

## **Counter-Jihadism Online: The Delhi and the Mali Case**

*The representation of recent events that provoke counter-jihadism on Facebook and Twitter*

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## 1. Introduction

In this essay, we investigate counter-jihadism online. We were inspired by Nick Lowles, of anti counter-jihadism organization Hope Not Hate<sup>1</sup>, when he stated that a real-time monitoring system would be useful to control and monitor counter-jihadism online (Lowles). Therefore, we decided to focus on recent news events that are related to the Islamic faith, and to investigate how these events are used for the counter-jihadist argument.

Our ultimate goal is to make a map that can be used as a guide during events that provoke counter-jihadist reactions. For this, we would have to research many previous and current events that provoke counter-jihadism online. To start, we will focus on two recent news events involving Islam, namely the Delhi rape protests and the Mali war. In order to find out how these events are used for counter-jihadism, we researched two social media platforms: Twitter and Facebook. Our research aims to map out who the *key actors* are, what the *subtopics* are and how social media are being used during important events by counter-jihadists.

### *Research Question*

How do counter-jihadists use Islam-related events to support their arguments on Twitter and Facebook?

- a) Who are the key players in these discussions?
- b) What information is in focus?
- c) In what context do they discuss these events?

### *Counter-Jihadism*

Counter-jihadism is the opposite of jihadism, you could say that it is extremism against extremism:

Old-style racism, anti-Semitism and authoritarianism are rejected; right-wing Zionism is taken to be an ally. Unlike the traditional far-Right, these new movements rhetorically embrace what they regard as Enlightenment values of individual liberty, freedom of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/>

speech, gender equality and gay rights. In moving from neo-Nazism to counter-jihadism, the underlying structure of the narrative remains the same, but the protagonists have changed: the identity of Western liberal values has been substituted for white racial identity, Muslims have taken the place of blacks and multiculturalists are the new Jews. (Kundnani 6)

This is counter-jihadism explained by Dr. Arun Kundnani, a researcher on race relations, multiculturalism and security. As with many discussions and wars there are always more sides to one story. It is important to stay objective when researching jihadism as well as counter-jihadism and to really look at who is doing what, weather it is a Muslim acting out on behalf of his beliefs or is it counter-jihadists acting out on behalf of their hate for Islam. Kundhani describes this as:

As it turned out, the worst terrorist attack in Europe since the Madrid bombings of 2004 – a car bomb in Oslo, followed by a shooting spree on the island of Utøya, leaving 77 dead – had been carried out in the name of a ‘counter-jihadist’ rather than jihadist ideology. Anders Behring Breivik, whose 1,500-page manifesto, *2083 – A European Declaration of Independence*, was published online on the day of the attacks, believed that European elites were pandering to multiculturalism and enabling an ‘Islamic colonisation of Europe’. Like the *Wall Street Journal* editorial writer, he believed that Norway’s liberal values were under threat from ‘radical Islam’. (Kundnani 1)

To see how groups of counter-jihadists, not jihadists, are acting and reacting online, we decided to research Twitter and Facebook. To see which actors are active in contemporary discussions online we decided to research these two social media platforms on recent high profile events in the news. Namely, we focussed on: the Delhi gang rape and the protests that derived from it in India, and the armed intervention of France in Mali to strike down jihadism. With our research, we want to find out if these cases have common ground online and how discussions on Twitter and Facebook are carried out by the actors of counter-jihadism.

*Case Study #1: Delhi*

On the 16th of December 2012, six men on a bus in Delhi, India raped a 23-year old female student and proceeded to beat her up along with her male friend. They were subsequently left naked and for dead on the streets by their assaulters (“Indiase Verkracht”). Delhi is known as the “rape capital,” hence a women being raped is not major news in India (Noble). The protests that arose can be attributed to the gruesomeness of this attack, and the notion that this one woman now symbolises a new group of Indian women who are educated and believe in western standards (Pruis). The protests were triggered by this case, but have now become about more than just this one incident:

There are other “customs,” (we would call them crimes), that afflict women in central Asia and in the Arab Middle East, including North Africa, namely, a level of street sexual harassment and public gang-rape that no longer exists in the Judeo-Christian West. (Chesler)

One of the interesting features of this case study is the claim that the perpetrators are not guilty. This claim lies within understandings of women’s behaviour in Islamic countries:

According to the lawyer of three men accused of rape in India, the 23-year-old victim is to blame. In a café near the court in New Delhi Manohar Lal Sharma let slip that he had never heard of a rape of a "respectable lady." (“Slachtoffer Verkrachting India”)

The event, which we dub “the Delhi case,” became big in news all over the world because protests against rape and the safety of women arose throughout India, in order to change cultural behaviour in this male-dominated country (Pruis).

*The Issue of Islam and Fatwa*

By researching counter-jihadism, we found that the concepts of Islam were often related to the notion of fatwa. A fatwa is “a ruling on a point of Islamic law that is given by a recognized

authority” (Audioenglish). Note that a fatwa is only legal when it is placed on the subject by one in leading position within the religion of Islam (Kabbani).

The fatwa we discuss in our research is related to marriage and is allegedly placed on Syrian women by Al-Arifi a “well known” and “popular cleric” in Saudi Arabia:

“Muhammed al-Arifi, a Wahhabi religious cleric, officially calls this act an “intercourse marriage” that can last only a few hours – “in order to give each fighter a turn” -- and restricts the men to Syrian females at least 14 years old, widowed or divorced. Al-Arifi, expressed his annoyance at the "warriors of Islam" being denied sexual pleasures while fighting in Syria “alongside the armed opposition forces” for the past two years. He said this *fatwa* "solves [their] sexual problems" and “boosts the determination of the *mujahideen* in Syria and is considered a duty to enter paradise for those females who enter such marriages.” (“Saudi Cleric Issues Fatwa”)

He allegedly issued the fatwa because, according to his interpretation of the Quran, the men who fight for jihadism in Syria have a right to have sex with Syrian women to help his cause. Note here that these women have to be 14 years old or older, be divorced or widowed, and that the “marriage” lasts only for a few hours (“Saudi cleric issues fatwa”). The war Al-Arifi refers to the Syrian civil war between forces loyal to the Syrian Ba'ath Party government and those who are on the counter side. This civil war started on 15th of March 2011 and it is seen as one of the results of the Arab Spring, a name for protests in Egypt against strict Islamic laws carried out by the government (“Syria uprising”). Question here is if this “intercourse” fatwa is real or a narrative that is created to support the counter-jihadism story. As Kundnani states in *What is a Fatwa?*:

There has been a debate since 9/11 as to whether terrorism is related to Islam or to a particular misinterpretation of Islam. But both sides in this debate agree that the substantial problem is conflict between liberal values and religiously-inspired ‘extremist’ values and that the question of Muslim ‘integration’ into ‘our’ values is therefore part of the security picture. Thus, the official narrative, in whatever particular form it takes, tends to focus on the question of values within Muslim populations, and claims that counter-terrorism requires initiatives aimed at a wider transformation of the Muslim population beyond those who actually perpetrate or advocate violence. The case studies in this paper

will examine the prevalence of this narrative in counter-terrorism thinking in four countries: Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark and Belgium. (Kundnani 1)

For the case of the “intercourse fatwa” there are also online sources claiming that this fatwa is not true (Garibaldi). This is interesting to our research because it shows that narratives might be used online by jihadists and counter jihadists to support their causes.

### *Case Study #2: Mali*

François Hollande, the president of France, has started a war against Islamists in the former French colony of Mali. Friday, January 11<sup>th</sup> 2013, France invaded Mali in a new war against ‘Islamization’ where, at that moment, the road to the capital Bamako was almost open to the rebels (“Meer Franse Troepen Naar Mali”). The African branch of Al-Qaeda has had a minimal presence for many years in the forests and deserts of Mali. In recent months, the terrorists made use of the political instability in the country to take over a territory of the size of France where they could prepare for the global jihad (“Extremisten Noord-Mali”). As the Taliban apply their own rules of law, associated with gruesome punishments, such as cutting off body parts and chastising of women. The military coup in Mali in March 2012 was the catalyst for the events in the north of the country. In the months that followed, Mali changed from a stable country to a failed state (“Extremisten Noord-Mali”).

### *Researching News Discussions on Social Media*

Twitter is an online microblogging platform, said to organize discussion and information flows such as around disasters and other events (Bruns and Lang). Our research technique followed the methods of the medium, insofar as hashtags organize subject matters, and retweets point to significant content. By collecting and analysing this data, we could make claims on how

the two stories of counter-jihadism are being told on Twitter. We also made a comparison of our analysis of the Twitter sphere to the Facebook space. We used a post-demographic approach for this analysis, which is concerned with how to make sense and use of a large amount of data, especially about interests and tastes. Tweets are an example of such data. According to Richard Rogers, “post-demographics could be thought of as the study of the data in social networking platforms, and, in particular, how profiling is, or may be, performed” (Rogers 29).

The Digital Methods Initiative collected a dataset of tweets on ‘jihad’ in the past few weeks, by collecting tweets with the following terms: jihad, djihad, dschihad, antijihad, antidjihad, antidschihad and cihad. This was a suitable dataset for us to use for our research on counter-jihadism because we could both use it for the Delhi rape as for the Mali case. Concentrating on retweets, it was found that they can be made to give an account of the unfolding of events (Rogers et al., 2009). In order to find out how narratives of counter-jihadism unfold online, we looked at both Twitter and Facebook for the most prominent influencers and topics.

## **2. Method**

### *2.1 Twitter*

When we started our Twitter analysis, we used the aforementioned dataset of collected tweets. We then used the Twitter Analytics Tool,<sup>2</sup> which makes it possible to collect tweets by keywords. The tool makes it possible to narrow the dataset and retrieve only tweets containing a specific word(s) within that dataset. For the Mali case we queried ‘Mali’ and for the Delhi case, ‘Delhi’ and ‘Rape’. Since our study focuses on events, we retrieved tweets within the dataset

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<sup>2</sup> <https://tools.digitalmethods.net/coword/twitter/analysis/index.php?>

matching the dates of important happenings during these events. Since the Mali case is relatively new this meant that we retrieved tweets from the day that the French troops invaded Mali (the 11<sup>th</sup> of January) until the 16th of January, the day we collected the tweets. For the Delhi case we used tweets collected from the 27th of December (the date of the incident) until the 15th of January. When this dataset was extracted, four peaks of tweets became visually obvious:

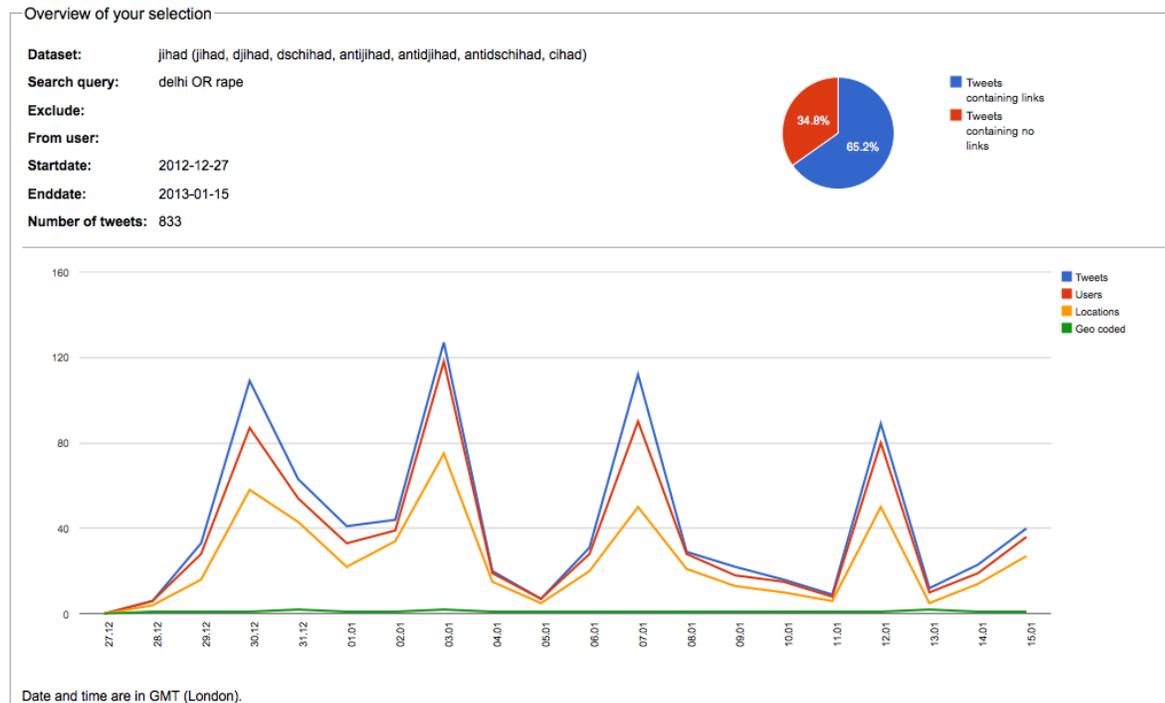


Figure 1. Peaks on Twitter for 'jihad', 'Delhi' and 'rape'.

When analysing the retweets, we focussed on these dates to specify the study to events. For the Mali case, we used the last four days of the dataset since that was when the tweets were most intense.

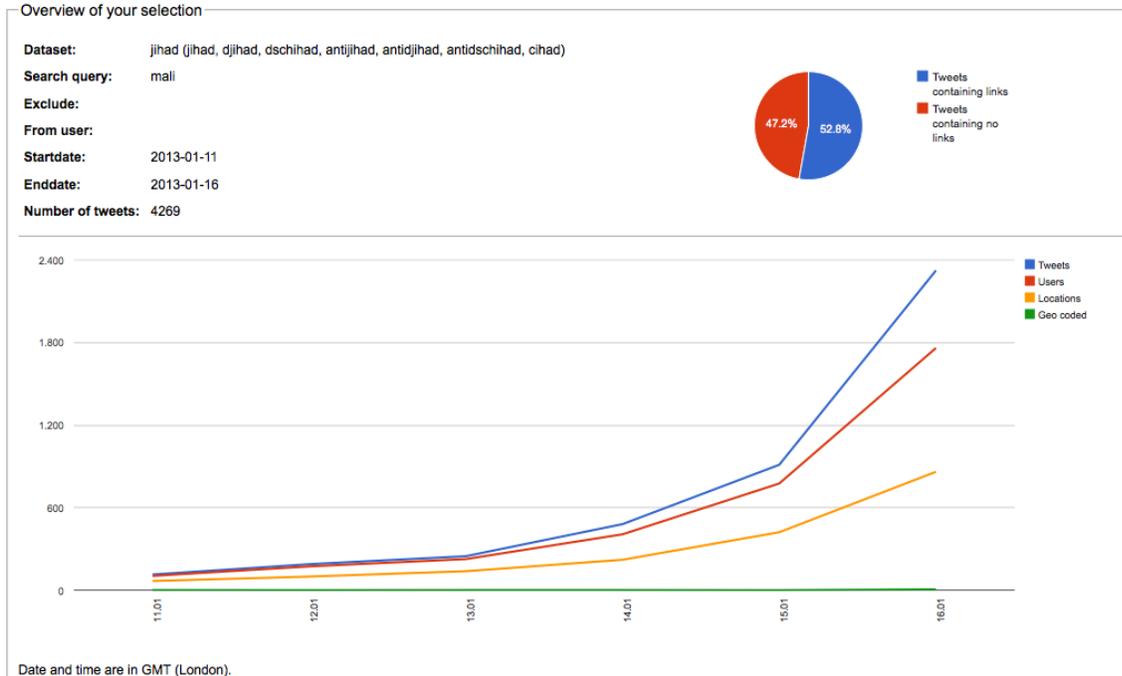


Figure 2. Twitter discussion about 'jihad' and 'Mali'

To visualise hashtag co-occurrence and relationship between the top 'mentioned users' in the retrieved dataset, the open source graph visualisation tool Gephi<sup>3</sup> was used. This resulted in several visualizations, which can be seen in the following chapter. Some changes to the dataset were made in order to have more relevant results. First, we removed all the hashtags with no links to other hashtags. Second, we removed all the nodes of the queries that were used to create the database (jihad, djihad, dschihad, antijihad, antidjihad, antidschihad and cihad) and also the queries 'Delhi', 'rape' and 'Mali'. We did this because we wanted to find out which topic were discussed next to the former mentioned search queries. For the visualization, we coloured the nodes and the edges on a frequency scale ranging from blue, to green, to yellow, to orange, to red. Blue means that this specific hashtag does not have a lot of hashtags in common; red means the opposite. Moreover, we also edited the size of the nodes and edges. The larger the size, the more links the hashtag has.

<sup>3</sup> <https://gephi.org/>

Next to a co-hashtag analysis, a social-graph visualization was made for both topics. With this, the most influential Twitter users could be found according to the amount of connections (mentions or retweets) with other users. To visualise the top retweets, the ‘word cloud’ generator Wordle<sup>4</sup> was used. When inputting a specific text, the tool gives more prominence to the words that appear more frequently in the text. In order to examine the meaning of the words, we referred back to the actual retweets.

## 2.2 Facebook

In order to access groups and data on Facebook anonymously, we first created a fake Facebook account called *Jill Seka*. Unfortunately, this account was removed the day after we started using it. Hence, we created a new profile for *Jillian Seka*.

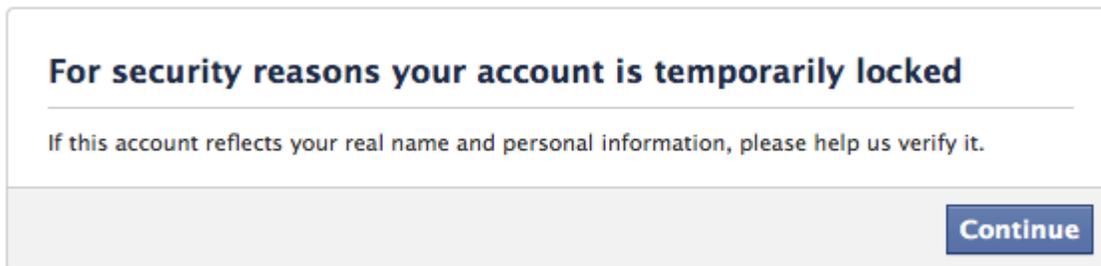


Figure 3. Screenshot of Facebook account being blocked.

To choose which Facebook-groups to study, we first visualized the Twitter dataset using Gephi, and chose the dominant groups mentioned there. The following groups were found: EDL (English Defence League), BNP (British National Party), BFP (British Freedom Party), GOP (Republican Party), The Tea Party, FSA (Free Syrian Army) and MDL (Muslim Defence League). The MDL was not chosen to investigate, however, due to its strict position *against*

<sup>4</sup> <http://wordle.net/>

counter-jihadism. This list was then broadened by using a list of counter-jihad organizations found on the website of Hope Not Hate,<sup>5</sup> a counter-jihad organization based in the UK. These queries were then used in Facebook's search option, where 'groups' and 'pages' were both selected. Only groups with a significant number of members or fans (more than 500), found to be active (with recent posts published) and with a majority of English language content were qualified. Additionally, generic counter-jihad Facebook groups and pages were searched. Unfortunately, using the second Facebook account, no groups accepted our request to join and therefore could not be researched using the chosen tool. For this reason, only Facebook 'pages' were used in this study.

The following Facebook pages were used:

- EDL<sup>6</sup>
- (EDL) English Defence League<sup>7</sup>
- BNP<sup>8</sup>
- British National Party<sup>9</sup>
- British Freedom<sup>10</sup>
- GOP Majority<sup>11</sup>
- Tea Party Stand Up<sup>12</sup>
- Tea Party<sup>13</sup>
- Tea Party Patriots<sup>14</sup>
- European Freedom Initiative (New)<sup>15</sup>
- I Hate Islam<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/counter-jihad/organisations/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/pages/EDL/258616132923?ref=stream>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/pages/EDL-English-Defence-League/238696516197018?ref=stream>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/pages/BNP/173163939435977?ref=stream>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/OfficialBritishNationalParty?ref=stream>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/BritishFreedomParty>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/GOPmajority?ref=stream>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/TeaPartyStandUp?ref=stream>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/TeaPartyCentral?ref=stream>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/teapartypatriots?ref=stream>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/EuropeanFreedomInitiative?ref=stream>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/hateislam>

- I hate islam<sup>17</sup>
- Stop Islamization of America<sup>18</sup>
- SIOC (Stop Islamization of Canada)<sup>19</sup>
- SION Stop Islamization of Nations<sup>20</sup>
- Stop Islamization of the world<sup>21</sup>
- The Counter Jihad Report<sup>22</sup>

After ‘liking’ these pages via our Facebook profile, we then used the Netvizz<sup>23</sup> software, which collects all posts by users and pages and outputs them into a spreadsheet. Unfortunately, the software only enables up to the 999th most recent post, and some of the groups were extremely active. The same date range used for Twitter was used again (December 27, 2012-January 16, 2013), but due to the Netvizz limitation, data on some pages did not reach back to December 27th. After collecting the data in spreadsheets, they were all searched for the following key terms: Mali, Rape, Delhi, India, Fatwa and France. These terms were chosen due to their relevance to our case studies, but unfortunately do not include misspellings. All data relating to our case study events was then collected together to be further analysed. Since Netvizz does not display usernames, we were unable to identify the key actors as we did with Twitter. It further does not display comments or reactions to posts; therefore, the relevant posts were later searched manually on the pages themselves.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/pages/I-hate-islam/255519231224988>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Stop-Islamization-of-America/109113042509908?ref=stream>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/pages/SIOC-Stop-Islamization-of-Canada/113065962075296?ref=stream>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/pages/SION-Stop-Islamization-of-Nations/150974048350848?ref=stream>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/SIOTW?ref=stream>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/counterjihadreport>

<sup>23</sup> <http://apps.facebook.com/netvizz/>

### **3. Results**

#### *3.1 The Delhi Case on Twitter*

To analyse the narrative of counter-jihadism on Twitter, we used the dataset of ‘Jihad’ to make word clouds and visualizations with Gephi. With the most retweeted tweets, we were able to reconstruct the narrative on twitter by putting the tweets in a chronological order, per hour. As mentioned before, during the research we discovered that ‘fatwa’ was a recurring topic in the Delhi case. Therefore, a co-hashtag and a social-graph analysis were made for the fatwa case as well.

##### *3.1.1 Co-Hashtag Analysis*

###### *Co-Hashtag Analysis of the Delhi Case*

In order to find the narrative and subtopics of the Delhi rape, a co-hashtag analysis was used. With the method described before the following visualizations were made:



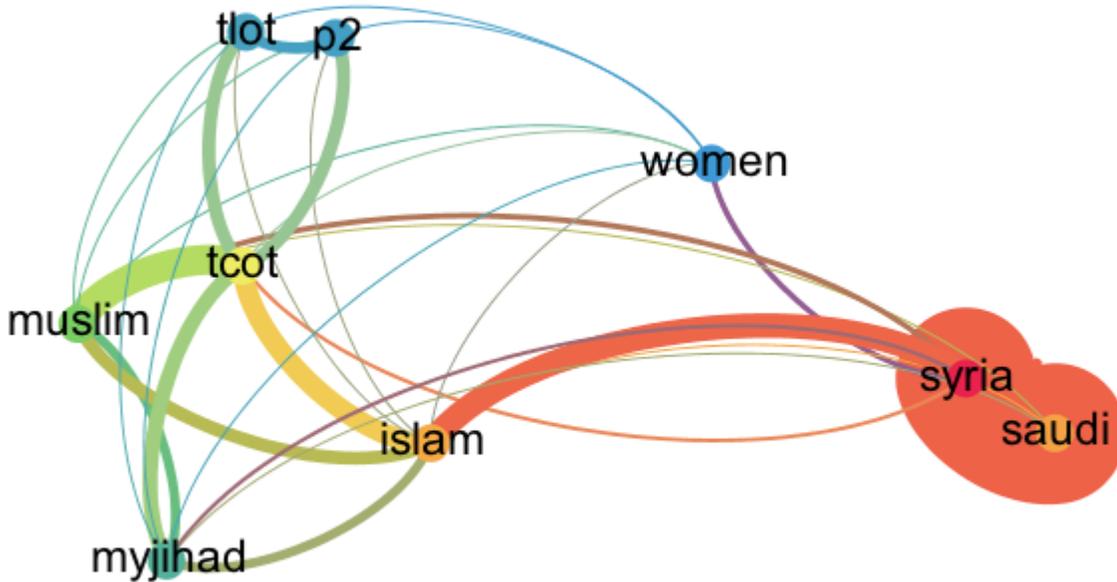


Figure 5. Top hashtags in Dataset Jihad – Delhi Rape.

The first image shows all the topics and hashtags concerning the Delhi rape. Some terms are mentioned significantly more than others; this is also visible in the second image. In this image, the terms with a low degree of connections are left out and only the most used terms are visible. This leads to the following list of important hashtags: Syria, Saudi, Islam, tcot (“top conversations on Twitter”), Muslim and MyJihad.

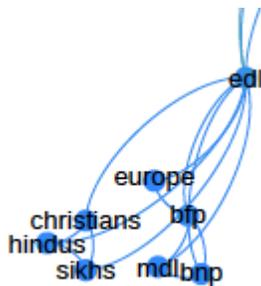


Figure 6. Cluster in the co-hashtag analysis of the Delhi Rape.

What is notable is a small cluster on the bottom, as seen in Figure 6 (above). This cluster consists of a collection of political and counter-jihad groups: EDL (English Defence League), BNP (British National Party), MDL (Muslim Defence League), BFP (British Freedom Party), FSA (Free Syria Army), GOP (Great Old Party), and the Tea Party. It appears that right wing parties like the Tea Party are closely connected in this cluster to counter-jihad groups like EDL. However, they are also connected to religious groups: Christians, Hindus and Sikhs.

#### *Co-Hashtag Analysis of the Fatwa Case*

Next, a co-hashtag analysis was made for the query ‘fatwa’, since it appeared that fatwa was appearing a lot in the Delhi rape story. The most appearing hashtags in this network are: Muslim, Islam, tcot, MyJihad, rapejihad, tlot and woman.

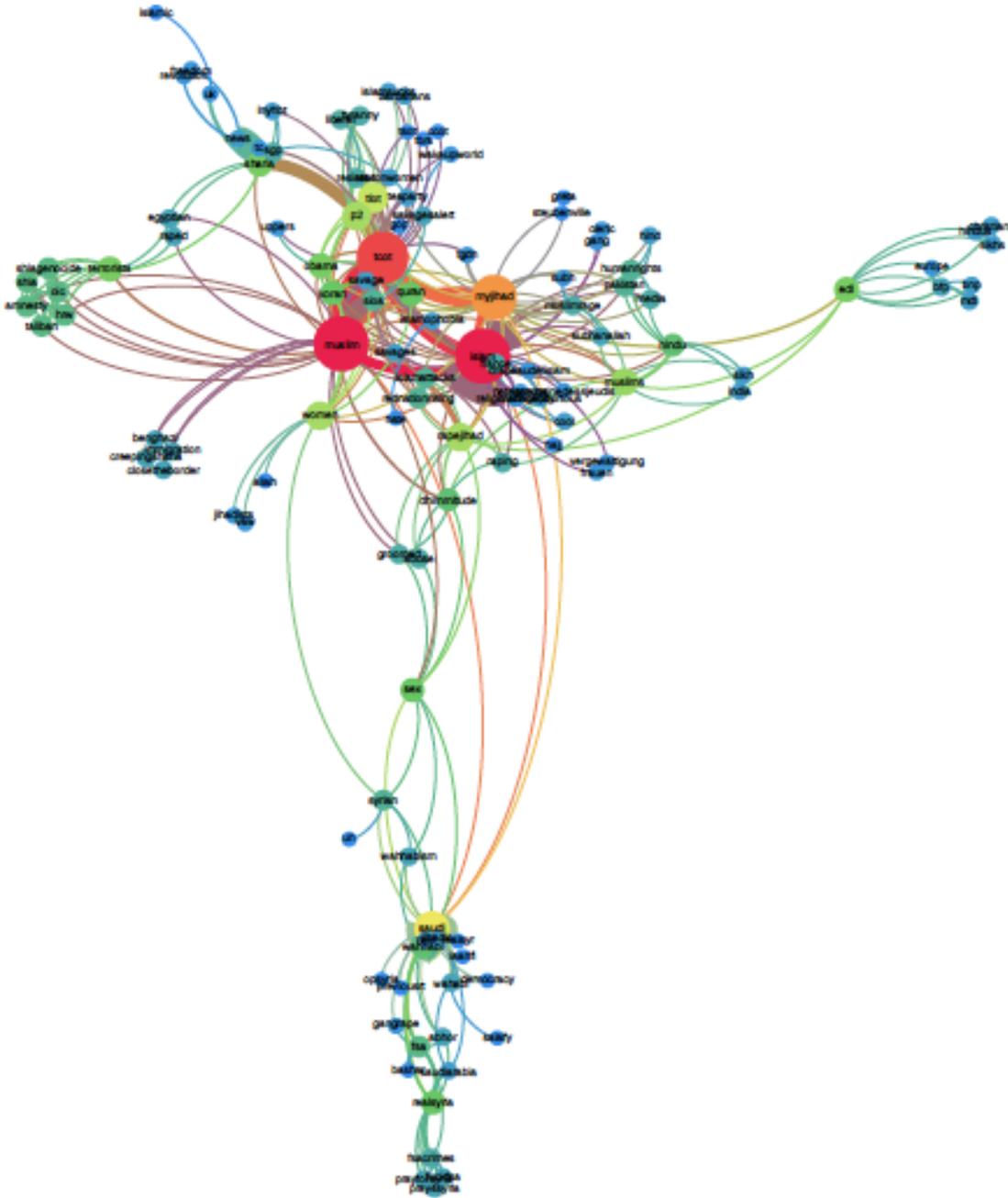


Figure 7. Co-hashtag analysis of 'fatwa'.

Like the network of the Delhi rape, the English Defence League forms a central hub in the Twitter network, as can be seen in the cluster on the upper right.

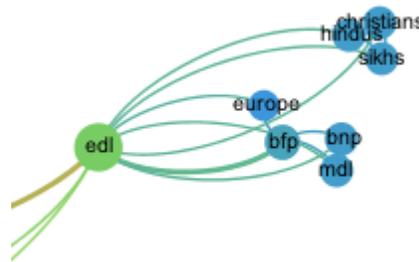


Figure 8. Detail of the co-hashtag analysis of 'fatwa'

Like the cluster of the Delhi rape, this cluster includes EDL, BNP, MDL, BFP. However, the right wing parties GOP and the Tea Party are not in this cluster. They can be found at another place in the network:

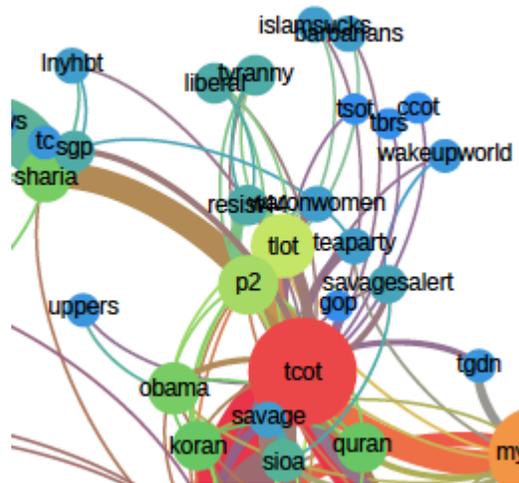


Figure 9. Right wing in the co-hashtag analysis of 'fatwa'.

### 3.1.2 Social Graph

Next, we used Gephi to create a social graph of the Twitter users in the datasets for the Delhi rape and fatwa, provided by the DMI. The following image shows a filtered network of Twitter users in the Delhi case:

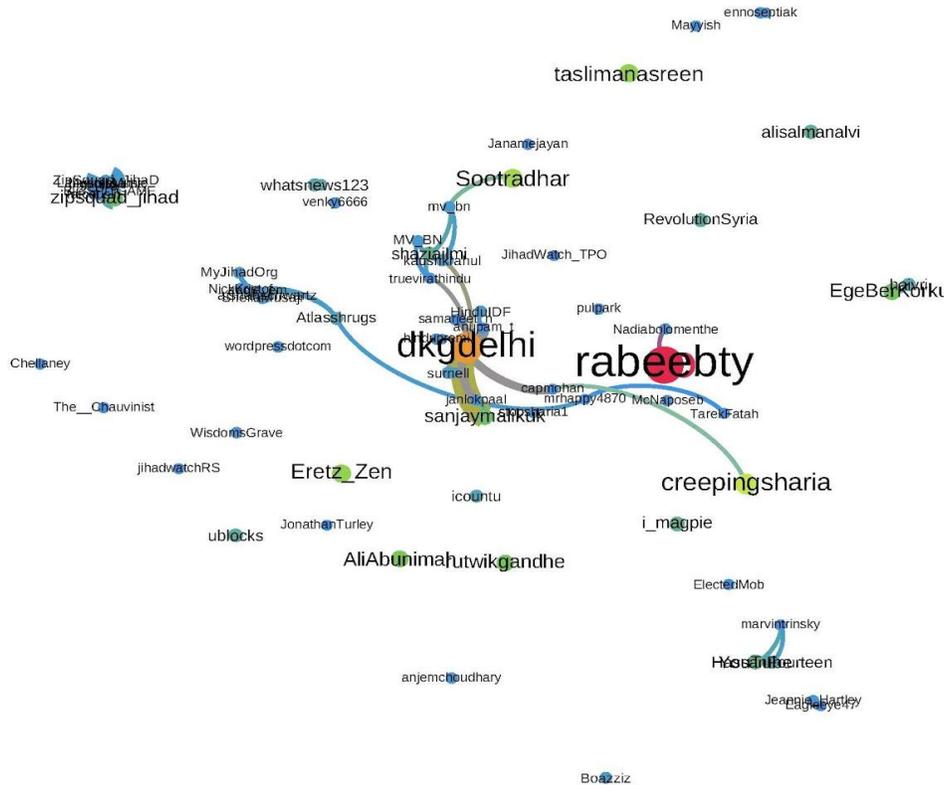


Figure 10. Social Graph of the Delhi Rape.

This image only shows the most connected Twitter users; the Twitter users with only a few connections are left out. The most connected Twitter users can be found according to the social graph of Gephi. The Twitter users with the most (at least 18) connections are: @rabeebty, @dkgdelhi, @creepingsharia, @sootradhar, @Eretz\_Zen, @taslimanasreen, @aliAbunimah, @EgeBerOrkut, and @zipsquad\_jihad. The same graph can be made for the fatwa-case. The most connected Twitter users are: @Rabeebty, @Creepingsharia, @Sootradhar, @Eret\_Zen,

@Taslimanasreen, @Youtube, @AliAbunimah, @EgeBerKorkut, @rutwikgandhe and @ZipsquadJihad.

This list is in the hierarchical order with @Rabeeby on top with 63 connections, and @ZipsquadJihad on the bottom with 15. The zipsquadjihad case is interesting (see next image): It is strongly connected to Bitspitgame, BIGSPITGAME, and ZipSquadJihad, and these nodes have the highest InDegree ratio. After research, it appeared that Zip Squad is an artist group and Bigspitgame is one of the rappers from this group.

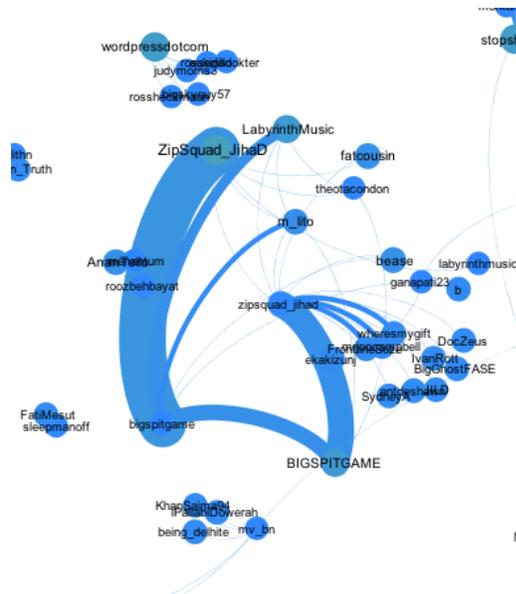


Figure 11. Detail of fatwa social graph according to InDegree.

However, in contrast to these figures that have a strong connection with a few users, most other important users are connected to *many* other users, but with a loose connection.





### 3.1.3 Word Clouds for Delhi

Peak 1: Retweets from the 30th to the 31st of December 2012 (12 retweets)

<http://freetoughtblogs.com/taslima/2012/12/31/a-fatwa-to-rape>



Figure 14. Wordle for the Delhi retweets from the 30<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2012.

'Fatwa' is dominating the picture for the retweets between the 30th and the 31st of December 2012, just as 'saudi', 'rape' and 'jihadis' are. These are followed by 'issues', 'syria' and 'syrian' and 'allowing'. Then, 'preacher', 'wahhabi' and 'women' come up. According to that, the Wordle works similar to a press release, since the most important information shows up prominently, and then the details follow and help for a better understanding. The graphic thereby tells the exact news from the 30th of December, which is that a fatwa was issued by the Saudi preacher Wahhabi, allowing jihadist soldiers in Syria to rape Syrian women. The Twitter user @taslimanasreen informed about this case and was retweeted frequently, by quoting her entry on Freetoughtblogs.com:

A fatwa was issued. A Wahhabi religious cleric in Saudi Arabia, Muhammed al-Arifi, who is very influential in Jihadi circles, has recently issued a fatwa (religious edict) that permits all Jihadist militants in Syria to engage in short-lived marriages with Syrian women that each lasts for a few hours in order to satisfy their sexual... (Nasreen)

One of the retweets stands out from the others though, since it is subjective, calling the Saudi who spoke out the fatwa a "fucker"; due to this being an isolated incident, it comes up small in the Wordle (retweet from @mayyish).

Peak 2: Retweets from the 2nd to the 3rd of January 2013 (11 retweets)



Figure 15. Wordle for the Delhi retweets from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January 2013.

Again, 'fatwa', 'rape', 'women' and 'Saudi' dominate the word cloud. Hence, the retweets are still informing about the incident that this fatwa has been issued. However, 'hoax' stands out of this information flow. It appears due to a retweet that accused the news about the fatwa to be false:



though, since the main subject of the retweets is the fatwa from the 30th of December 2012.

Unfortunately, we could not figure out why the link to the video is important to dkgdelhi, since Bhatt speaks in Hindi in it.

Peak 4: Retweets from the 12th to the 13th of January 2013 (10 retweets)

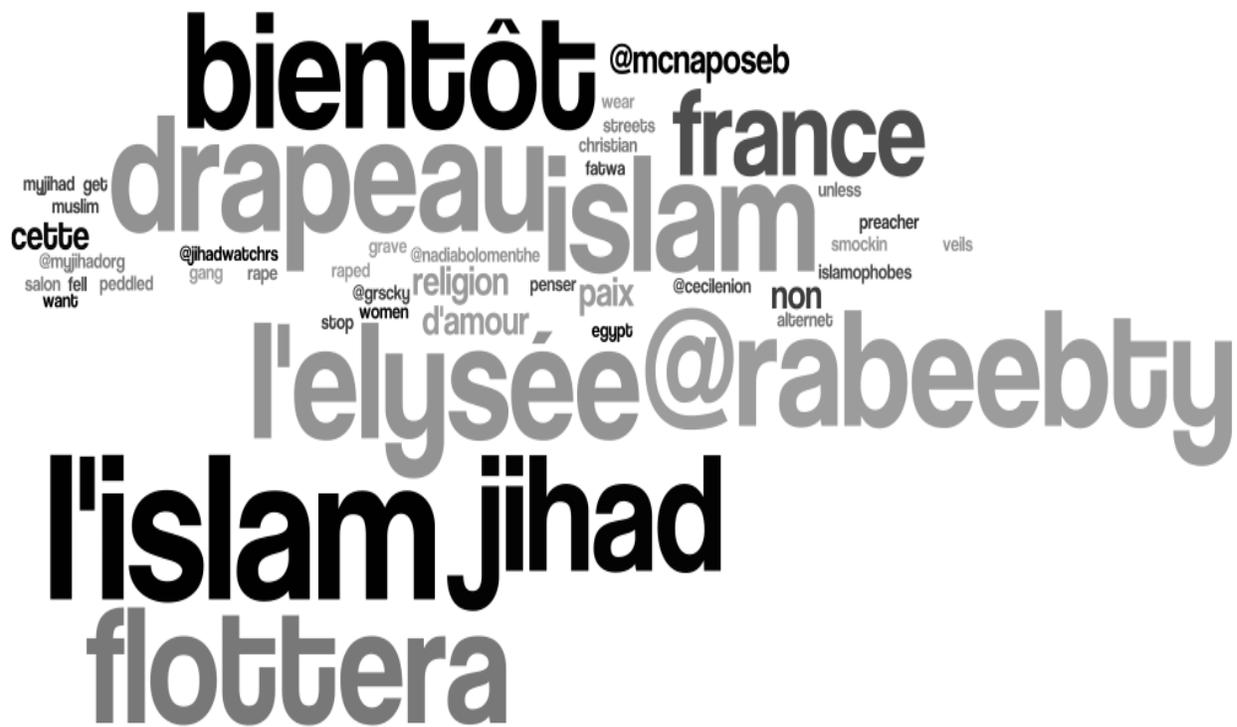


Figure 17. Wordle for the Delhi retweets from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> of January 2013.

This Wordle confirms that the most retweeted tweet is made by @rabeebty, saying “le drapeau de l'islam flottera bientôt a l'elysée. #jihad #islam #france”, which means “The flag of Islam will soon fly over the palace of elysée”. Therefore, the words showing up the biggest next to it are ‘l'islam’, ‘drapreau’, ‘flottera’, ‘bientôt’ and ‘l'elysée’. ‘France’ comes up pretty big too, since it is a hashtag used in this tweet. This retweet actually refers to the case of France invading Mali on the 12th of January 2013, which apparently evokes feelings of resentment



### 3.1.4 Reconstructing the Twitter Narrative

While searching for tweets containing ‘jihad’, ‘Delhi’ or ‘rape’, we immediately found four remarkable peaks of tweets on different days between November 28, 2012 and January 15, 2013. We scraped the most retweeted tweets for the four peaks and reconstructed the narrative of tweets on the different days, by structuring them in a chronological order. Therefore, we were able to capture the discussions at these particular days, and to analyse the stories on Twitter.

30-31 December 2012	Top retweets on ‘jihad’, ‘Delhi’ and ‘rape’
30-12-2012 - 07h	<i>saudi fucker issues fatwa allowing jihadists to rape syrian woman since they've been deprived while ""freeing"" Syria</i>
30-12-2012 - 13h	<i>saudi wahhabi preacher issues fatwa allowing jihadis to rape syrian women</i>
30-12-2012 - 19h	<i>a fatwa to rape! #saudi #fatwa #jihadis #syria</i>
30-12-2012 - 21h	<i><a href="http://freethoughtblogs.com/taslima/2012/12/31/a-fatwa-to-rape/">http://freethoughtblogs.com/taslima/2012/12/31/a-fatwa-to-rape/</a> saudi cleric issues fatwa enabling jihadists in syria to enter into rape marriages with 14 year old...</i>
31-12-2012 - 16h	<i>saudi wahabi cleric issues fatwa allowing jihadists to rape syrian women #syria #islam</i>
31-12-2012 - 16h	<i>curse these molvis. ""#saudi #wahabi preacher issues #fatwa allowing jihadis to rape #syria women"</i>
31-12-2012- 20h	<i>saudi wahhabi preacher issues fatwa allowing jihadis to rape syrian women #muslim #sioa #cot</i>

Figure 19. Top retweets on ‘jihad’, ‘Delhi’ and ‘rape’ on the 30th and 31th of December 2012.

On the 30th and 31st of December 2012, a Twitter discussion emerged about the fatwa that was issued by a Saudi cleric. The most retweeted tweets are either: reporting the fact and

redirecting to the news online, or they are more subjective and indignant about the fatwa. Some can be considered as furious and even hate speech. It is also interesting to look at the hashtags that are being used: Next to rather descriptive hashtags such as ‘Saudi’, ‘Syria’ and ‘fatwa’, others are used, like ‘Muslim’, ‘jihadis’ and even ‘siao’, which stands for Stop Islamization of America. The last hashtag especially shows that this event of the Fatwa is used as an argument for counter-jihadism, since Twitter users establish a link between the fatwa and the Stop Islamization of America movement.

2-3 January 2013	Top retweets on ‘jihad’, ‘Delhi’ and ‘rape’
02-01-2013 - 15h	<i>saudi imam reportedly issues fatwa allowing jihadists to rape women in syria</i>
03-01-2013 - 05h	<i>alternet's dissemination of 'rape fatwa' hoax disturbingly similar to lat years 'sodomy is ok for jihad fatwa' hoax.</i>
03-01-2013 - 05h	<i>influential saudi arabian imam issues fatwa that allows all jihadists fighting in syria to rape women.</i>
03-01-2013 - 06h	<i>alternet's dissemination of 'rape fatwa' hoax disturbingly similar to lat years 'sodomy is ok for jihad fatwa' hoax.</i>
03-01-2013 - 07h	<i>saudi imam issued a fatwa that essentially allows all jihadists fighting in syria to #rape women.</i>
03-01-2013 - 07h	<i>saudi arabian imam issued a fatwa that allows all jihadists fighting in syria to rape women.</i>
03-01-2013 - 09h	<i>(@bbcnews) time you admitted that #muslims are conducting a rape #jihad in india. their victims are all non-muslims. #hindu</i>
03-01-2013 - 15h	<i>(@creepingsharia) saudi cleric issues fatwa allowing islamic rebels to rape syrian women #sharia #jihad #news</i>

Figure 20. Top retweets on ‘jihad’, ‘Delhi’ and ‘rape’ on 2th and 3th of January 2013.

On the 3rd of January 2013, there is another peak of tweets containing ‘jihad’, ‘Delhi’ or ‘rape’. Apparently the fatwa is still treated as a news item, but a discussion also emerges about the fatwa being a hoax. If it is indeed a hoax, the fatwa cannot be used as an argument for counter-jihadism. However, these most retweeted tweets show two different statements (namely, the fatwa as a fact or a hoax), but they do not show an actual discussion. This might have to do with the fact that the tweets do not use the same hashtags (or no hashtags at all). Therefore, it is harder to create a communal discussion space.

6-7 January 2013	Top retweets on ‘jihad’, ‘Delhi’ and ‘rape’
06-01-2013 - 06h	<i>23 year old ""kaafir"" nurse jyoti singh gangraped/murdered by mohammed afroze in the name of allah/islam/koran/jihad!</i>
06-01-2013 - 10h	<i>saudi cleric issues #fatwa allowing jihadis to rape syrian women <a href="http://www.defence.pk/forums/middle-east-africa/227421-saudi-cleric-issues-fatwa-allowing-jihadis-rape-syrian-women.html">http://www.defence.pk/forums/middle-east-africa/227421-saudi-cleric-issues-fatwa-allowing-jihadis-rape-syrian-women.html</a></i>
06-01-2013 - 19h	<i>jihad murders &amp; rape every day and the enemedia sings the praises of #filthyislam.... <a href="http://sheikyermami.com/2013/01/06/jihad-murders-every-day-and-the-enemedia-sings-the-praises-of-islam/">http://sheikyermami.com/2013/01/06/jihad-murders-every-day-and-the-enemedia-sings-the-praises-of-islam/</a></i>
07-01-2013 - 00h	<i>compare mahesh bhatt's a converted muslim with mohan bhagwat on bharat &amp; india- ibtl <a href="http://www.ibtl.in/video/6654/mahesh-bhatt-call-to-indian-muslims-for-jihad">http://www.ibtl.in/video/6654/mahesh-bhatt-call-to-indian-muslims-for-jihad</a></i>
07-01-2013 - 00h	<i>compare mahesh bhatt a converted muslim breathing fire with #rss mohan bhagwat on women in bharat <a href="http://www.ibtl.in/video/6654/mahesh-bhatt-call-to-indian-muslims-for-jihad">http://www.ibtl.in/video/6654/mahesh-bhatt-call-to-indian-muslims-for-jihad</a></i>
07-01-2013 - 02h	<i>hear mahesh bhatt a converted jihadi &amp; now judge bhagwat on</i>

07-01-2013 - 06h	<i>bharat&amp;women</i> <i>before ranting on rss ans this.saudi(in which direction u do namaaz) imam called for jihad(rape women) in syria</i>
07-01-2013 - 09h	<i>disgusting: saudi imam reportedly issues fatwa allowing jihadists to rape women in syria</i>
07-01-2013 - 13h	<i>if a 17 year old kashmiri jihadi rapes sonia/gangrapes sheela/murders mms in the name of allah/islam/koran/mohammed/jihad will he be spared?</i>

Figure 21. Top retweets on ‘jihad’, ‘Delhi’ and ‘rape’ on 6th and 7th of January 2013.

On the 6th and 7th of January, there are a couple of events that are being discussed. Still, the fatwa is mentioned, but also some actual rapes are being reported. Also, some of these are condemned in the tweets. One of the tweets says that the rape by a 17 year old boy is simply disgusting. Also, the hashtag #filthyislam is being used. It would be interesting to further research whether or not this hashtag is being used by counter-jihadists online.

<b>12-13 January 2013</b>	<b>Top retweets on ‘jihad’, ‘Delhi’ and ‘rape’</b>
12-01-2013 - 03h	<i>egypt: muslim preacher says christian women should wear veils unless ""they want to get raped on the streets"</i>
12-01-2013 - 12h	<i>le drapeau de l'islam flottera bientôt a l'elysée. #jihad #islam #france</i>
12-01-2013 - 12h	<i>l'islam cette religion de paix et d'amour! ""le drapeau de l'islam flottera bientôt a l'elysée. #jihad #islam</i>
12-01-2013 - 12h	<i>how alternet and salon fell for ""gang rape"" fatwa peddled by islamophobes #myjihad</i>
12-01-2013 - 12h	<i>“le drapeau de l'islam flottera bientôt a l'elysée. #jihad #islam #france”qu en penser ? grave non ?</i>

*Figure 22. Top retweets on 'jihad', 'Delhi' and 'rape' on 12th and 13th of January 2013.*

On the 12th of January, there is a last peak of tweets. Here, we actually find a small discussion between opponents. The Twitter user @rabeebty posted that the flag of the Islam will fly soon over the Palace of Élysées. A reaction from another Twitter user states that Islam is the religion of peace and love, which is interesting, because it tries to convince other Twitter users that Islam should not be used for violence. Another Twitter user was worried about the statement of @rabeebty and tried to evoke a discussion by asking other users what they think of the statement. This discussion might be a result of the hashtags that @rabeebty has used, namely 'Islam', 'France' and 'jihad'. What is also interesting is that this discussion originates on Twitter; it is not a reaction to a news event. On the same day, other tweets about women's rights and cases of rape are mentioned as well. The hashtag #myjihad also emerges, but it is hard to state whether it is used in a counter-jihadist way or not, since it talks about the fatwa as being issued by Islamophobes.

### *3.2 The Mali Case*

#### *3.2.1 Co-Hashtag Analysis*

In the Gephi graph it shows that #myjihad is used by the counter-jihadists in relation to describing this event. It is used in combination with hashtags related to counter-jihadist groups from the UK and the USA such as #edl, #teaparty and #bnp. Hashtags with negative connotations are also used in combination with #myjihad, such as #savages.



user is based in Brisbane, Australia and describes herself as “Love Jesus, love my husband, love my kids, love homeschooling, love Israel, love free speech. Prolife, Australian, not so keen on Islam. Brisbane Australia” (@nobigotry). The @Atlasshrugs account is run by Pamela Geller who is a known counter-jihadist and who is an editor of Atlas Shrugs. This account is also the one that is mentioned the most within the group. The English Defence League’s official Twitter account is also mentioned many times since the node is relatively large. However, it is not connected to @AtlasShrugs or any other nodes in the social graph. Though, since the filtering was set to only show accounts that had been mentioned at least five times, it might be the case that there are many users who mentions the EDL account, but fewer than five times.

Interesting to note with both the case of @Atlasshrugs and @Official\_EDL is that they are not mentioning the Twitter news accounts that seem to be frequently mentioned by other users on Twitter. The graph shows that the users who are most mentioned and integrated in the conversation on Twitter is mostly journalists and news agencies such as @dufourdufour who is a chief editor of the French newspaper *Le Petit Quotidien* and @joepenney who is a photojournalist in West Africa.

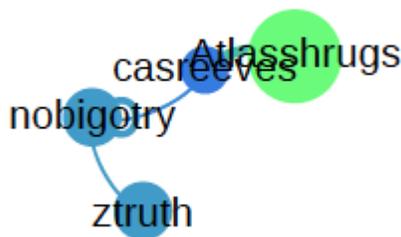


Figure 20. Extracted cluster of nodes from the from Gephi social graph (Full graphic in Appendix B)



### 3.2.4. Reconstructing the Twitter Narrative

In order to reconstruct the narrative about the invasion of Mali, connected to counter-jihadism, we captured the most retweeted tweets for ‘jihad’ and ‘Mali’ between the 13th and 16th of January 2013. On those days, there were the most tweets for this topic since November 2012.

13-16 January 2013	Top retweets for ‘jihad’ and ‘Mali’
13-01-2013 - 00h	<i>jihadis for hire: for friend of foe: economical rates go anywhere: #libya #syria #mali just call alqaeda enterprises</i>
13-01-2013 - 03h	<i>hier 18h45 : manifestants musulmans devant l'ambassade de france à londres : ""jihad !"" ""sharia pour l'europe!"" #mali</i>
13-01-2013 - 11h	<i>to all the jihadis in #syria: your brothers in #mali need you to fight the french as they are outnumbered. leave now and go.</i>
13-01-2013 - 13h	<i>al-qaeda jihadists whom #uk fights in #mali comb their beards to the left while the ones #uk supports in #syria</i>
13-01-2013 - 15h	<i>nu op thepostonline op de vlucht voor jihad in mali: hoe erg is de situatie in mali? heel erg. de nederlandse vr..</i>
13-01-2013 - 22h	<i>fransız savaş uçakları mali'nin kuzeyinde etkin olan tevhid cihad ve ensaruddin gruplarını bombaladı.</i>
14-01-2013 - 02h	<i>kia apko islam &amp; jihad se muhabat he to follow @mujahid_313 &amp; kia apko ckt ki shawq he to follow @malik_jee2 03139049448</i>
14-01-2013 - 08h	<i>alerte - mali: les jihadistes menacent de frapper la france au coeur je dirais plutôt</i>
14-01-2013 - 08h	<i>#mali "la france a attaqué l'islam. nous allons frapper le coeur de la france" dit l'un des chefs des djihadistes</i>
14-01-2013 - 08h	<i>#mali #djidah: ""depuis juin on a des ouvertures d'informations judiciaires sur les groupes qui veulent aller au mali""</i>

14-01-2013 - 09h	<i>mali la jihad: «colpiremo la francia al cuore»</i>
14-01-2013 - 11h	<i>#french intervention against #jihadists in #mali may herald wholly unexpected moves in #syria <a href="http://www.bariatwan.com/english">http://www.bariatwan.com/english</a></i>
14-01-2013 - 14h	<i>it was okay to flood mali with jihadis and weapons when nato was ousting gaddafi but now it's not... hmm...</i>
14-01-2013 - 15h	<i>obama involves u.s. in another war mali #sharia #jihad #news</i>
14-01-2013 - 15h	<i>islamists in london condemning france's attack on brutal savage radical islam in mali. #myjihad #edl</i>
14-01-2013 - 15h	<i>""france has attacked islam"": mali islamic supremacists vow to bring their #myjihad campaign to france <a href="http://www.jihadwatch.org/2013/01/france-has-attacked-islam-mali-islamic-supremacists-vow-to-bring-their-myjihad-campaign-to-france">http://www.jihadwatch.org/2013/01/france-has-attacked-islam-mali-islamic-supremacists-vow-to-bring-their-myjihad-campaign-to-france</a></i>
14-01-2013 - 17h	<i>a la une de tel quel (maroc) : au coeur du djihad malien</i>
14-01-2013 - 17h	<i>#mali la #francia incassa il sostegno usa. la jihad minaccia: "vi colpiremo al cuore" --&gt; <a href="http://t.co/edxxuxhm">http://t.co/edxxuxhm</a></i>
14-01-2013 - 20h	<i>les djihadistes menacent de s'attaquer à des pays voisins du #mali #bamako #burkina #ci225 #senegal #africa #france</i>
15-01-2013 - 01h	<i>#myjihad in mali: islamic supremacists shouting ""allahu akbar"" counter attack promise french long brutal war.</i>
15-01-2013 - 08h	<i>france launches attack on islamofascists in mali after obama regime policies fail #jihad #islam</i>
15-01-2013 - 13h	<i>""france has attacked islam"": mali islamic supremacists vow to bring their #myjihad campaign to france</i>
15-01-2013 - 13h	<i>france bombs mali while backing jihad elsewhere: a leader of al tawhid + jihad movement has threatened to mine #mali's borders w. niger &amp; burkina faso</i>

15-01-2013 - 15h	<i>"la france est tombée dans un piège bien plus dangereux qu'en iraq afghanistan ou somalie""o. hamaha jihad islamic #mali</i>
15-01-2013 - 15h	<i>so why the jihadists in mali are the ""bad guys"" but the jihadists in syria are the ""good guys""?</i>
15-01-2013 - 15h	<i>cricket ki shawq &amp; ckt ki muhabat follow @malik_je2 &amp; islam se wafa &amp; jihad ki shawq follow @mujahid_313 4r msg show @afridi_37 3139049448</i>
15-01-2013 - 16h	<i>french special forces seen 40km from diabaly on way to fight jihadists #mali</i>
15-01-2012 - 16h	<i>il faudrait expliquer pourquoi les djihadistes sont des terroristes à combattre au mali et des héros de la liberté à...</i>
15-01-2013 - 16h	<i>another african country fights 4 survival against islamic jihad mali a democratic republic gets help from france.</i>
15-01-2013 - 17h	<i>non il reste encore un petit village qui résiste à l'envahisseur djihadiste dans le nord mali : montreuil.</i>
15-01-2013 - 17h	<i>comparisons with afganistan starting to look a bit more credible now that #mali war turning into french v jihadists ground.</i>
15-01-2013 - 18h	<i>mali : la france fer de lance dans la lutte contre les jihadistes</i>
15-01-2013 - 19h	<i>hollande part en guerre contre les jihadistes au mali.</i>
15-01-2013 - 19h	<i>if the jihadists win in mali next they'll be in some other country you don't know anything about.</i>
15-01-2013 - 19h	<i>mali   la #mauritanie pourrait rejoindre la large coalition internationale pour lutter contre les jihadistes au #mal</i>
15-01-2013 - 20h	<i>comme indiqué hier des blindés français vont se diriger vers ségou pour contrer l'axe jihadiste venant de diabaly. #mali</i>
15-01-2013 - 20h	<i>thank you france for rejuvenating jihadism and pumping fresh blood into their once-pale ideology. #mali</i>

15-01-2013 - 20h	<i>les militaires maliens et français en route pour diabaly à la rencontre du noyau dur des narco-djihadistes d'aqmi #mal</i>
15-01-2013 - 20h	<i>le #mali est victime du djihadisme étranger qui est l'impérialisme du 21eme siècle. mais vous préférez le bon vieil impéri ...</i>
15-01-2013 - 20h	<i>des djihadistes""français"" vont combattre la france au mali. la déchéance de la nationalité avant prison serait la ...</i>
15-01-2013 - 20h	<i>something that's gone quite unremarked; significant portion of #mali jihadist fighters are child soldiers young as ...</i>
15-01-2013 - 20h	<i>les djihadistes ne sont pas des maliens. ils parlent arabe."" un civil de diabaly. #mali #serval</i>
15-01-2013 - 21h	<i>#mali: war ends feb. 10 all jihadists dead mali wins can modibo maiga w/ 7 goals sanogo quits the game moussa mara ...</i>
15-01-2013 - 21h	<i>a few days in france says she wants locals to win fight against jihad in mali - uk's failed after 11 years in afghanistan ...</i>
15-01-2013 - 22h	<i>mali : l'offensive des djihadistes n'est pas encore complètement stoppée: au quatrième jour des opération...</i>
15-01-2013 - 22h	<i>les mecs st venus faire le djihad pour aller au paradis faut etre genereux et les y envoyer c tout #mali</i>
15-01-2013 - 23h	<i>#mali - offensive aérienne de l'armée malienne appuyée par la #france sur les jihadistes à #diabaly</i>
16-01-2013 - 00h	<i>lmaooooooooo jihad #pause what the fuck?! why?!!!! why!!!???</i>
16-01-2013 - 00h	<i>#mali pour konna ni les djihadistes ni l'armée n'est ds la ville mais l'armée contrôlerait la zone selon serge daniel</i>
16-01-2013 - 00h	<i>mali: les jihadistes coupent les communications à gao</i>
16-01-2013 - 00h	<i>urgent nord du #mali: les jihadistes ont coupé les télécommunications à gao accusant la population d'informer l'armée ...</i>

16-01-2013 - 00h	<i>#mali les jihadistes ont coupé les télécommunications dans la ville de gao située dans le nord du mali.</i>
16-01-2013 - 00h	<i>#mali: les jihadistes ont coupé les télécommunications à #gao afin que les habitants n'informent pas les militaires maliens.</i>
16-01-2013 - 01h	<i>french officials tell @dg_lewis that 10 french citizens have been arrested trying to get to mali to join jihadis</i>
16-01-2013 - 01h	<i>""mali has been at peace since 1893 and now the jihadists have returned to stir the national memory. "" i'm sorry what?</i>
16-01-2013 - 01h	<i>des salafistes tunisiens brûlent le drapeau tricolore en solidarité avec les djihadistes du mali <a href="http://m.reflexiondz.net/en-solidarite-avec-les-djihadistes-du-mali-les-salafistes-tunisiens-brulent-le-drapeau-franc">http://m.reflexiondz.net/en-solidarite-avec-les-djihadistes-du-mali-les-salafistes-tunisiens-brulent-le-drapeau-franc</a></i>
16-01-2013 - 02h	<i>online jihadis are predictably urging attacks against france in retaliation for mali campaign.</i>
16-01-2013 - 02h	<i>etre en guerre contre des ""djihadistes"" #mali et soutenir des djihadistes #lybie ! on nous prend pour des cons lol #tri</i>
16-01-2013 - 07h	<i>les jihadistes coupent les communications à gao <a href="http://t.co/zbmyxcic">http://t.co/zbmyxcic</a> <a href="http://www.liberation.fr/monde/2013/01/16/mali-les-jihadistes-coupent-les-communications-a-gao_874343">http://www.liberation.fr/monde/2013/01/16/mali-les-jihadistes-coupent-les-communications-a-gao_874343</a></i>
16-01-2013 - 07h	<i>la france en guerre au mali expliqué aux plus petits... dico: islamiste djihadiste terroriste! #lepetitquotidien</i>
16-01-2013 - 09h	<i>la ville de #konna est toujours sous le contrôle des moujahidine #jihad #mali #bamako #propagande</i>
16-01-2013 - 10h	<i>international jihadis now have a choice : fight france in #mali or with france in #syria ?</i>
16-01-2013 - 11h	<i>#mali : l'offensive des djihadistes n'est pas encore complètement stoppée</i>

16-01-2013 - 11h	<i>diabaly resident in #mali tells #ap that jihadists have sealed off town. residents not allowed to leave. human shields?</i>
16-01-2013 - 11h	<i>mali   le #maroc ds de bonnes dispositions pr rallier la coalition internationale contre les jihadistes au #mali</i>
16-01-2013 - 11h	<i>#mali : le front salafiste égyptien affirme son soutien aux jihadistes malien et menace la france .. le prélude à un bourbi ...</i>
16-01-2013 - 12h	<i>les villes ne sont pas occupÉes par les jjihadistes elles sont libÉrÉes par les moudjahidines;) #mali #mali</i>
16-01-2013 - 12h	<i>"on ne peut pas accepter qu'un État djihadiste se crée au cœur même de l'afrique de l'ouest" #mali #rnc</i>
16-01-2013 - 12h	<i>le groupe #ansardine confirme l'arrivée de 300 jihadistes tunisiens au #mali</i>
16-01-2013 - 13h	<i>tunisie-mali-syrie c pas un vol avec escales mais l'parcours de 100aines de tunisiens partis au jihad en #syrie après</i>
16-01-2013 - 13h	<i>a few days in france says she wants locals to win fight against jihad in mali - uk's failed after 11 years in afghanistan ...</i>
16-01-2013 - 13h	<i>combattimenti corpo a corpo tra francesi e jihadisti a diabali #mali <a href="http://www.francetvinfo.fr/live/message/50f/69b/2e1/cc6/f06/556/029/69b.html">http://www.francetvinfo.fr/live/message/50f/69b/2e1/cc6/f06/556/029/69b.html</a></i>
16-01-2013 - 13h	<i>combats «au corps à corps» entre français et jihadistes au mali</i>
16-01-2013 - 14h	<i>avec tous les moyens du monde sanogo et ses troupes n'auraient jamais réussi a déloger les jihadistes #mali</i>
16-01-2013 - 14h	<i>la stabilité du #mali ne peut se faire sans régler la question touareg et la marginalisation du nord terreau djihadiste ...</i>
16-01-2013 - 14h	<i>les djihadistes n'ont pas tardé à punir l'algérie de sa discrète coopération avec l'opération française au mali. #pris ...</i>
16-01-2013 - 15h	<i>pas vraiment timides ces jihadistes ils ont pas fini de se battre au</i>

16-01-2013 - 15h	<i>#mali ils ouvrent le feu sur l #algérie encore ...</i>
16-01-2013 - 15h	<i>kidnapping in #algeria shows jihadis in n #mali can move easily across border govt says is closed.</i>
16-01-2013 - 15h	<i>moussaoui ignore-t-il que les djihadistes du mali ne font qu'appliquer le coran ?</i>
16-01-2013 - 15h	<i>le #qatar s'oppose a la guerre au #mali ! Évidemment!! il ne peut pas être contre les groupes djihadistes</i>

Figure 26. Top retweets on 'jihad' and 'Mali' between 13 and 16 January 2013.

By reading this reconstructed story on Twitter about the invasion in Mali, it is possible to follow the development of the invasion over the four days. For example, the event of disconnecting the telecommunication in the village of Gao is reported. Also, global commentary can be found in the tweets, like the comparison of the invasion of Mali to the invasion of the UK in Afghanistan, or the child soldiers that are involved. Overall, Twitter is in this case more used for reporting news facts, than as an actual space for discussion.

### 3.3 Facebook Results

Since Twitter was seen more as a news source, our initial hope was that Facebook would offer this missing discussion space. However, on Facebook, no conclusions could be drawn regarding the most active users because this was not outputted in the Netvizz charts. The Twitter users were also not found on Facebook, making it impossible to draw conclusions of user crossover between the two platforms. Further, on the Facebook pages, no conversations surrounding the Delhi rape case were found. Although rape consistently yielded results, the conversations were drawing a general connection between Islam and rape. Other rape events

were consistently discussed, such as a taxi driver rape in the UK and rape within a UK political party. The oppression of Islamic women was a consistent argument of counter-jihad organizations on Facebook.

Since the Delhi case did not appear in the Facebook results, relevant conversations only focussed on the Mali case. Support was overwhelmingly positive *for* France’s invasion of Mali and users generally supported their own and other countries (especially European) to join France. The only mentions of rape within the Mali conversations were also generic; they was a reply to a picture of young Islamic children holding signs in protest to Mali in London. The first comment reads “poor little girl, in 10 years she would be raped by the boy besides her and than [sic] murdered cause [sic] it was her fault..... makes me sick...” (Viegel). A second called Muhammed a “child rapist” (Handa).

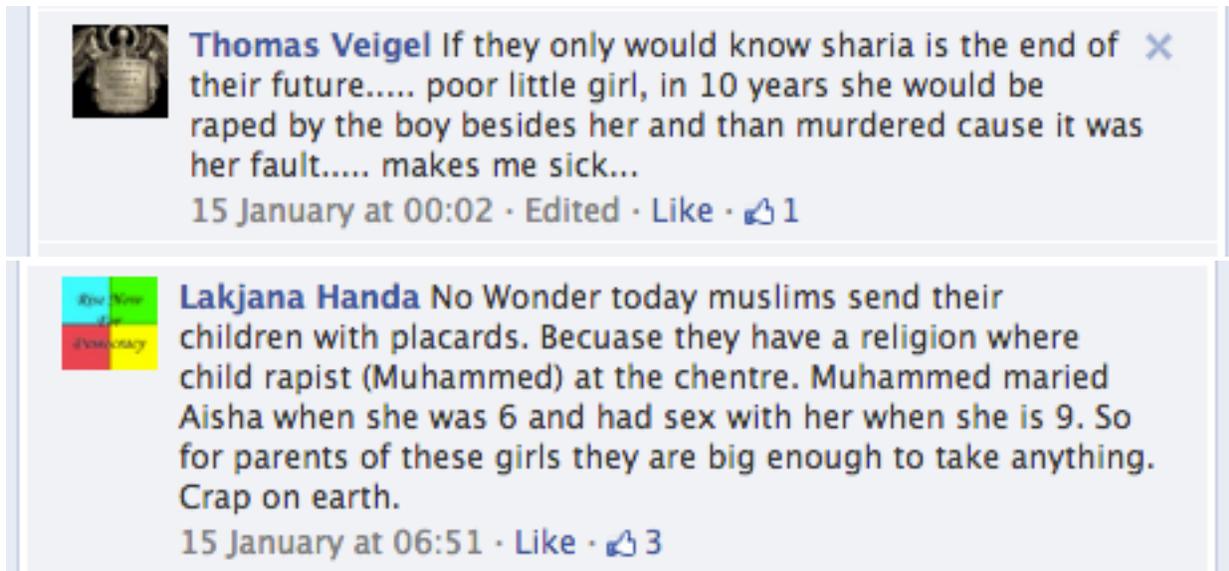


Figure 22. User posts from the Facebook group “Stop the Islamization of the World”

## 5. Discussion

According to our research, events like the Delhi and the Mali case are indeed being used for the counter-jihadist argument on Twitter. As we have seen, hashtags like #sioa (Stop Islamization of America) are connected to news events like the fatwa. Next, we have seen that the top hashtags that are used in the discussion on Twitter about both events, have some overlap. #Muslim, #Islam, #MyJihad and #Syria appear in the dataset of tweets about Mali and Delhi or fatwa. We have also discovered that there are two users on Twitter that operate in both discussions, namely @creepingsharia and @atlasshrugs. Both of them are counter-jihadist parties,<sup>24</sup> which confirms that the events are indeed used for the counter-jihadist campaign. Interesting to note is that both of these accounts along with other counter-jihadist Twitter users are making use of the hashtag #MyJihad in relation to negative aspects of Islam. This is interesting because the hashtag was initially used by and for a public education campaign to educate people about the true meaning of Jihad and taking back Islam from extremists, Jihadists and Counter-Jihadists alike (MyJihad).

For other key actors on Twitter, like @dkgdelhi and @rabeebty, neither a connection to the Mali case nor to each other was found. We conclude from this that that a counter-jihad network on Twitter does not exist. A reason for that might be that hashtags are not shared and these actors only tweeted on one of the peak dates, sending a central message that is retweeted a lot.

Contrary to Twitter, our case studies suggest that events are *not* used in the counter-jihadist argument on Facebook. This difference could be attributed to, as we assume, Twitter's role as a news source and Facebook's role as a social platform. In the Facebook groups, although

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<sup>24</sup> <http://creepingsharia.wordpress.com> and <http://atlasshrugs2000.typepad.com>

the subject of rape was commonly discussed, it was rarely in the context of the Delhi case. Instead, it was used in the larger discussion of women's rights (or lack thereof) as it relates to Islam. However, other rape cases were sometimes discussed; for example, the case of a UK taxi rape was used as an argument against jihadism on the English Defence League Pages. In these cases, the argument was against jihadism in the UK; it is evident that these groups focus on topics related to their own groups and the common cause of counter-jihadism, without focusing on world news. Likewise, Mali was mentioned in groups like EDL who have a special interest with the conflict since they can pressure their own governments (as EU countries) to support France. Unfortunately, we were unable to draw connections between the *users* on Twitter and Facebook, which makes us conclude that the active Twitter users



Figure 23. User post from Facebook page 'EDL'.

Generally, Twitter and Facebook are used differently in terms of information exchange. We can state that Twitter as a medium is more news oriented, since news events are being discussed a lot. Facebook as a platform is more social oriented and includes a lot of images.

### *The Guide*

In this essay we have investigated how recent events that are related to Islam, are used for the counter jihadist argument. In order to establish a real-time monitoring system of counter-jihadism, a map that contains all the networks of counter-jihadist key actors and their strategies

would be needed. In Appendix 1, our sample guide can be found, which explains the method can be used to research events like the Delhi rape and the invasion in Mali in real-time. When more events are researched, the results can be combined into a map that shows counter-jihadism's key actors online, their subtopics and strategies.

### **5.1 Limitations and Further Research**

Regarding the dataset we used from the Twitter analytics tool it would have been interesting to be able to have a dataset collecting tweets including words such as 'Delhi', 'Rape', 'Fatwa' and 'Mali'. However, by querying these words within the 'Jihad' dataset we got tweets particularly related to the case of jihadism and counter-jihadism, which was our main research focus.

Results drawn from Facebook were quite limited due to a variety of technical limitations. In the beginning, the initial research Facebook profile was blocked after the first day, thus removing us from any groups. After creating the new profile, it was not accepted into any groups until after the data collection period, meaning only Pages were examined. For this reason, we were unable to draw a comparison between Groups and Pages on Facebook.

There was also a major shortfall in terms of the content outputted by Netvizz. Images made up for a large amount of content on the pages, and some has more image than text-based posts. Since images do not appear in the Netvizz spreadsheets, this content was not analyzed at all. It is possible that there were images posted in the Pages relating to the case studies. In order to analyze this properly, we would need to manually read all content on the pages, which was not possible in the given time frame. Further, Netvizz limits its output to the latest 999 posts, meaning some content within our time frame was lost on the most active pages.

In using Netvizz, we were further unable to compare users in the outputted charts. After finding the most active users on Twitter, we also attempted to find these same users but were unsuccessful. In an effort to circumvent these barriers on Netviz, we also attempted to use public searches on Facebook using Bing Social Search<sup>25</sup> and Open Status Search<sup>26</sup> (through an American proxy). Unfortunately, the content provided was too vast to analyze within our timeframe and there were no tools to output it easily to be used in our keyword searches.

For further research, we would recommend to follow certain hashtags and actors that we have found during our research, in order to create a clearer picture of them. This might also help in order to figure out a network, based on shared interests. Also, other jihad related events should be researched by the methods that we used to eventually make a map that allows to forecast how conversations and connections are build in the counter-jihad network

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<sup>25</sup> [www.bing.com/social](http://www.bing.com/social)

<sup>26</sup> [www.openstatussearch.com](http://www.openstatussearch.com)

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## **Appendix A: Map Prototype**



**Appendix B: Mali Social Graph (Gephi Visualization)**

