in collaboration with the West) created *ISIS*. These tweets also condemn the contradiction of the Republican Party, which claim to fight *ISIS* while selling weapons to the Saudis who fund them, thus associating the Saudis with terrorism and constructing them as a source of threat. For example:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Example 247 | Example 268 No one should be fooled by US claims they are well and truly fighting <i>ISIS</i> , this is a joke coz #US and #Saudis are the real # <i>ISIS</i> supporters |
| Example 248 | lets bomb <i>ISIS</i> but welcome and sell arms to the barbaric Saudis. Makes sense. Why doesn't the west cut of any country which supports <i>ISIS</i> |

Tweets claim that the declarations made by the US government, represented by the Republican Party, to fight *ISIS* are false and deceptive. The tweet in example 247, for instance, warns against the US’s misleading claims to fight *ISIS* while they align with the Saudis and sell them weapons. It also questions the reliability of the war against *ISIS*, which is led by both the US and Saudis, while the Saudis support *ISIS* covertly. The tweet uses both terms, *ISIL* and *ISIS*, alternately as neither seems to entail any semantic variation, and also tags *ISIS*, the US and the Saudis in hashtags to circulate certain claims to the wider public. Using both terms (*ISIL*, *ISIS*) suggests that the tweet is aware of the resemblance between the terms while recognising the pervasiveness of *ISIS* over *ISIL*. Similarly, the tweet in example 248 mocks the US

government for fighting ISIL while they sell arms to the “barbaric” Saudis. It implies a conspiracy between the US and the Saudis who pretend to fight ISIL while secretly supporting them. The tweet’s negative stance against the Saudis urges the West to boycott the Saudis and any other country that supports ISIL.

Similar to *ISIL*, tweets in the USC associate *Islamic State* with the Saudis mainly in terms of their financial and moral support for the group (seven tweets). Tweets condemn the Saudis either for backing the Islamic State financially (two tweets) or approving their ideology (five tweets), using words like “support”, “fund”, “sympathise”, “preach” and “agree”. For example:

- Example 249 poll of Saudis shows 92% agree that Islamic State (ISIS) conforms to the values of Islam and Islamic law.
- Example 250 Saudis bigger threat 2 US 15 Saudis bombed NY towers ISIL financed by Saudis Wahabism religion of ISIL why not call out the Saudis

The tweet in example 249 refers to a poll which claims that 92 per cent of Saudis agree with the idea that the Islamic State (also referred to as ISIS in parentheses) endorses the teachings of Islam, yet the tweet does not provide the source of this poll. The tweet, using the claimed poll’s results, suggests that the vast majority of Saudis affiliate with the Islamic State and conform to corresponding religious values. The high percentage of this ‘poll’ (92%) serves to categorise the majority of Saudis as affiliating with the terroristic behaviour of the Islamic State and thereby warns against the majority of the Saudis as a similar, threatening source. However, in example 250, the tweet bluntly declares that the Saudis constitute a “bigger threat” to the US. Referring to Saudis’ financing ISIL, the 9/11 attacks, and embracing the same

religious affiliation, the tweet urges that action be taken against the Saudis by holding them responsible for their negative actions.

Finally, in the RWC, examining the concordance lines shows that tweets associate Saudis with *ISIL* in 47 tweets, two tweets use *ISIS* and “Daesh” synonymously with *ISIL*. Tweets postulate that the Saudis support *ISIL* ‘financially’, using words like fund (four tweets), back (three tweets), support (three tweets), arm (four tweets), supply (three tweets), create (two tweets), finance (two tweets), provide and give. Relating *ISIL* to the Saudis also associates some of the recurring issues around them, such as joining the UNHRC, the crucifixion of Al-Nimr, the 9/11 attacks and the Syrian refugee crisis (see Chapter 6 for details). Tweets also posit Saudis as having equal status with *ISIL* (five tweets) in terms of embracing Wahhabi thought, which is linked to terrorism and violence. For instance:

- Example 251 Like #ISIL #Saudis are destroying all civilizations in the region. #Wahhabis are manifestly enemies of cultures.
- Example 252 Go to the source of the problem - the Saudis - Saudi Arabia funds the ISIL; the Saudis should help the innocent civilians-

Presenting Saudis adversely is achieved through other negative-presentation strategies (van Dijk, 1999), such as ascribing them similar negative qualities as *ISIL*. These qualities include destroying historical places in Yemen (example 251) and escalating the Syrian refugee crisis in Europe (example 252). This negative other-presentation strategy not only misrepresents Saudis by associating them with *ISIL* but also highlights other alarming issues, such as the refugee crisis. This issue is already stressed by tweets in the FCT and constructed as a threat to Europe. Saudis are

perceived as the key player and initiator of this problem that is threatening the security and culture of the West (see Section 5.2.1.2).

Similarly, the *Islamic State* in the RWC occurs in 15 tweets, 13 tweets associate the Saudis with the Islamic State in terms of support and congruity, and two tweets see IS as a threat to the Saudis. In case of the former, tweets perceive the Saudis as funding and supporting the *Islamic State* and aligning with their beliefs and concepts, in terms and phrases such as “supporting”, “fund”, “create” and “believe Islamic State to be manifesting real Islam”, while in the latter case, tweets postulate the *Islamic State* as a source of threat to the Saudis. In this respect, the Saudis are not presented as targeted victims, rather it is pilgrims who will be targeted by the *Islamic State*. For example:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Example 253 | Worth under #breaking #news👉The #IS/#Islamic State is facing a cash crunch in the #Caliphate. #Saudis run out of \$\$? |
| Example 254 | Saudis are supporting the Islamic State |
| Example 255 | they could be facing an internal uprising from Saudis who believe the Islamic State to be manifesting authentic Islam. |
| Example 256 | Saudis fear ISIS attacks on hajis - The Islamic State is extending its reach in Saudi Arabia |

In associating the Islamic State with Saudis, tweets in the RWC assume a homogenous relationship that connects both: Saudis are presented as either sponsoring the Islamic State financially (examples 253 and 254) or the Saudis and the Islamic State adopting a similar ideology, i.e. following similar Islamic teachings. In example 255, for instance, the tweet hypothesises that since the Islamic State faces “a cash crunch”, the Saudis must have “run out” of money as they are the primary financier of Islamic State and suggests that both sponsor terrorism. It also uses hashtags to tag the content of the tweet as “breaking news” information, which facilitates sharing the tweet with a wider audience. In example 256, however, the tweet uses the terms ISIS

and Islamic State synonymously and posits the latter as an opponent of the Saudis, as they plan to extend their attacks to Saudi Arabia, yet the target of Islamic State is not the Saudis but rather pilgrims who will be victims of these attacks.

7.9. Summary and discussion

This chapter is devoted to answering RQ-3 (To what extent are Saudis represented differently by tweets in the Australia, Canada, GB, USA and rest of the world corpora?) using extensive keywords and concordance analysis. In addition, I also utilise intertextuality and interdiscursivity, discursive strategies and transitivity analysis to scrutinise the findings. The differences among the corpora are divided into two sections: keywords unique to each corpus and keywords more common to some corpora than others. Keywords unique to each corpus were identified by manually comparing the wordlists of each corpus with the remaining four corpora grouped together as a reference corpus, and the resulting unique keyword lists were then examined individually. As for keywords that were more common between some corpora and not others, these were also identified through manually comparing the keyword lists of each corpus, and common keywords were then grouped and thoroughly examined.

The discourse dominating each corpus resembles the overall discourse in the FCT, i.e. tweets present Saudis negatively by associating them with some of the main topics in the FCT: terrorism, violence and corruption. In the AUSC, CAC, GBC and USC, tweets depict Saudis in a common image, i.e. the Saudis are a threatening national source. In the AUSC, for instance, tweets warn against the Saudis' plans to Islamise Australia, and in the CAC, Saudis threaten to strip Canada of its identity and security. In the GBC, Saudis are assumed to spread their (terroristic) ideology in the

UK, and in the USC, Saudis are represented as a threat to the US, given their responsibility for the 9/11 attacks. In the RWC, tweets present Saudis as a source of threat to less-empowered groups, such as foreign workers and housemaids.

The differences between the five corpora, however, do not reveal any counter discourses but, rather, the unique keywords in each corpus triangulate the negative findings in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. These unique keywords in the AUSC, CAC, GBC, and USC reveal other strategies, such as employing political hashtags and tagging Parliament and government representatives, to link Saudis negatively with local issues. For instance, In the AUSC, tweets use the hashtag *#Auspol* to highlight human rights violations against asylum seekers in Australia represented by concentration camps. The humanitarian situation of asylum seekers is feared to become worse if the relationships with the Saudis are maintained. In the CAC, tweets use hashtags devoted to Canadian local issues, such as *#BarbaricCulturalPractices*, which serve dual functions. First, to question the credibility of the PM and the MPs who associate with the Saudis given that it was the election period; and second, to warn against the imminent threat posed by the Saudis if they control the wheat board and buy Canadian-made arms. In the GBC, the hashtag *#newsnight* is deployed to warn against the Saudis' plans to control the UK and spread their ideology of beheading and violence. Finally, in the USC, tweets tag the *#GOPdebate* programme to condemn Republicans who ally with the Saudis, such as Bush, since the Saudis were depicted as a threat to the US as the funders and executors of the 9/11 attacks.

In the RWC, the discourse surrounding Saudis is similarly negative. However, the topics and issues that tweets associate with Saudis differ from the other four corpora. Tweets, however, present Saudis negatively as racist and violent; the issues and cases addressed in the RWC pertain mainly to the stampede event, the rape case,

the amputated-arm maid and the conditions of Indian workers in Saudi Arabia. These issues also pose the Saudis as a threatening source by risking the lives of pilgrims and foreign workers through their recklessness and racist attitudes.

The intertextuality and interdiscursivity analyses substantiate the above findings. Tweets deploy hashtags and quote other tweets to recontextualise other issues and events so as to represent Saudis negatively and connect them to terrorism, manipulation and violence—this triggers assumptions regarding the media’s presence on Twitter. With tweets hashtagging TV debate programmes and online articles (through quoting news accounts), the media seem to contribute to a negative presentation of Saudis and construct them in adverse ways.

The findings of this chapter coincide with the previous findings in Chapters 5 and 6. However, the tweets in each corpus utilise different ways that only support the overall negative stereotypes of Saudis on Twitter. The inclusion of Saudis as an electoral topic and as a means to criticise politics and national policies reflects the extent of accumulated, negative representations of Saudis in Western media. The outcomes of such media presentations do not only portray Saudis as a source of national threat but also contribute to rooting these negative stereotypes in Twitter discourse. These views may eventually reflect on the public’s attitudes towards and acceptance of Saudis in Western countries, which can, if promoted, lead to the normalisation of a non-acceptance of others’ ideology and motivate individual or collective violence.

Chapter 8. Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to bring together the findings for the RQs to answer the overarching research question *How are Saudis represented in English on Twitter by tweets in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, the United States and the rest of the world in September 2015, the period including two tragic events at Mecca?* Having done this, I will also consider the limitations of the study (8.3), indicate how further research on the topic could supplement my findings (8.4) and identify the contribution of this research to the fields of CDS and CL regarding social media research (8.5). In the following section (8.2), I discuss the findings of each chapter guided by the research questions highlighted earlier in Chapter 1:

1. How are Saudis represented across the five corpora?
2. What discursive strategies are employed by tweets in the representation of Saudis?
3. To what extent are Saudis represented differently by tweets in Australia, Canada, GB, the USA and the rest of the world corpora?
4. What are the reasons and potential consequences for discourses about Saudis identified through the findings of the above research questions?

Each question will be answered by offering overall conclusive findings for the four analysis chapters and explaining how these are used to arrive at answers.

8.2. Summary of findings and discussion of the discourses about Saudis identified through findings for Research Questions 1–4

The overall aim of this thesis was to investigate how Saudis were represented by tweets in the aftermath of two tragic events at Mecca. In Chapter 1, I explained how

misrepresenting social actors in the media could have negative consequences in the offline world. I also argued for Twitter as a valuable data source to examine the bottom-up discursive practices of tweets. This was followed by a literature review in Chapter 2 that discussed relevant studies from a discourse-historical perspective, which indicated how a relatively similar group (i.e. Muslims) are misrepresented in Western media and how such negative representations can prompt hostile attitudes and street violence. The review also pointed to an important gap in the literature, as there are very few studies dedicated to examining the representation of social groups on Twitter, particularly Saudis, from Corpus and Critical Discourse Studies perspectives.

The following Chapter 3 outlined the data and methodology used in this thesis. In the first part, I introduced Twitter as the data source, with a brief background of the platform and some of its well-known conventions. I also explained two key issues that would make researching Twitter data challenging, i.e. acquiring historical Twitter data and ethical considerations. The second part of this chapter explained in detail the methods I employed in analysing the data. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were based on a corpus about Saudis, this was collected in the aftermath of the two tragic events in Mecca in 2015. This corpus was divided into five sub-corpora based on the geolocations of tweets (AUSC, CAC, GBC, USC, RWC). This step was essential to examine differences in the representation of Saudis by different English-speaking countries. I then explained corpus-linguistic techniques, such as keywords, collocations, concordances and n-grams, that were combined with several CDS analytical tools and concepts (Chapter 2) to address the following research questions:

RQ-1 How are Saudis represented across the five corpora? Addressing this question was accomplished via two steps. The first step was to consider the

dominating themes and topics in the five corpora, after the two tragic events at Mecca, together in Chapter 4. This step was carried out by investigating and calculating keywords, i.e. lexical items that were numerically higher in the five corpora grouped together (the FCT) when compared to the reference corpus. These keywords were then grouped into thematic categories according to their cotexts. Such thematic categorisation facilitated locating salient themes and topics which tended to co-occur with Saudis in the FCT after the tragic events at Mecca. The second step was to examine these themes extensively through keyword and concordance analyses in Chapter 5.

Examining the themes generated by keywords analysis shared a common, negative discourse about Saudis in the FCT. The keyword analysis showed GEOGRAPHY, COUNTRIES and NATIONALITIES and WAR to be the most significant themes in the FCT after the tragic Mecca events. Though the crane collapse in Mecca coincided with the 14th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in 2001, neither event seemed to skew the data. In fact, MECCA EVENTS keywords occupied only 14 per cent of the top 100 keywords in the FCT. Also, the 9/11 attacks coexisted with the crane collapse in only 19 tweets out of a total of 240. The significance of *war* as a keyword in the FCT indicated extensive news reporting of the wars in both Yemen and Syria. However, this reporting, when it involved Saudis, incorporated a negative contribution and, consequently, the representation was highly adverse and negative. Extensive concordance analysis of the WAR category in Chapter 5 revealed adverse portrayals of Saudis in the FCT, they were presented as committing war crimes against civilians in Yemen, such as targeting women and children and destroying the infrastructure.

In Syria, Saudis were depicted as funding and supporting terrorist groups and escalating the Syrian refugee crisis by not taking them in. The refugee crisis brought

back into focus a media-problematised issue for the West, i.e. refugees fleeing to Europe. Tweets associated the claim that Saudis did not take in any refugees while building mosques for them in Germany to warn against a Saudi plot to “Islamise” Europe. Similar to the media representation of refugees and asylum seekers, tweets in the FCT referred to the Syrian refugees as an upcoming threat to Europe, intensified through a strategy of metaphor, such as “invasion” (Goodman & Speer, 2007), “flood” (Baker et al., 2008; KhosraviNik et al., 2012) and “extermination” of the West. Clearly, intertextuality reinforced this intimidating image of refugees and instantiated that Saudis were not only responsible for threatening the West by sending refugees, but also planned to threaten Western identity through the Islamification of Europe, which resulted in Islamophobic (Ekman, 2015) and Saudiphobic discourses.

MECCA TRAGIC EVENTS was the third top recurring theme in the FCT, with *stampede* recurring more frequently than *crane collapse*. Such human tragedies might have led somehow to a pause, an interruption, in the negative discourses about Saudis, but the ‘accumulation’ factor seemed so enormous that it did not trigger any sympathy or sentiment of condolences, but rather prompted negative representations of Saudis, such as their incompetence in handling the Hajj season and maintaining pilgrims’ safety, exploiting pilgrims and treating them with racist and inhuman attitudes. The crane collapse was also described as “karma” for the 9/11 attacks, the war in Yemen and for not taking in Syrian refugees. Metaphor was also at play in the tragic events category: tweets used “flooded” to describe international condolences and collocated them with “condemnation”, which entailed a negative evaluation of Saudis in relation to the stampede, suggesting that although condolence messages were very numerous, they were critical and adverse in their tone.

Another dominating theme was TERROR which highlighted several issues about Saudis, such as the keyword *crucifixion* which associated Saudis with the case

of Ali Al-Nimr and the same crucifixion penalty for women who practise witchcraft and sorcery. Other keywords included in the lemma FUND also connected Saudis with funding the 9/11 hijackers and other terrorist groups. Negative representations were also delivered through the theme of POLITICS, in which tweets condemned selling arms and weapons to the Saudis and allowing them onto the UNHRC. Selling arms to the Saudis was opposed by tweets as Saudis use them to kill civilians in Yemen or provide them to terrorist groups in Syria, such as ISIS. The Saudis getting a seat at the UNHRC was also attested to by tweets, which resulted in rejecting and questioning its credibility.

RELIGION is another theme which included discursive strategies that classified Saudis along a religious spectrum, such as *Wahhabi* and “radical”, and posited them on an extreme (dangerous) level of belief. These findings coincided with earlier research on Islam and Muslims in Western media, which often presented them as a threatening source to Western democracy and civilisation. Saudis were also represented as “fanatics” who aim at a religious war, targeting Western countries, values and democracy (Arif & Ahmad, 2016; Indah & Khoirunnisa, 2018; Moore et al., 2008), thereby promoting an 'Us' versus 'Them' discourse which presents Saudis as a threatening and dangerous outgroup.

The last theme that tweets associated with Saudis was OIL. The possession of oil, as perceived by tweets, serves the Saudis in two ways. First, possessing oil helps the Saudis to conceal their human rights violations and support terrorism and terrorist groups (e.g. ISIS and AlQaeda). Second, Saudis have gained in importance (and value) only because of oil. In the FCT, they are described in negative predicates, such as “Totalitarian regime”, “unapologetically oppressive”, “backwards”, “pig-ignorant”, and “nomads”, which indicates a discourse prosody of insignificance and corruption.

RQ-2 What discursive strategies are employed by tweets in the

representation of Saudis? This question was addressed in Chapter 6 using the corpus tool collocation. Tweets deploy different discursive strategies, such as nomination, predication, perspectivisation and intensification.

Tweets deploy nomination strategies mainly to present Saudis negatively. Besides referring to them in negative terms, tweets also use nomination strategies to describe other groups or objects negatively to emphasise Saudis' adverse involvement or attitude. For instance, the war in Yemen is referred to as "genocidal", "futile" and "drone" to highlight the Saudis' adverse role in this war. Saudis are also referred to as "barbaric", "ugly", and "dirty zionist". Similarly, tweets use nomination strategies to condemn the Hajj stampede and the Saudis' attitude towards other pilgrims (e.g. Africans) by referring to them as "dirt poor" and "negros", and the Saudis as "obscenely wealthy", "fucking" and "racist". Such opposing depictions vilify Saudis and promote racist discourse. The possession of oil and the concept of wealth are also associated negatively with Saudis through nomination strategies. Tweets refer to the Saudis as "those pigs", "backward" and "ignorant", which suggests a negative discourse prosody of worthlessness and insignificance. Adopting a dangerous Islamic thought is also highlighted by tweets through the keyword *Wahhabi*, which is intensified through complex phrases, such as "Wahhabi terror spreading", "Wahhabi extremist" and "Wahhabi terrorists". These strategies augment the negative stances of tweets and contribute to further xenophobic discourse and negative stereotypes of Saudis on Twitter.

Predication strategies also fulfil similar functions. Tweets use these strategies to sustain negative depictions of Saudis, which are highlighted throughout the different themes in the FCT. These predicative strategies are deployed to represent the

Saudis as a negative other and a source of threat through different predicates, such as funding ISIS, sponsoring 9/11 attacks, Islamising Europe and beheading and crucifying dissidents. Saudis are also described as “fanatics” who embrace the Wahhabi doctrine and aim at a religious war, such as targeting Western countries, values and democracy (Arif & Ahmad, 2016; Indah & Khoirunnisa, 2018; Moore et al., 2008). Such depictions reinforce a 'Us' versus 'Them' discourse which constructs the Saudis as a threatening and dangerous outgroup.

Tweets also use perspectivisation strategies in the FCT through mental processes to express negative stances and points of view of Saudis. This strategy links tweets' knowledge and perception (through cognitive processes *think* and *know*) or feelings and sentiments (through emotive processes *love* and *hate*) to similar negative depictions of Saudis recurring in Chapter 5. These processes involve predications expressing negative discourse prosody of war crimes, terrorism support and abusive wealth and power.

Another significant discursive strategy used by tweets to present Saudis in the FCT is metaphor, such as sexual and dehumanising animal metaphors, resulting in evoking a racist and xenophobic discourse about Saudis on Twitter. Tweets deploy sexual metaphors to associate Saudis, and the West (e.g. MPs), with corruption. Metaphoric expressions, such as “in bed with”, “prostitute themselves for” and “kisses ass”, associate Saudis negatively with secret deals and oil. Saudis are also compared to “cancer”, thereby painting an image of an uncontrolled, destructive force which constitutes a life-threatening source to others. Although cancer is in some cases curable, Saudis in the FCT are depicted as a “cancerous tumour” to emphasise the malignant nature of cancer, which can spread into neighbouring tissues, i.e. countries, individuals. The “plague” metaphor also sustains a similar image of a “tumorous

cancer”: both correlate Saudis to epidemics, which evokes a sense of contamination and threat. In racism studies, metaphor has become a key notion, as many metaphors rely on Western dichotomies of 'Us' versus 'Them' in which race is the ultimate outcome (van Teeffelen, 1994). In the FCT, metaphors serve to promote adverse depictions and misconceptions and result in sustaining a xenophobic and Saudiphobic discourse on Twitter.

The collocation of Saudis with *women* in the FCT also discloses nomination and predication strategies that promote further negative representations. The nomination strategies refer to Saudis as “Wahhabi”, “barbaric murderous”, “sex maniac[s]”, “heartless”, “disgusting” and “arrogant”. Similarly, the predication strategies echo negative postures of violence and immorality. Tweets use predication strategies to ascribe Saudis with negative qualities, such as hating women, abusers, war criminals, matching ISIS in dealing with women and denying women freedom (e.g. enforcing certain dress codes and denying them jobs). These negative portrayals resonate with similar findings in Western media studies which depict Saudi women as “oppressed, deficient, subordinate, submissive, and non-agentive women who unquestioningly accept patriarchy and domination” (Alharbi, 2015, p. iv). In fact, misrepresenting Saudis view of women echoes similar findings in Western media studies which associate Muslim men negatively with women. According to Al-Hejin (2015), research in Western media “corroborates a misconception observed by a number of scholars that all that is negative or hostile in the Muslim ‘Other’ is perpetrated by men, while women are merely passive victims moving with the tide” (p. 12).

RQ-3 To what extent are Saudis represented differently by tweets in the Australia, Canada, GB, USA and the rest of the world corpora? Examining the

differences between the five corpora was accomplished through keyword and concordance analyses in Chapter 7. The discourse resulting from the analysis of unique keywords in each of the five corpora was mainly negative and triangulated the negative discourses in the FCT. The unique keywords sustained a common image, i.e. the Saudis are constructed as a threatening (national) source. In the AUSC, for instance, tweets warn against the Saudis' plans to Islamise Australia, whereas in the CAC, Saudis threaten to strip Canada of its identity and security. In the GBC, Saudis are assumed to spread their (terroristic) ideology in the UK; and in the USC, tweets condemn aligning with the Saudis who represent a threat to the US, given their responsibility for the 9/11 attacks. In the RWC, tweets present Saudis as dangerous and a source of threat to less-empowered groups (e.g. foreign workers and housemaids).

Each of the five corpora represents Saudis negatively by associating them with national issues and polarises these negative representations through hashtags to frame Saudis as a national concern. Tweets use hashtags and tag PMs, MPs and political representatives to condemn and criticise associating with the Saudis in domestic and international issues. For example, in the AUSC, tweets use the election hashtag *#Auspol* to highlight human rights violations against asylum seekers in Australia, held in concentration camps. The humanitarian situation of asylum seekers threatens to become worse if the relationships with the Saudis are maintained. In the CAC, tweets use political hashtags and hashtags devoted to local Canadian problems (e.g. *#BarbaricCultural-Practices*), which serve a dual function. First, to question the credibility of the PM and MPs who associate with the Saudis (given that it was the election period); and second, to warn against the imminent threat that would be posed by the Saudis if they controlled the wheat board and bought Canadian-made arms. In

the GBC, the hashtag #*newsnight* is deployed to warn against the Saudis' plans to control the UK and spread their ideology of beheading and violence. In the USC, tweets tag the #*GOPdebate* programme to condemn those Republicans who ally with the Saudis, such as Bush, since they present the biggest threat to the US as the funders and executors of the 9/11 attacks. Finally, in the RWC, tweets highlight the rape case of a Nepalese woman against a Saudi diplomat and the story of an amputated-hand maid to condemn the Saudis' racist and inhuman attitude towards others, describing them as "savages", "dictators", "disgusting" and "rape terrorists".

Examining the differences between the corpora also revealed some keywords that are common in some corpora and not others. For instance, the USC and RWC share keywords related to the Saudi women driving ban. Tweets associate Saudis negatively with the women driving ban, recalling issues of oppression, contradiction, terrorism and violence. Banning women from driving also prompted tweets to condemn several issues, such as Saudis' chairing the UNHRC, using barbaric methods for punishment and financing ISIS. And even when lifting the driving ban was announced, tweets mocked the decision (through images and GIFs) and speculated that the Saudis would enforce conditions to hinder women driving. There are other keywords in common between the CAC, the USC and the RWC, these refer to different terms relating to ISIS. Tweets use these terms synonymously to refer to the well-known ISIS group. Using these terms in the three corpora has similar associations to those echoed in Chapters 5 and 6. Associating *ISIL* and *Islamic State* with Saudis mainly highlights their connection with ISIS, whether as supporters or founders of the group, or as embracers of the same (Wahhabi) religious thought.

RQ-4 What are the reasons for and the potential consequences of the discourse about Saudis identified through the findings of the above Research

Questions? The findings in Chapters 5–7 contribute to a hegemonic discourse which represented Saudis negatively across the corpora in the aftermath of tragic events in Mecca. The outcomes of such media presentations not only portray Saudis as a threatening national source but also contribute to rooting these negative stereotypes of Saudis among social media users. As explained earlier in Chapters 1 and 2, negative depictions in mass media can result in a negative impact on online discourse. Saudis are represented negatively, as embroiled in terror, extremism and violence, through relating them to the critical situation in the Middle East (e.g. the wars in Yemen and Syria), escalating the refugee crisis which threatens Europe and supporting terrorism and terrorist groups. Also, the inclusion of Saudis as electoral material and as a means to criticise politics and national policies is an indication of accumulated, negative representations of Saudis in Western media. The power of media discourse over the public can lead to evoking these negative depictions online, which can then result in intimidating and racist discourse about Saudis on Twitter. Negative stereotypes of Saudis in the media can be attributed to earlier Orientalists representations of Arabs and Muslims which focused on othering the Arab world (Altwaiji, 2014). These negative stereotypes have found their ways into mainstream media that normalise a prototypical ideology of Arabs and Muslims as evil terrorists sometimes driven by political and personal agendas. Moviemakers, for instance, are willing to perpetuate hate and “continue to indict Arabs on movie screens for as long as unjust images are tolerated” (Shaheen, 2003, p. 189). Consequently, media consumers are likely to be exposed to recurring negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims (as well as others), which can ultimately shape their conception and ideologies, and eventually their acceptance and tolerance of others. From a dialectical-relational perspective, and as Fairclough (1992) argues, media representations of others do not operate in a vacuum

but rather have dialectical, interrelated relationships with the society ,which can shape the nature of the discursive practices of social groups and the effects of discourse.

The dialectical relationships of media texts with consumers also indicate the importance of reception as one of the components of discursive practices (Fairclough, 1992a). It seems crucial then to question the extent to which tweeters' mental representations are likely to incorporate the media discourses that they are exposed to over time on Twitter. In fact, Teo (2000) asserts that "the active choices made in the way newspaper headlines, leads and captions are couched can have a very powerful ideological effect on readers' perception and interpretation of people and events" (p. 16). Al-Hejin (2007) asserts that readers' context models can incorporate the discourses they are presented with in media texts. By examining readers' comments on a BBC website forum discussing the probability of banning niqab in the UK, Al-Hejin states that there are "strong intertextual links with the BBC news articles in the two months leading to the forum, suggesting a considerable uptake of the discourses readers were presented with" (cited in Al-Hejin 2012, p. 309). Hence, the homogeneity of tweeters' representations of Saudis with earlier media representations of Muslims and Arabs is an indication of the power of the media over the reception of the audience and, consequently, the formation of their ideologies and perceptions of Saudis on Twitter.

Misrepresenting others in the media is documented in the literature as sparking hostile attitudes against targeted groups and warns against street violence prompted by negative depictions and hate speech. Consequently, negative stereotypes and Saudiphobic discourse in both the mass and social media may eventually be reflected in the public's attitudes towards and tolerance of Saudis in Western countries, which, if promoted, can lead to the normalisation of a non-acceptance-of-others ideology and

motivate individual or collective violence. As seen in Chapter 2, Muslims in Western countries are subject to violence and physical attacks, sparked by the media coverage of some events, such as tearing off headscarves (hijab) in public places, vandalising mosques (Awan & Zempi, 2017) physical violence, verbal abuse and sexual assault (Poynting & Noble, 2004). These attacks can be attributed to the distorted and prejudiced stereotypes of Muslims and Islam in Western media, which tend to ascribe Muslims collective responsibility after the violent actions of a few (Arshad, Setlur, & Siddiqui, 2015). Similarly, negative depictions of Saudis in the media can also lead to fuelling online Saudisphobic discourse and, consequently, materialising it as offline, street violence.

The findings of the current research contribute to the ongoing academic discussion on the relationship between traditional media and social media regarding whether social media at large represent a safe space for generating and maintaining alternative discourses, or if they reproduce and amplify existing hegemonic discourses, which may result in even stronger polarising effects on public discourses. Although it may be hard to draw precise conclusions here, owing to the lack of research on the discursive representations of Saudis in Western media, the analysis findings are in line with current research on Islam and Muslims in mainstream Western media. This research suggests that social media do not simply offer an alternative (countering) discourse, but rather can recontextualise traditional media discourse in misrepresenting Islam and Muslims, though social media discourse can be more aggressive and blunter. Beside inflicting harm and danger on others, some social media users put their privacy at risk by advocating online racism and cyberhate. Such users, particularly on Twitter, who disseminate hate content via accessible (unprotected) accounts are likely to be unaware of the possible consequences of these

online practices. Though users acknowledge the terms of service and privacy settings before opening their accounts, default public settings and anonymity may prompt xenophobic and racist content which can eventually threaten users' privacy if they are shared or leaked without their knowledge.

8.3. Strengths and limitations of the study

Some limitations of this research must be acknowledged. As far as the data are concerned, I narrowed down the focus on the topic of the representation of Saudis on Twitter to include only English tweets in the aftermath of the tragic events at Mecca over a one-month period. This narrowing down of the search query was essential, given the immense number of tweets generated daily by Twitter users, which necessitated locating a spike of events which could involve voluminous tweeting about Saudis. Historical Twitter data (as described in Section 3.2.3) were not accessible at the time of the study and were only affordable via university or company subscriptions. Data were purchased from a commercial, third-party company which has access to Twitter API, and consequently, it was inevitable to limit the search query and span.

The limitations also concern interpretation. My intention was to remain focused to what these tweets were suggesting and to deliver relevant and adequate examples that would show my analysis was defensible and valid. I strived to be unbiased in my stance as an analyst, but as a Saudi citizen myself, the negative and adverse discourse resulting from the data might possibly have influenced my analysis and claims. However, I have tried my best to be careful in selecting examples, drawing conclusions and making generalisations that objectively fulfil the aim and Research Questions of this research.

Another point worth highlighting is the small size of the data set analysed in this research. The corpus comprised 44,961 tweets and excluded retweets. Due to time and word count limits, I opted to examine the original use of language in tweets to achieve as reliable results as possible. This, of course, does not underestimate the significance of retweets or liked tweets in the analysis, rather they can be another interesting area for future research.

Further, the corpus includes tweets that were decontextualised from their audio and visual elements. Although I frequently refer to Twitter for contextual information in tweets (such as when a tweet is a part of a conversational thread) and some visual elements were briefly addressed, a richer corpus would incorporate visual and metadata elements (such as weblinks and images) to allow a more comprehensive, multimodal analysis. This also includes Twitter metadata, i.e. hashtags, which constitute a significant facet of social media interaction.

Finally, given the scale and word limitations of a PhD thesis, some aspects of the analysis were not given as much attention as they could have. Ideally, I would have made a comparison between the representation of Saudis on Twitter and in other mass media outlets, such as newspapers, to investigate possible differences or similarities in the ways and strategies of representation, given that other media have a significant presence on Twitter (sections 2.3.5.2 & 7.9).

However, this research benefits from at least four strengths: 1) In terms of the data, Twitter is considered a genuine data and valuable social media source due to several important features, such as establishing communities, interaction and collective action groups (O'Leary, 2015, p. 227), and it can be good representation of reality (Letierce et al., 2010). 2) This research has examined the bottom-up

representation of social groups (Saudis in this study) in social media, contrary to the (profound) existing research which has focused on the representation of other groups in traditional mass media. Social media research now requires the attention of researchers, especially from critical and corpus linguistics approaches. 3) The synergy of the methodological approaches of CDS and CL adopted in this thesis helped (to some extent) to reduce subjectivity during the analysis stage. Although, however, subjectivity can never be eliminated, even with quantitative analyses. Deciding upon cut-off points (without which qualitative analyses would not be feasible) and identifying various discourses are inherently subjective. 4) Corpus tools facilitated uncovering tweets' views and representations as well as the discursive strategies deployed in those representations. These findings would not have been easily identified through mere qualitative analyses.

8.4. Areas for future research

Further research can address the above limitations. More specifically, as stated in Chapter 1, examining the bottom-up representation of other groups, such as social media data, still requires the attention of critical discourse researchers. Future research can also draw on comparative approaches to study social media texts, such as comparing the representation of social groups in social media and mass media.

It would also be interesting to examine the multimodal aspects of social media sites and how these are used to represent others. Examining the representation of other groups could also be significant after certain political events or speeches; researchers could examine the extent to which these events or speeches can have an impact on public attitudes towards targeted groups.

Triangulating with other methods, such as ethnography and fieldwork, could also be an interesting area of study. Researchers could investigate whether media representations of other groups can affect/ influence users on social media sites in Western countries and to what extent those representations reflect their attitudes and the perceptions of others.

8.5. Final remarks

This study originated from a desire to provide evidence to myself and to other scholars that social media representations are significant and worthy of investigation. Although social media sites represent virtual reality, negative stereotypes of others can have their own negative (if not harmful) consequences in the real (offline) world. It is noteworthy to examine the effects of media negative representations of other groups on people's ideologies and their acceptance of the other. My aspiration is that further research can draw attention to this problematic area and contribute to change, like a study such as mine has (I hope) attempted to make.

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Appendix A: Keywords lists in the AUSC compared to the reference corpus

(ordered by LL value)

| Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL |
|-----------|-------|--------|-----------------------|-------|------|---------------|-------|------|
| SAUDIS | 491 | 7,7075 | SAUDI'S | 6 | 77 | USA | 10 | 34 |
| YEMEN | 57 | 620 | AUSTRALIA | 13 | 75 | FUNDED | 5 | 33.9 |
| THE | 449 | 360 | NEWS | 28 | 75 | SHIITE | 3 | 33.6 |
| SAUDI | 37 | 335 | WESTERN | 11 | 70.6 | MOSSAD | 3 | 33.6 |
| RIGHTS | 44 | 332 | REFUGEES | 11 | 70.6 | NUSRA | 3 | 32.7 |
| UN | 43 | 330 | FUNDING | 11 | 70.5 | ASBESTOS | 3 | 32 |
| HAJJ | 22 | 305 | THEIR | 35 | 65 | AFGHANISTAN | 5 | 31.8 |
| SYRIA | 38 | 304 | ISRAELIS | 6 | 63 | FELLOW | 6 | 31.8 |
| HUMAN | 47 | 285 | SYRIAN | 9 | 60.8 | TORTURE | 5 | 31.6 |
| ISIS | 30 | 208 | ARMING | 6 | 59 | TERRORISM | 5 | 31 |
| ARABIA | 19 | 173 | UK | 17 | 58.7 | BOLT | 4 | 31 |
| US | 62 | 155 | DEATHS | 7 | 51 | YEMENI | 3 | 30.7 |
| RUSSIA | 20 | 144 | WAHHABISM | 4 | 51 | SUNNIS | 3 | 30.7 |
| ARE | 101 | 136 | MUSLIM | 10 | 49 | WORLD | 20 | 30.7 |
| BEHEAD | 11 | 130 | MOSQUES | 4 | 46.6 | BLAME | 7 | 30 |
| IRAN | 20 | 117 | MODERATES | 4 | 46.6 | WIKILEAKS | 3 | 30 |
| BOMBING | 13 | 117 | UNHCR | 4 | 45.5 | YOUNUSALGOHAR | 3 | 29 |
| CRUCIFY | 9 | 116 | CIVILIAN | 5 | 44.7 | BOMB | 8 | 29 |
| ASSAD | 12 | 113.5 | UNHRC | 3 | 44 | ETC | 7 | 29 |
| AUSPOL | 14 | 106.9 | GULFIES | 3 | 44 | THEM | 26 | 29 |
| ALNUSRA | 7 | 103 | WEAPONS | 7 | 43 | COUNTRIES | 6 | 29 |
| ALLIES | 10 | 101 | QATAR | 5 | 43 | DEADLY | 5 | 29 |
| ALQAEDA | 8 | 100 | WEST | 12 | 42.9 | CHRIDTIANS | 5 | 28.8 |
| MUSLIMS | 16 | 99.9 | QAEDA | 5 | 42 | AUS | 5 | 28.8 |
| MOSQUES | 9 | 99 | ATTACKS | 8 | 41 | COALITION | 4 | 28 |
| PANEL | 14 | 99 | THEY | 44 | 41 | BUILD | 8 | 27 |
| ISLAM | 15 | 97.7 | TIPS | 7 | 40.5 | COLLAPSE | 4 | 26.6 |
| WAHHABI | 7 | 97 | JIHADIS | 4 | 39.9 | BARBARIC | 8 | 26 |
| IRAQ | 13 | 96 | BBC | 8 | 38.5 | SYRIANS | 3 | 26 |
| AS | 62 | 92 | BUSH | 6 | 37.5 | CRITICISE | 3 | 25.9 |
| STAMPEDE | 8 | 91 | ALIMOHAMME DALNIMR | 3 | 37.5 | RUSSIA'S | 3 | 25.6 |
| COUNCIL | 13 | 88.5 | FUND | 7 | 37 | AIRSTRIKES | 3 | 25 |
| BEHEADING | 7 | 82 | TURKS | 4 | 37 | INVASION | 4 | 25 |
| ISRAEL | 13 | 79.5 | JIHADISTS | 4 | 36.6 | THOUSANDS | 5 | 24.6 |
| MECCA | 7 | 78 | MOSLEMS | 3 | 35.9 | TURKEY | 5 | 24 |
| WAR | 18 | 77.8 | IRANIAN | 5 | 34.9 | | | |
| OIL | 15 | 77 | BOMBED | 4 | 34 | | | |

Appendix B: Keywords lists in the CAC compared to the reference corpus

(To save space, the lists include the top 200 keywords in each of the remaining four corpora)

| Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL |
|-------------------------------|-------|--------|------------|-------|-------|------------|-------|------|
| SAUDIS | 1,072 | 13,897 | FUND | 22 | 131.5 | CRUCIFYING | 5 | 65.7 |
| HARPER | 111 | 1,217 | SELLS | 20 | 131 | THEM | 58 | 65 |
| SAUDI | 115 | 1,086 | BARBARIC | 13 | 126.6 | PUTIN | 9 | 64 |
| CDNPOLI | 86 | 943 | HOUTHIS | 10 | 124.7 | DEATHS | 10 | 64 |
| ARMS | 115 | 894.5 | ASSAD | 15 | 124 | REBELS | 8 | 63.5 |
| YEMEN | 89 | 888 | THEY | 111 | 123 | MOSQUES | 7 | 63 |
| RIGHTS | 102 | 769.5 | THEIR | 71 | 121.7 | ASSETS | 9 | 61.5 |
| HAJJ | 60 | 764 | RUSSIA | 21 | 120.9 | DEALS | 19 | 59 |
| ISIS | 88 | 650.5 | CPC | 12 | 120.6 | BOMBS | 10 | 57.7 |
| ARABIA | 59 | 558.8 | TERRORISTS | 18 | 119.9 | SAUD | 5 | 57 |
| HUMAN | 87 | 494.9 | CANADA'S | 13 | 118 | CIVILIANS | 9 | 56 |
| WEAPONS | 54 | 454 | SOLD | 24 | 115 | DISASTER | 10 | 56 |
| ALLIES | 35 | 368.8 | ISRAEL | 21 | 114.9 | GOV | 12 | 55 |
| CANADA | 57 | 360 | CIVILIAN | 12 | 106.8 | OUR | 12 | 55 |
| OIL | 54 | 326 | TOLL | 13 | 99 | WESTERN | 11 | 53 |
| WHEAT | 32 | 313 | CANADIAN | 18 | 97.9 | MILITARY | 14 | 53 |
| STAMPEDE | 27 | 306.7 | BEHEADINGS | 8 | 95 | NDP | 6 | 53 |
| IRAN | 50 | 303 | SAUDI'S | 8 | 92 | PRICES | 11 | 52.8 |
| CRUCIFY | 21 | 254 | TAIZ | 7 | 92 | NIMR | 4 | 52 |
| SELLING | 43 | 250.7 | DUCEPPE | 7 | 92 | CANADIANS | 8 | 51 |
| DEAL | 57 | 239 | ISLAM | 17 | 88 | TALIBAN | 10 | 50.9 |
| UN | 40 | 239 | FUNDING | 16 | 88 | INQUIRY | 7 | 50 |
| SELL | 43 | 235.9 | VEHICLES | 13 | 87 | IRAN'S | 6 | 50 |
| HARPER'S | 18 | 212.5 | CDN | 9 | 84.7 | BOMB | 15 | 50 |
| ARE | 189 | 207 | FUNDED | 12 | 82 | ISIL | 6 | 49 |
| REFUGEES | 30 | 202.5 | HYPOCRISY | 11 | 81.9 | SUPPORTING | 12 | 49 |
| SYRIA | 32 | 195 | BOMBING | 11 | 78 | GLENCORE | 4 | 47 |
| WAHHABI | 15 | 189.6 | BRITON | 7 | 77.5 | SYRIAN | 9 | 46.7 |
| WAR | 42 | 184 | LAV | 7 | 77.5 | ALLY | 10 | 45.9 |
| BEHEAD | 17 | 184 | CRIMES | 12 | 77 | SECRECY | 5 | 45.8 |
| BARBARICCULT URALPRACTICES | 14 | 184 | TERRORISM | 12 | 76 | AL | 13 | 45.8 |
| NIQAB | 16 | 177 | CWB | 7 | 74 | BLAME | 12 | 45.7 |
| HOUTHIS | 14 | 176.6 | AGAINST | 29 | 73 | WAHHABISM | 4 | 44.9 |
| CRANE | 17 | 158.6 | IRANIANS | 7 | 72.6 | TERROR | 9 | 44 |
| BOARD | 29 | 148 | BILLIONS | 12 | 70 | SILENCE | 11 | 43.9 |
| MECCA | 14 | 148 | YEMENI | 7 | 70 | FOREIGN | 11 | 43.7 |
| MUNKDEBATE | 11 | 144.5 | WOMEN | 32 | 69.8 | SUPPORT | 24 | 43 |
| BEHEADING | 13 | 142.9 | PILGRIMS | 7 | 68.9 | BILLION | 12 | 43 |
| US | 85 | 142.7 | COUNCIL | 13 | 68 | COUNTRIES | 10 | 42.9 |
| CRUCIFIXION | 12 | 137 | BEHEADERS | 5 | 65.7 | AMERICANS | 11 | 42 |
| SAUDIARABIA | 14 | 136.9 | CDNPOLI | 5 | 65.7 | CONDEMNING | 4 | 41 |

Appendix B: Keywords lists in the CAC compared to the reference corpus

| Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL |
|-----------------------|-------|------|---------------|-------|------|
| PRESSURE | 11 | 40.9 | GULF | 5 | 31 |
| SHALE | 5 | 40.7 | WERE | 29 | 31 |
| SHOULD | 3 | 40.6 | SILENT | 8 | 31 |
| SYRIANS | 5 | 40 | LPC | 3 | 31 |
| TERRORIST | 9 | 40 | STEPHENHARPER | 3 | 31 |
| EGYPTIANS | 4 | 40 | ARAB | 6 | 30.6 |
| DESCENDS | 4 | 40 | RAMBO | 4 | 30.6 |
| MUSLIM | 11 | 39.6 | CHOPPING | 4 | 31 |
| QATARIS | 3 | 39 | TARGETS | 6 | 31 |
| LAVS | 3 | 39 | FRACKERS | 3 | 29.8 |
| CONJOB | 3 | 39 | EXTREMIST | 4 | 29.6 |
| STOPHARPER | 3 | 39 | BAHRAIN | 4 | 29.6 |
| TRUDEAU | 6 | 38.6 | SALE | 13 | 29.5 |
| NATIONS | 7 | 38 | COLLATERAL | 3 | 28.8 |
| MUSLIMS | 10 | 38 | BINLADEN | 3 | 28.8 |
| EXTREMISM | 5 | 38 | FLOG | 3 | 28.8 |
| SHARIA | 5 | 37 | GRAIN | 4 | 28.8 |
| TPP | 6 | 35.9 | ABUSES | 4 | 28.5 |
| WIMP | 4 | 35.8 | PRICE | 11 | 28 |
| PANEL | 8 | 35.5 | BUSH | 6 | 28 |
| PHOTOSET | 4 | 35 | RIYADH | 3 | 27.9 |
| HOSTAGES | 4 | 35 | FIGHTING | 10 | 27 |
| COLLAPSE | 6 | 35 | CONTROL | 11 | 27 |
| DALBY | 3 | 34.9 | CROWD | 8 | 26.9 |
| ARABIA'S | 3 | 34.9 | DEATH | 15 | 26.7 |
| DESPODIC | 3 | 34.9 | GOVS | 3 | 26.5 |
| RUSSIANS | 4 | 34 | DERAIL | 3 | 26.5 |
| TENTS | 4 | 34 | GERMANY | 7 | 26 |
| REGIME | 6 | 33 | PRACTICES | 5 | 26 |
| STEPHEN | 8 | 33 | IRAQ | 6 | 26 |
| VIOLATIONS | 5 | 33 | PENTAGON | 5 | 26 |
| PENSION | 5 | 33 | FIGHT | 15 | 26 |
| ALIMOHAMMEDALN IMR | 3 | 32.7 | BLAMED | 4 | 26 |
| MOUNTING | 4 | 32.6 | USSR | 3 | 25.9 |
| JIHAD | 5 | 32.5 | BEHEADED | 3 | 25.9 |
| CRITICIZE | 5 | 31.8 | HUMANRIGHTS | 4 | 25.8 |
| ADEN | 4 | 31.7 | IDEOLOGY | 4 | 25.8 |
| CREATED | 9 | 31.7 | BIN | 5 | 25.7 |
| ILLUSTRATES | 4 | 31 | | | |

Appendix C: Keywords lists in the GBC compared to the reference corpus

| Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL |
|-------------|-------|--------|--------------|-------|-------|------------|-------|------|
| SAUDIS | 1,872 | 22,222 | CORBYN | 22 | 186 | TURKEY | 18 | 83 |
| YEMEN | 189 | 1,859 | STAMPEDE | 18 | 175.5 | TURKS | 10 | 81.8 |
| HAJJ | 147 | 1,733 | THEM | 124 | 172 | SELLING | 23 | 81.6 |
| SAUDI | 169 | 1,501 | ISRAEL | 30 | 150.5 | SUNNI | 11 | 80.9 |
| RIGHTS | 169 | 1,233 | BOMBS | 24 | 150 | BRITISH | 22 | 80.6 |
| HUMAN | 166 | 957.6 | MUSLIMS | 31 | 149 | HOSTAGES | 9 | 80 |
| UN | 115 | 781 | CRANE | 18 | 148.9 | ISIL | 10 | 79.5 |
| SYRIA | 84 | 566.6 | HIJACKERS | 13 | 148.6 | ALQAEDA | 8 | 78.6 |
| ISIS | 88 | 550 | BLAME | 32 | 145 | MINA | 11 | 78 |
| ARE | 386 | 499 | MINASTAMPEDE | 12 | 143.8 | BBC | 20 | 78 |
| CAMERON | 79 | 488 | BARBARIC | 16 | 142 | BOMB | 24 | 75 |
| UK | 111 | 483 | ARMING | 16 | 140 | YEMEN'S | 8 | 75 |
| ARABIA | 57 | 471 | ISRAELIS | 15 | 138 | WEST | 28 | 72 |
| CRUCIFY | 36 | 405.6 | TORIES | 20 | 134 | EAST | 22 | 72 |
| IRAN | 71 | 397 | QATARIS | 11 | 131.8 | SHALE | 9 | 72 |
| OIL | 70 | 377.9 | BRITON | 12 | 125.9 | CORBYN'S | 7 | 71.7 |
| BOMBING | 43 | 358 | PANEL | 23 | 122 | QAEDA | 8 | 71 |
| MOSQUES | 33 | 331.6 | AL | 30 | 119.6 | SUPPORT | 41 | 71 |
| MECCA | 31 | 320.8 | CRIMES | 19 | 117 | AIRSTRIKES | 9 | 68.7 |
| RUSSIA | 50 | 312 | BEHEADING | 12 | 117 | FOREIGN | 18 | 68 |
| COUNCIL | 46 | 297 | YEMENI | 12 | 115 | FUND | 16 | 68 |
| WEAPONS | 42 | 286.6 | ISLAM | 24 | 113 | TOLL | 11 | 67.8 |
| ASSAD | 33 | 278.5 | HOUTHY | 10 | 113 | BRITAIN | 14 | 67.6 |
| THEIR | 135 | 245 | CIVILIAN | 14 | 112 | ZIONISTS | 8 | 67 |
| HOUTHIS | 21 | 243.6 | FUNDING | 22 | 109.5 | ABUSES | 9 | 66 |
| CRUCIFIXION | 22 | 237.9 | REGIME | 17 | 108.6 | WAHHABI | 6 | 62.9 |
| BEHEAD | 23 | 230.8 | DEATHS | 17 | 106.7 | BEHEADINGS | 6 | 62.7 |
| SYRIAN | 35 | 230.5 | PUTIN | 15 | 104 | KINGDOM | 13 | 62 |
| REFUGEES | 37 | 222 | DEAL | 41 | 103 | GOVERNMENT | 22 | 62 |
| ARMS | 45 | 221 | INQUIRY | 14 | 102 | CONDEMN | 9 | 62 |
| WAR | 57 | 219.8 | AMERICANS | 24 | 100 | BEHEADED | 7 | 61.7 |
| CIVILIANS | 30 | 219.7 | NEWSNIGHT | 14 | 100 | SUNNIS | 7 | 61 |
| MOJ | 18 | 215.8 | TERRORISM | 17 | 99.9 | AGAINST | 34 | 57 |
| US | 137 | 207.7 | GERMANY | 21 | 99 | ALLAH | 18 | 56.8 |
| ALLIES | 23 | 202 | WESTERN | 20 | 97 | KILLING | 21 | 57 |
| PILGRIMS | 20 | 201.6 | CRUCIFYING | 8 | 95.9 | COLLAPSE | 10 | 56.8 |
| IRANIANS | 19 | 197.5 | IRAQ | 18 | 95.9 | MAKKAH | 6 | 56 |
| REBELS | 23 | 197 | PROTESTER | 11 | 94 | SUPPLIED | 7 | 56 |
| RUSSIANS | 20 | 195.6 | BUILD | 29 | 94 | ARAB | 11 | 56 |
| SAUDIARABIA | 21 | 193.6 | TERRORISTS | 17 | 92 | SHOULD | 61 | 56 |
| THEY | 185 | 187 | YEMENIS | 8 | 85.9 | GULF | 9 | 55.9 |
| SAUDI'S | 17 | 186.9 | NIMR | 7 | 83.9 | DEATH | 29 | 55 |

Appendix C: Keywords lists in the GBC compared to the reference corpus

| Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq | LL |
|--------------|-------|------|---------------|------|------|
| EXECUTION | 10 | 55 | ARABS | 6 | 41.6 |
| QATAR | 8 | 53.9 | SELLS | 10 | 41.5 |
| RUSSIAN | 14 | 53 | SUPPORTING | 13 | 41 |
| BLAMING | 9 | 53 | UAE | 8 | 40 |
| CRITICISM | 10 | 51.9 | ANTIQUITIES | 4 | 40 |
| WAHHABISM | 5 | 51.5 | TERROR | 10 | 40 |
| BARBARIANS | 5 | 51.5 | INVESTIGATION | 12 | 40 |
| WERE | 50 | 51 | BOMBED | 6 | 39.6 |
| DISASTER | 11 | 51 | SUPPORTS | 10 | 39.5 |
| INCOMPETENCE | 7 | 50 | INVESTIGATION | 12 | 40 |
| BILLIONS | 11 | 50 | OFFICIALS | 10 | 39 |
| ETC | 16 | 50 | MISSILES | 5 | 39 |
| EID | 6 | 49.9 | BUSH | 9 | 39 |
| SHIAS | 5 | 49 | TOLERATE | 7 | 38.5 |
| SQUALID | 5 | 49 | WAHABI | 4 | 38 |
| PAKISTANI | 9 | 49 | WHILE | 34 | 38 |
| KILLED | 23 | 49 | INTELLIGENCE | 10 | 38 |
| IRANIAN | 9 | 48.6 | STAKE | 8 | 38 |
| ISLAMIC | 11 | 48 | THREAT | 11 | 37.9 |
| UNHRC | 4 | 47.9 | SAYS | 35 | 37 |
| HASHIMITES | 4 | 47.9 | MOUNTING | 5 | 36.9 |
| ALWALEED'S | 4 | 47.9 | FRACKERS | 4 | 36.8 |
| COUNTRIES | 13 | 47.8 | BRITS | 6 | 36.7 |
| PILGRIMAGE | 6 | 45.6 | GOVT | 13 | 36.7 |
| CCTV | 7 | 45.5 | TORY | 9 | 36.7 |
| SELL | 17 | 45.5 | FEND | 6 | 36.5 |
| TEENAGER | 10 | 45 | HUMANRIGHTS | 6 | 36.5 |
| DEADLY | 10 | 44.5 | IDEOLOGY | 6 | 36.5 |
| USA | 20 | 43.7 | CRUDE | 6 | 36.5 |
| HAMAS | 7 | 43.6 | TRAGEDY | 8 | 36 |
| MOSQUE | 7 | 43 | WASN | 3 | 35.9 |
| SABIC | 4 | 42.9 | SEDATPEKER | 3 | 35.9 |
| YEMAN | 4 | 42.9 | PIGGATE | 3 | 35.9 |
| CRITICISE | 6 | 42.9 | FREERAIF | 3 | 35.9 |
| PROTEST | 11 | 42.6 | CACHJOBS | 3 | 35.9 |
| ATTACK | 16 | 42.6 | BANKROLLING | 3 | 35.9 |
| BAHRAIN | 6 | 42 | MECCASTAMPEDE | 3 | 35.9 |

Appendix D: Keywords lists in the USC compared to the reference corpus

| Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL |
|-------------|-------|--------|------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|-------|
| SAUDIS | 2,736 | 30,516 | HIJACKERS | 23 | 250 | BRITON | 13 | 127.5 |
| SAUDI | 287 | 2,542 | BOMBING | 34 | 245 | PRICES | 27 | 125 |
| YEMEN | 244 | 2,287 | BEHEAD | 26 | 244.8 | SHIITE | 13 | 124.8 |
| HAJJ | 147 | 1,622 | GERMANY | 44 | 235.9 | QAEDA | 14 | 124.7 |
| IRAN | 181 | 1,182 | AMERICANS | 49 | 234 | OPEC | 14 | 124.7 |
| STAMPEDE | 111 | 1,168 | SUNNI | 28 | 227 | CRUCIFYING | 11 | 123.6 |
| ARABIA | 131 | 1,143 | PANEL | 38 | 208.6 | TERRORISM | 22 | 123 |
| OIL | 171 | 1,073 | GULF | 29 | 208 | FUND | 27 | 121.7 |
| ISIS | 155 | 1,010 | PUTIN | 28 | 203 | DEADLY | 23 | 120.9 |
| RIGHTS | 150 | 952 | THEM | 163 | 200.6 | TURKS | 15 | 120.8 |
| SYRIA | 114 | 745 | MOSQUE | 26 | 199 | RAND | 17 | 120 |
| HUMAN | 150 | 727 | DEATHS | 30 | 196 | KILLED | 45 | 118.7 |
| MECCA | 67 | 685.6 | OBAMA | 62 | 194.5 | SUPPORT | 64 | 117.6 |
| ARE | 533 | 644.5 | GOPDEBATE | 21 | 190.8 | HOUTHIS | 11 | 116.7 |
| MOSQUES | 63 | 625 | COLLAPSE | 28 | 189.8 | AIRSTRIKES | 15 | 115.8 |
| REFUGEES | 91 | 623.8 | IRANIAN | 28 | 187.6 | DEAD | 56 | 115 |
| UN | 103 | 602.8 | ISLAM | 38 | 184 | KSA | 13 | 113 |
| RUSSIA | 86 | 556 | RUSSIANS | 20 | 180.5 | NIMR | 10 | 112 |
| US | 272 | 546.9 | WERE | 109 | 177.6 | HAIJSTAMPEDE | 10 | 112 |
| ALLIES | 58 | 536.8 | BUILD | 50 | 176.8 | QATARIS | 10 | 112 |
| ASSAD | 62 | 533.8 | COUNCIL | 3 | 169 | BLAMES | 17 | 112 |
| ISRAEL | 80 | 485.8 | ISLAMIC | 30 | 164.9 | SYRIANS | 14 | 110 |
| THEY | 322 | 407 | BLAME | 39 | 163 | SAUDI'S | 11 | 109 |
| REBELS | 46 | 404.6 | SHALE | 19 | 159.6 | NUCLEAR | 22 | 107.7 |
| THEIR | 209 | 399 | YEMENI | 17 | 157.5 | DISASTER | 21 | 106.6 |
| IRANIANS | 39 | 399 | UNHRC | 14 | 157 | ARABS | 14 | 106.5 |
| CRANE | 45 | 397.9 | ARMING | 19 | 157 | SADDAM | 11 | 106 |
| WAR | 92 | 370 | INQUIRY | 21 | 152 | MERS | 10 | 105.6 |
| CRUCIFY | 34 | 356.5 | ARMS | 38 | 147 | UAE | 18 | 104.5 |
| CRUCIFIXION | 34 | 352 | ISRAELIS | 17 | 146.9 | EGYPTIANS | 11 | 103.7 |
| PILGRIMS | 34 | 334.9 | MECCA'S | 13 | 147 | ARAB | 19 | 102 |
| IRAQ | 50 | 321.8 | FUNDING | 30 | 144.6 | TRAGEDY | 19 | 102 |
| MUSLIMS | 59 | 311 | MUSLIM | 35 | 137.8 | BIN | 18 | 102 |
| BUSH | 45 | 294.5 | YEMENIS | 13 | 134 | ALWALEED'S | 9 | 101 |
| SYRIAN | 45 | 283 | PILGRIMAGE | 16 | 134 | JORDANIANS | 9 | 101 |
| CIVILIANS | 40 | 282.6 | RIYADH | 14 | 134 | DEAL | 47 | 99 |
| WEAPONS | 45 | 279 | BOMBS | 24 | 132 | BLAMING | 16 | 99 |
| BEHEADING | 27 | 265.8 | USA | 45 | 132 | PRICE | 34 | 97.7 |
| TERRORISTS | 42 | 265.6 | TURKEY | 28 | 131.8 | HARPER | 16 | 97.6 |
| HOUTHIS | 24 | 261 | OUR | 152 | 131 | IRAQIS | 11 | 96 |
| SAUDIARABIA | 29 | 275.9 | SHIA | 19 | 130.7 | LADEN | 13 | 92 |
| TOLL | 34 | 251 | TENTS | 15 | 129.9 | DEATH | 45 | 90 |

Appendix D: Keywords lists in the USC compared to the reference corpus

| Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL |
|-----------------------|-------|------|--------------|-------|------|
| ALLY | 21 | 87 | CIVILIAN | 10 | 67 |
| REPORTS | 35 | 87 | TARGETS | 14 | 66.6 |
| STATES | 26 | 86.6 | AMERICAN | 32 | 66.6 |
| COUNTRIES | 22 | 86.5 | NUKES | 10 | 65.9 |
| DIPLOMATIC | 11 | 85 | BARBARIC | 9 | 65 |
| KINGDOM | 18 | 84.6 | ATTACKS | 19 | 65 |
| AGAINST | 48 | 84 | RADICAL | 13 | 65 |
| WAHHABI | 8 | 83.6 | SUPPORTING | 20 | 65 |
| HOSTAGES | 10 | 83 | BBC | 20 | 64 |
| BACKED | 16 | 82.5 | SAYS | 55 | 64 |
| IRANS'S | 11 | 82.5 | EXTREMISTS | 9 | 63 |
| IMMUNITY | 11 | 82 | CHAIR | 18 | 62.6 |
| MILITARY | 26 | 81.9 | CONFLICT | 17 | 62.6 |
| CRIMES | 16 | | CNNDEBATE | 6 | 61.6 |
| FUNDED | 15 | 81 | ARABIA'S | 6 | 61.6 |
| FINANCED | 10 | 80.9 | HYPOCRISY | 11 | 61 |
| BOMB | 29 | 80.8 | ATTACK | 23 | 60 |
| CONTROL | 31 | 80 | CONDITIONED | 8 | 60 |
| ALIMOHAMM EDALNMIR | 8 | 79.9 | REGIME | 12 | 60 |
| BILLIONS | 17 | 79 | WEDDING | 26 | 60 |
| LATES | 44 | 78 | SHARIA | 9 | 59.7 |
| HEZBOLLAH | 9 | 7 | STAKE | 12 | 57 |
| REFUGEE | 17 | 75 | MINASTAMPEDE | 5 | 56 |
| NATIONS | 15 | 75 | HUTHIES | 5 | 56 |
| ROUHANI | 12 | 73.8 | PRESSURE | 19 | 56 |
| EGYPT | 15 | 73 | NEWS | 57 | 56 |
| TERROR | 17 | 72.7 | AIDING | 7 | 55.6 |
| MISSILES | 9 | 72.5 | ESCALATING | 7 | 55.6 |
| QATAR | 11 | 72 | SLAVES | 10 | 55.6 |
| KILLING | 28 | 71.5 | CONDEMN | 9 | 54.6 |
| ETC | 23 | 71 | PALNES | 10 | 55 |
| CONFORMS | 8 | 70.8 | CRUDE | 9 | 54.6 |
| BARBARIANS | 7 | 69 | EID | 7 | 54.6 |
| BEHEADINGS | 7 | 69 | RESPONSIBLE | 14 | 54.5 |
| ABUSES | 10 | 68.7 | THEY'RE | 40 | 54 |
| BOMBED | 10 | 67.6 | INVASIONS | 6 | 53.9 |
| UNGA | 6 | 67 | PRODUCTION | 15 | 53 |
| EMIRATIS | 6 | 67 | | | |

Appendix E: Keywords lists in the RWC compared to the reference corpus

| Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL |
|----------------|--------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------|--------------|-------|-------|
| SAUDIS | 14,640 | 116,388 | CRIMES | 156 | 868 | BOMBS | 102 | 482 |
| YEMEN | 1,233 | 9,035 | DEATHS | 150 | 859 | TERRORISM | 98 | 477.6 |
| SAUDI | 1,286 | 9,027 | BLAME | 214 | 859 | FUNDED | 92 | 474.9 |
| HAJJ | 791 | 6,264 | BEHEAD | 117 | 853 | QAEDA | 67 | 474.8 |
| ARE | 3,143 | 4,274 | MINA | 130 | 849 | OBAMA | 208 | 474 |
| IRAN | 732 | 3,993 | SYRIANS | 118 | 823 | GOVT | 143 | 473 |
| ISIS | 643 | 3,521 | AGAINST | 353 | 795 | BUSH | 100 | 463 |
| RIGHTS | 624 | 3,340 | BUILD | 244 | 793 | GULF | 80 | 455 |
| ARABIA | 457 | 3,094 | IRAQ | 156 | 784.7 | PANEL | 109 | 448.6 |
| SYRIA | 534 | 3,013 | TRAGEDY | 137 | 735 | WERE | 407 | 447 |
| THEIR | 1,288 | 2,728 | GERMANY | 165 | 729 | ETC | 139 | 445 |
| THEY | 1,906 | 2,707 | SUNNI | 110 | 714.9 | TENTS | 63 | 433 |
| HUMAN | 639 | 2,672 | IRANIAN | 125 | 712 | WAHHABI | 55 | 428 |
| UN | 506 | 2,631 | ARAB | 133 | 710 | UAE | 83 | 421.5 |
| STAMPEDE | 343 | 2,629 | BEHEADING | 96 | 709 | TERROR | 100 | 420 |
| OIL | 531 | 2,600 | PUTIN | 117 | 703.8 | AIRSTRIKES | 66 | 419.9 |
| RUSSIA | 399 | 2,226 | REBELS | 107 | 692.7 | EAST | 144 | 415.5 |
| WAR | 548 | 2,193 | ISRAELIS | 96 | 677.7 | HOUTHIS | 52 | 404.5 |
| REFUGEES | 376 | 2,149 | RUSSIANS | 94 | 670.5 | HAIJSTAMPEDE | 49 | 390.5 |
| MOSQUES | 283 | 2,125 | QATAR | 103 | 660.5 | TOLL | 73 | 386 |
| PILGRIMS | 270 | 2,065 | BLAMING | 110 | 646 | SANAA | 51 | 383 |
| MECCA | 258 | 1,958 | CRUCIFIXION | 85 | 639 | FUNDING | 101 | 382 |
| MUSLIMS | 368 | 1,872 | MINASTAMP- EDE | 77 | 613.6 | DISASTER | 87 | 380.5 |
| US | 1,145 | 1,851 | COUNTRIES | 148 | 608.9 | FUND | 100 | 366.6 |
| ISRAEL | 341 | 1,765 | QATARIS | 75 | 597.7 | PAKISTAN | 104 | 366 |
| ASSAD | 242 | 1,642 | TURKEY | 139 | 597.6 | SUNNIS | 52 | 363.7 |
| BOMBING | 240 | 1,561 | KSA | 83 | 594 | DIPLOMAT | 54 | 361.7 |
| IRANIANS | 180 | 1,375 | SAUDI'S | 76 | 580 | REGIME | 74 | 360.5 |
| YEMENIS | 157 | 1,229 | SHOULD | 529 | 572 | WORLD | 401 | 357 |
| ALLIES | 169 | 1,175 | ISLAMIC | 119 | 549 | BARBARIC | 55 | 352 |
| THEM | 902 | 1,162 | MOSQUE | 90 | 547 | BODIES | 86 | 345 |
| HOUTHIS | 146 | 1,151 | ARABS | 83 | 545.5 | BOMB | 136 | 340.8 |
| ISLAM | 238 | 1,132 | UK | 256 | 543 | PILGRIMAGE | 52 | 338 |
| MUSLIM | 259 | 1,105 | KILLED | 221 | 539.5 | BOMBED | 56 | 336 |
| CIVILIANS | 182 | 1,087 | TURKS | 80 | 538 | RESPONSIBLE | 85 | 333.6 |
| CRUCIFY | 140 | 1,079 | KILLING | 186 | 531 | WEST | 162 | 333 |
| WEAPONS | 199 | 1,059 | COUNCIL | 124 | 523 | MONEY | 301 | 326 |
| CRANE | 154 | 1,050 | COUNTRY | 227 | 506 | ARMING | 52 | 325 |
| SYRIANS | 193 | 1,032 | USA | 199 | 506 | WESTERN | 88 | 318.6 |
| TERRORIST S | 187 | 1,014 | SAUDIARABI A | 74 | 490 | PAKISTANIS | 50 | 317.9 |
| YEMENI | 123 | 914.9 | SHIA | 84 | 488 | CDNPOLI | 59 | 315.8 |
| ARMS | 233 | 913.6 | AMERICANS | 139 | 483 | BLAMES | 59 | 312.9 |

Appendix E: Keywords lists in the RWC compared to the reference corpus

| Keyword | Freq. | LL | Keyword | Freq. | LL |
|---------------|-------|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| MILITARY | 114 | 311.9 | ANY | 291 | 237.9 |
| COLLAPSE | 64 | 311.8 | RICH | 113 | 237 |
| MIDDLE | 140 | 311 | INNOCENT | 76 | 235 |
| CRITICISM | 68 | 311 | BILLIONS | 62 | 233.5 |
| UNHRC | 39 | 310.8 | INCIDENT | 76 | 235 |
| DEATH | 191 | 310.8 | ALLAH | 91 | 231.9 |
| SHAME | 112 | 309.7 | ATTACK | 102 | 231 |
| MUST | 249 | 306.7 | DEADLY | 61 | 231 |
| CIVILIAN | 52 | 305.9 | PROXY | 43 | 229 |
| HAJIS | 38 | 302.8 | AFRICANS | 42 | 226.9 |
| REFUGEE | 77 | 301.9 | HYPOCRISY | 47 | 224.6 |
| RUSSIAN | 55 | 293.7 | KILL | 151 | 224.5 |
| HIJACKERS | 89 | 293.5 | WAHHABISM | 30 | 224 |
| EGYPTIANS | 38 | 287.5 | BEHEADINGS | 30 | 224 |
| ISIL | 47 | 286.8 | SAUD | 30 | 224 |
| SHALE | 46 | 286 | EMIRATIS | 28 | 223 |
| IRAN'S | 46 | 284 | BACKED | 54 | 222 |
| THEMSELVES | 114 | 281 | SELLING | 94 | 220 |
| MIGRANTS | 63 | 278 | DEAL | 159 | 219.5 |
| BIN | 61 | 276 | NATIONS | 54 | 219 |
| MISMANAGEMENT | 40 | 275.8 | DIPLOMATIC | 36 | 218.8 |
| TARGETS | 65 | 275 | MAKKAH | 31 | 218 |
| KINGDOM | 70 | 273.8 | OPEC | 33 | 216.7 |
| DEAD | 195 | 268.5 | IDEOLOGY | 41 | 215.9 |
| MILLIONS | 81 | 267 | INDIAN | 90 | 215 |
| MANY | 284 | 265.8 | JEWS | 51 | 214.7 |
| FOREIGN | 91 | 265 | EID | 33 | 213.9 |
| INDIA | 142 | 261.9 | EGYPT | 54 | 213 |
| PALESTINIANS | 47 | 260.7 | SHIAS | 29 | 211 |
| PRICES | 77 | 258.8 | MISSILES | 33 | 211 |
| BLAMED | 46 | 250.8 | PRESSURE | 83 | 211 |
| LADEN | 44 | 248 | ALIMOHAMME DALNIMR | 28 | 208.5 |
| THOSE | 251 | 247 | INVESTIGATE | 48 | 206.8 |
| SUPPORT | 214 | 240.7 | IMMUNITY | 35 | 206.8 |
| DESTROYING | 55 | 240 | SHARIA | 37 | 205 |
| VICTIMS | 74 | 240 | WAHABI | 28 | 203.5 |
| CRUCIFYING | 30 | 239 | | | |

Appendix F: Collocates of Saudis in the FCT

(Due to space limitation, only the top 200 collocates are listed below)

| Collocate | LL | MI | Freq. | Collocate | LL | MI | Freq. |
|-----------|--------|------|--------|-------------|-------|------|-------|
| SAUDIS | 36,035 | 4.16 | 22,226 | AMERICANS | 108 | 3.61 | 165 |
| THE | 5,216 | 3.47 | 11,036 | ISRAELIS | 106 | 3.77 | 112 |
| ARE | 2,331 | 3.65 | 3,255 | ISRAEL | 104.5 | 3.37 | 300 |
| TO | 1,263 | 3.25 | 5,296 | SELLING | 103.7 | 3.69 | 133 |
| AND | 995.5 | 3.27 | 3,966 | IRANIANS | 102 | 3.57 | 174 |
| HAVE | 684 | 3.49 | 1,400 | CRITICISM | 101.7 | 3.36 | 303 |
| WITH | 582.5 | 3.42 | 1,435 | ISIS | 101.6 | 3.19 | 548 |
| FOR | 502.9 | 3.26 | 2,054 | SOME | 99.9 | 3.89 | 83 |
| BY | 469 | 3.44 | 1,109 | BECAUSE | 96.7 | 3.45 | 224 |
| SAUDI | 317 | 1.73 | 376 | DON'T | 95.8 | 3.23 | 445 |
| ON | 236 | 3.16 | 1,462 | LOVE | 94.9 | 3.64 | 136 |
| WERE | 193.9 | 3.49 | 404 | US | 94 | 3.08 | 585 |
| YEMEN | 188.9 | 3.20 | 996 | SHOULD | 93.9 | 3.48 | 197 |
| OF | 184 | 2.99 | 2,751 | MANY | 93 | 3.89 | 77 |
| QATARIS | 176 | 4.08 | 101 | BLAMING | 92.7 | 3.72 | 109 |
| DEADLY | 166.8 | 4.02 | 102 | NOT | 90 | 3.03 | 1,082 |
| ARMS | 169.5 | 3.54 | 307 | HOW | 89 | 3.19 | 486 |
| AS | 165.8 | 3.21 | 826 | SLAM | 88.8 | 4.07 | 47 |
| OVER | 166.8 | 3.42 | 412 | UN | 88.8 | 3.21 | 446 |
| HUMAN | 163.6 | 3.28 | 633 | OUR | 88.5 | 3.23 | 417 |
| FACE | 162.9 | 3.82 | 156 | INVESTIGATE | 85.7 | 3.97 | 59 |
| ALLIES | 158.5 | 3.65 | 221 | WINNING | 82.8 | 3.22 | 394 |
| VIA | 158 | 3.54 | 296 | BOMBING | 81 | 3.40 | 215 |
| TURKS | 157.8 | 3.99 | 105 | BUILD | 79 | 3.40 | 212 |
| THEIR | 156.7 | 3.17 | 933 | THAT | 78.7 | 3.01 | 1,075 |
| IN | 150 | 2.97 | 2,719 | WHEN | 78.6 | 3.23 | 372 |
| HAJJ | 146.5 | 3.24 | 658 | AREN'T | 78 | 3.64 | 111 |
| BLAME | 146 | 3.61 | 222 | RICH | 76 | 3.63 | 101 |
| FRIENDS | 140 | 3.63 | 203 | ETC | 74 | 3.55 | 132 |
| FROM | 136.9 | 3.20 | 709 | FUNDED | 71.7 | 3.66 | 98 |
| TURKEY | 134.6 | 3.73 | 155 | FUND | 69.8 | 3.56 | 121 |
| CRUCIFY | 129.5 | 3.65 | 180 | THESE | 69.8 | 3.30 | 250 |
| WHO | 128 | 3.24 | 581 | SOLD | 68.7 | 3.66 | 93 |
| IRAN | 124.9 | 3.23 | 589 | ARABIA | 68 | 2.03 | 176 |
| DO | 128 | 3.21 | 626 | AGAINST | 67.8 | 3.27 | 273 |
| DEAL | 121.5 | 3.54 | 218 | WHILE | 67.5 | 3.40 | 180 |
| ABOUT | 121 | 3.21 | 600 | WAR | 66 | 3.16 | 405 |
| OR | 120 | 3.84 | 111 | OUT | 66 | 3.19 | 360 |
| PRESSURE | 115.7 | 3.83 | 108 | GET | 66 | 3.24 | 300 |
| KNOW | 114 | 3.43 | 280 | OFFER | 64 | 3.13 | 459 |
| QATAR | 113.5 | 3.25 | 733 | WOMEN | 64 | 3.68 | 84 |
| MAKE | 113 | 4.07 | 55 | RIGHTS | 63.6 | 3.09 | 553 |
| BEHEAD | 112.6 | 3.67 | 148 | DEATHS | 63.6 | 3.34 | 200 |
| TAKE | 109.9 | 3.35 | 334 | EGYPTIANS | 62.8 | 3.33 | 88 |

Appendix F: Collocates of Saudis in the FCT

| Collocate | LL | MI | Freq. | Collocate | LL | MI | Freq. |
|-------------|------|------|-------|--------------|------|------|-------|
| MOST | 62 | 3.90 | 50 | TAKING | 42.6 | 3.37 | 124 |
| TREAT | 62 | 3.87 | 54 | SELL | 41 | 3.77 | 44 |
| BOMB | 61 | 3.07 | 577 | IF | 41 | 3.93 | 31 |
| # | 59 | 3.31 | 206 | BLAMED | 41 | 3.74 | 47 |
| ALL | 58.7 | 3.07 | 562 | BEEN | 41 | 3.17 | 240 |
| WEALTHY | 58.6 | 4.07 | 31 | AFTER | 40.8 | 3.20 | 214 |
| THINK | 58 | 3.25 | 252 | ROLE | 40.5 | 3.64 | 58 |
| WEAPONS | 57.5 | 3.29 | 217 | EVERYWHERE | 40 | 3.97 | 28 |
| DID | 57.5 | 3.91 | 45 | OWN | 39.5 | 3.27 | 159 |
| ARMING | 57 | 3.37 | 166 | BED | 39 | 3.78 | 41 |
| FUNDING | 57 | 3.35 | 174 | THAN | 39 | 3.16 | 246 |
| HATE | 56.8 | 3.69 | 73 | AT | 38.9 | 3.71 | 47 |
| SO | 55.7 | 3.14 | 381 | ALSO | 38 | 3.82 | 37 |
| THOSE | 55 | 3.26 | 232 | KILLING | 38 | 3.29 | 145 |
| ONLY | 54.9 | 3.67 | 73 | TOO | 38 | 3.18 | 215 |
| DEAD | 54.5 | 3.47 | 119 | SUIT | 37.9 | 4.01 | 24 |
| BLOCK | 54 | 3.49 | 112 | SUPPORTING | 37.7 | 3.47 | 81 |
| BUT | 53.5 | 3.01 | 704 | PAY | 36.8 | 3.43 | 90 |
| CAN | 53 | 3.41 | 135 | MUST | 36.6 | 3.31 | 127 |
| EMIRATIS | 52.6 | 3.99 | 35 | WHY | 36.6 | 3.00 | 518 |
| DISASTER | 52.5 | 3.55 | 93 | EVEN | 36 | 3.17 | 216 |
| UP | 52 | 3.13 | 375 | TOLERATE | 36 | 3.21 | 180 |
| HELPING | 51.8 | 4.10 | 37 | LET | 36 | 3.13 | 253 |
| SUPPORT | 51.7 | 3.37 | 149 | COLLAPSE | 36 | 3.49 | 75 |
| DEALS | 50.9 | 3.72 | 60 | JORDANIANS | 36 | 3.88 | 30 |
| GROWING | 50.7 | 3.88 | 43 | ASK | 35.9 | 3.43 | 88 |
| SELLS | 50 | 3.80 | 50 | FALL | 35.7 | 3.78 | 37 |
| RESPONSIBLE | 50 | 3.59 | 80 | NEWS | 35 | 3.38 | 100 |
| CRUCIFIXION | 50 | 3.48 | 106 | ACTIVE | 34.9 | 3.95 | 25 |
| SAUDI'S | 49 | 0.77 | 12 | GOOD | 34.8 | 3.16 | 211 |
| KILL | 49 | 3.40 | 131 | WANT | 34.5 | 3.17 | 208 |
| MULL | 49 | 4.07 | 26 | PUTS | 34.5 | 3.91 | 27 |
| LIKE | 49 | 3.27 | 199 | KUWAITIS | 3.91 | 34.5 | 27 |
| BOARD | 48.8 | 3.66 | 67 | USE | 3.35 | 34.5 | 107 |
| LAUNCH | 47.5 | 3.89 | 39 | STOP | 34 | 3.60 | 53 |
| SAY | 46.9 | 3.59 | 76 | RACIST | 34 | 3.00 | 486 |
| BUY | 45.7 | 3.49 | 94 | ANGRY | 34 | 3.21 | 169 |
| CRANE | 45 | 3.34 | 145 | ARROGANT | 34 | 4.07 | 18 |
| GIVE | 44.5 | 3.34 | 142 | CLARIFY | 34 | 4.07 | 18 |
| REFUSE | 44 | 3.91 | 35 | RELATIONSHIP | 34 | 3.74 | 39 |
| UK | 44 | 3.19 | 240 | HIJACKERS | 33.5 | 3.58 | 55 |
| PAID | 44 | 3.64 | 62 | DEFEND | 33 | 3.71 | 40 |
| THREE | 43 | 3.71 | 53 | MEAN | 32.9 | 3.40 | 86 |
| UK | 44 | 3.19 | 240 | REPORT | 32.8 | 3.40 | 88 |
| WILL | 43 | 3.16 | 270 | INTERESTED | 32.8 | 3.91 | 26 |

Appendix F: Collocates of Saudis in the FCT

| Collocate | LL | MI | Freq. | Collocate | LL | MI | Freq. |
|-------------|------|------|-------|-----------|------|------|-------|
| READIES | 32.7 | 3.87 | 28 | FINANCED | 31 | 3.76 | 34 |
| ACCOUNTABLE | 32.7 | 3.87 | 28 | PREPARE | 31 | 3.90 | 25 |
| INVASIONS | 32.6 | 2.99 | 499 | HELPS | 31 | 3.87 | 27 |
| MONEY | 32.5 | 3.14 | 215 | TWO | 30.9 | 3.33 | 101 |
| MAKING | 32 | 3.47 | 69 | OTHERS | 30.8 | 3.37 | 89 |
| HELPED | 32 | 3.60 | 50 | ATTACKS | 30.8 | 3.46 | 69 |
| SUCK | 31.5 | 3.95 | 23 | OTHER | 30.8 | 3.15 | 197 |
| CONTINUE | 31 | 3.59 | 52 | CHAIR | 30.7 | 3.59 | 46 |
| SENDING | 31 | 3.76 | 34 | DOING | | | |