



THE PHONE FRAUD IN TURKEY: "I AM A PROSECUTOR AND I WANT YOUR MONEY"!

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Abstract

A new form of fraud that has been attracting the media in Turkey and frequently appears in both televisions and newspapers: phone fraud. In this form of fraud, fraudsters do not make any physical contact with persons but only give specific commands over the telephone. Act of defraud is completed if the amount requested is transferred to the requested bank account without talking to anyone else and closing the telephone or money or jewellery goods are delivered to the foreigner coming to the house eventually. This study aims to analyse the expressions used in such forms of fraud and which succeed in convincing the persons. These expressions were reached by analysing the news of three newspapers which broadcast at national level and have different political views. It has been seen that the expressions used are concentrated around "police, terrorist organization and prosecutor" and the grounds for this were tried to be explained by the social effects of the terror and the trust in the institutions.

Keywords: Social Structure, Defrauding on the Phone, Terrorism Effect, Trust in Bureaucracy.

A. Introduction

According to article 157 of Law No. 5237, fraud is defined as "to deceive a person, through fraudulent behaviour, and to secure a gain for himself or others at his or someone else's expense". Communication fraud is committed by suspects using communication devices and introducing themselves as police, judge, prosecutor, insurer etc. Persuasive ability of fraudsters is the most important factor in this process which is carried out by giving money in a park or near waste container sometimes or depositing money into account number given by the fraudsters. This process of persuasion has various sociological and cultural elements. The purpose of the study is to reveal the sociological meanings of the expressions used in the persuasion process.

1. Terrorism and Its Effect on Turkey Society

Word of terror is derived from the word "terrere" and means "to be shaken by fear," "to tremble or cause to tremble by fear" or "to cause to be terrified by fear" and it was included, for the first time, in the "attachment of Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française published in 1789" (Şen, 2015: 20). 1793 Period of Convention following the 1789 French Revolution is among the first areas of use of the term and the violence policies imposed by the Jacobin administration are called "terrorist regime-regime de la terreur" (Şen, 2015: 20). Republic of Turkey's Anti-Terror Law No. 7215 defines terrorism as follows: "Terrorism is any criminal acts attempted by a person and persons member to an organization, using algebra and violence, in order to; alter the characteristics of the Republic stated in the Constitution, political, legal, social, secular, economic order; impair the indivisible unity of the State and the nation; endanger the existence of the Turkish State and the Republic; disrupt or demolish or capture the State authority; destruct fundamental rights and freedoms and disrupt the internal and external security of the State, public order or general health."

Terrorism is a deteriorating element that can affect the whole world - September 11, 2001 (3000 casualties), Madrid (March 11, 2004, 191 casualties) and London (July 7, 2005, 50 casualties). Turkey faces with terrorism in 1984 only within the context of PKK terrorism and has been given a total of 35,300 casualties (Şen, 2015: 18). A matter that is within the agenda of the politics and media and thus people for such a long period of time inevitably lead to changes in the sociological and psychological structure of society.

It is a normal situation for individuals to be afraid in the sociological environment created by terror. As a matter of fact, purpose of any sort of terror is to harm political authority, to destroy the sense of trust and undermine commitment of citizens to the state. In phone fraud events that are subject of this study, the damaged sense of trust plays a crucial role in believing the foreigners for the citizens who have been told that their names are involved in terrorist actions. There is a social environment in which the military conflicts against terrorist organizations and the soldiers (martyrs) who lost their lives in these conflicts take place in the national media every day. Martyr families are shown in the visual media, political leaders are participating in the funerals and all written and visual media announce these ceremonies to the public with

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every moment. Both a military defence, which has been going on for years, and the loss of the young citizens are affecting all other citizens and questioning their beliefs about public security as well as security. A relative or neighbour or fellow townsman of every citizen in Turkey became martyr. Therefore, we should see that citizens are in a common pain and sensitivity against terrorism and for victims of terror. In addition, it is a fact that means of living as tourism, agriculture and livestock have been prevented in eastern part of Turkey due to terrorism and people there have been forced to migration in certain historical periods in consequence of these economic difficulties.

"According to a survey conducted towards the end of the 1990s, 33.9% of the people living in the rural areas of the Eastern and South-eastern Anatolia Regions takes the terrorist organization as the main reason of migration, 24.4% takes the state authority, 10.9% takes village guards and 0.4% of them takes both the terrorist organization and state authority. So the fight between the security forces and terrorist organization affected 69.6% of the people who had to migrate from the region. Economic disruption and unemployment are indicated as other causes of migration at the rates of 13.2% and 12.1% respectively. Portions of some other causes are quite low such as blood vengeance is 1.8%, oppression by landlords (feudal structure) is 0.1% and other reasons due to social structure is 2.3%" (Şen, 2015: 50).

Both economic and socio-psychological effects of terrorist incidents can be observed in the whole country, especially the local people (Arınc, 2010). There are important studies examining the effects of terrorism on the country's economy (Altay et al., 2013; Ateş, 2017; Dücan and Özsoylu, 2016; Aksoy, 2014, Işık et al, 2016; Mutlu and Akbaş, 2016).

Another current terrorist incident is FETÖ (Fethullahist Terrorist Organization). Fethullah Gulen, who is the founder of this organization, received a religious education in Turkey and took the first steps in creating a community as of 1970's. While trying to maintain its spiritual understanding which it inherited from Ottoman Empire in the social life, Turkey showed interest and relevance of such communities throughout history. While investigating the origin of this interest, for demonstrating the functioning of the FETO terrorist organization, the following facts have been revealed associated with *service movement (Fethullah Gulen community)* (Directorate of Religious Affairs, 2017: 11):

"Fethullah Gulen is not an ordinary person. He is a special person chosen by God to revive Islam on doomsday... Since Gulen is "chosen", his followers are a distinguished community just as companions of Hz. Muhammad and even a second companion generation. Gülen presents himself as a scholar that knows Islamic religion very well in order to convince his members of his perverted ideas. He lives the Prophet Mohammad's ascension almost every day. Gülen implies that he communicates with the Prophet Mohammad asleep or awake; shortly in every case and takes orders from him and that he transfers these orders to his followers as if these are orders of the Prophet Muhammad. The mystical concepts that the Sufis use only when they pass on their personal experiences and are exploited by Gülen are presented as divine messages that direct a social movement."

Having created such a divine fantasy world, FETÖ has entered into a political, military and academic structure; acted as a gang with the people it had placed at various levels of the state and eventually attempted coup on 15 July 2016 when it realized that it could not get what it wanted. This coup attempt led to 240 martyrs and citizens held democracy watches on the streets for days. Citizens have been exposed to the effects of this coup attempt for days under the influence of the media, as well as the discourse of the politicians. Thus, this act of terrorism has been felt and internalized by every citizen and a social climate has been emerged in which the concepts of democracy and motherland came to the forefront and FETÖ began to be questioned by everyone. At the next stage, members of the FETÖ in the state organization were started to be detected, dismissed and imprisoned. In this process, people began to see that the persons around them could be members of a terrorist organization and that the persons they thought they knew were actually small aides to big plans. When we think together with the coup attempt, it is possible to observe that the process of sweeping has some psychological effects on people and that the confidence of people against their surroundings has been shaken. It is reasonable to see that it is not only a terrorist organization but also a sociological trauma that causes people to question their beliefs against religious communities.

The relation of religion in both political and social life in Turkey has a complicated form that has continued throughout history. Turkey, as the only secular Muslim country in the region, gained freedom of belief thanks to the revolutions after the War of Independence. Secularism requires a two-sided understanding: to live one's own religious belief and to respect for the beliefs of others. However, in these



lands where a public understanding preponderates over individuality, religious life also has been shaped within unity, and the interpretation of the Koran, the sacred book of Islam, has been left to religious scholars. So in the meetings that are called as community meetings and so easy to reach for the public, conversation environments are created, some food is eaten and religious topics are learned by talking. The reason of why the discourses of Fethullah Gülen that are incompatible with Islam have not been even noticed is trust in the persons providing information in these conversations and disappearance of the feeling of inquiry. FETÖ structure is the most prominent proof for what could be told and done to a society, which prefers to learn its religion from others, under the guise of religion. Important steps have been taken to completely do away with this terrorist organization:

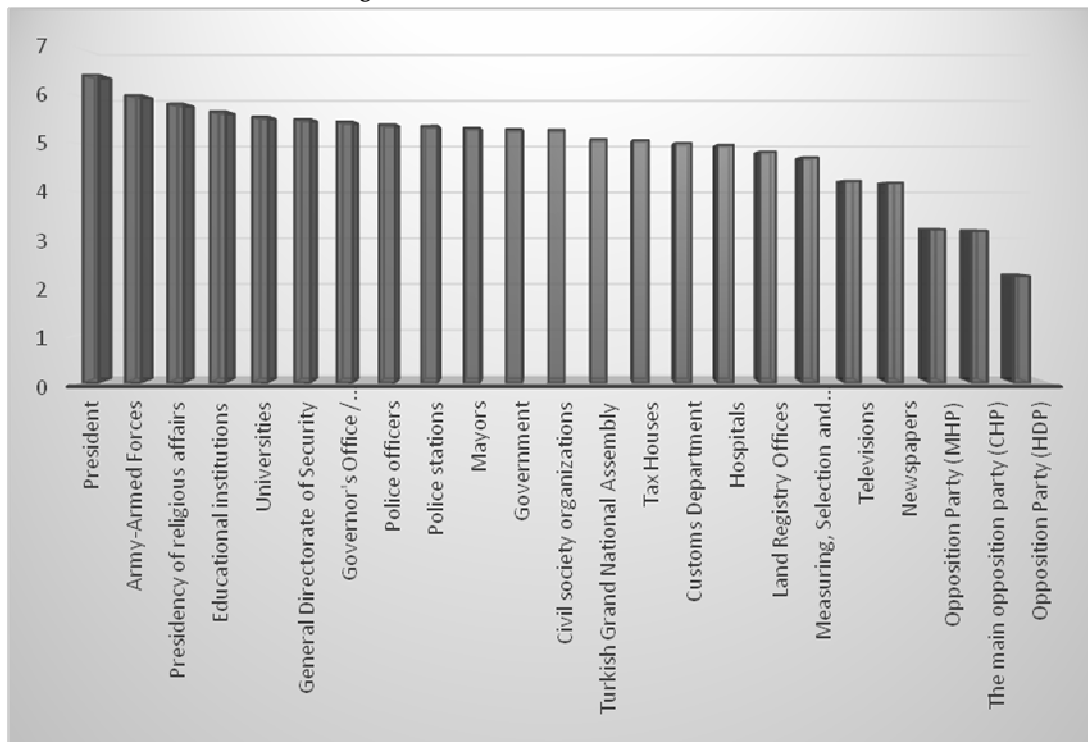
"Lists of dismiss and reinstatement have been issued since 27 July 2016 with 11 Statutory Decrees. 98.459 public personnel and 4.092 judges and attorney generals are in these dismiss lists. As of May 2, 2017, a total of 102,551 public personnel were exported. The Ministry of National Education reached the peak with 33.955 dismissals. Police Forces follow the Ministry of National Education with 20.683 dismissals. In addition to these institutions, a large number of public personnel were dismissed from the Constitutional Court, HSYK and Ministries. It is known that many of the students who have been granted scholarship for graduate studies and doctoral degree abroad have been discharged with Statutory Decrees. Within the scope of the Statutory Decrees, a total of 2341 institutions and organizations providing financial resources to the organization as well as its schools and training centers were closed as of September 2016" (Ateş and Akpınar, 2017: 11).

Other than the terrorist organizations as PKK and FETÖ, Turkey witnessed explosions in its major cities, İstanbul and Ankara (http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/10/151010_ankara_saldiri_genel, https://tr.sputniknews.com/trend/ankara_istanbul_teror_saldiri/). As a result of these events and the media's interest in these events, such acts of violence have led to various erosions in the security perception of the society.

2. Trust on Government, Bureaucracy and Media in Turkey

In the eyes of the people of Turkey, state has a protective role and power inherited from the Ottoman Empire tradition. For this reason, the major political request is a strong and stable state. Even the roots of such a collectivism of the society rather than individuality are based on this understanding. In a study conducted in Turkey in the twenty-six provinces (Örsell and Sipahi, 2016: 849) needed to organizations trust values are determined as follows:

Figure 1. Citizen's Confidence in Institutions





The sense of confidence in institutions is sometimes influenced by terrorist incidents. Public institutions are more trusted than the media, especially after the military coup attempted by FETÖ, the confidence in the army is shaken.

The reflection of the acts of terrorism in daily life corresponds to the feeling of insecurity and fear in the society. In a study investigating the public safety in Turkey (KONDA, 2016: 9), it has been observed that about 60% of society "feels insecure about taking to the streets, appearing in crowded places" and about 30% "this situation adversely affects the daily life and such a mind of fear is significantly increasing from rural to the metropolis ". In the same study, it was asked whether the security of the state or safety of life and property of citizens should be given priority to and it was observed that the society is divided into roughly two parts over two definitions of security and almost half of the country population exhibited a 'statist' attitude. Individuals tend to consider the security of the state and the public before their own security concerns. This social characteristic makes the bureaucratic institutions that are crucial elements of state and the people who occupy important positions honourable and respectable in the eyes of the society. Therefore, such institutions and persons have a credible power and positive image on the society. Under the sense of trust in the state, sense of obedience and fear created by a state status that makes various requests from individuals also have influence from declaration of the Republic. Under a research on Turkey by World Values Survey, covering the years 2010-2014, views of people on security were studied, people were asked whether or not they are concerned about a possible terrorist attack and the possibility of regional war and the following findings were obtained.

Figure 2. Worries: A terrorist attack

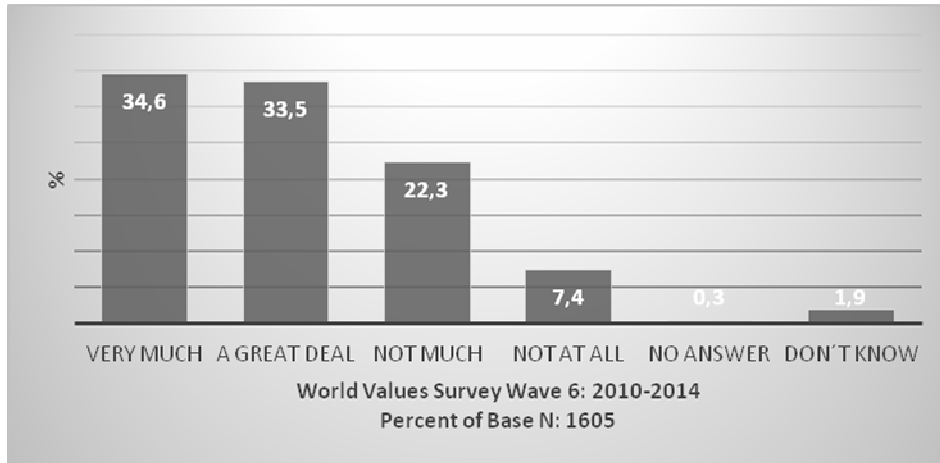
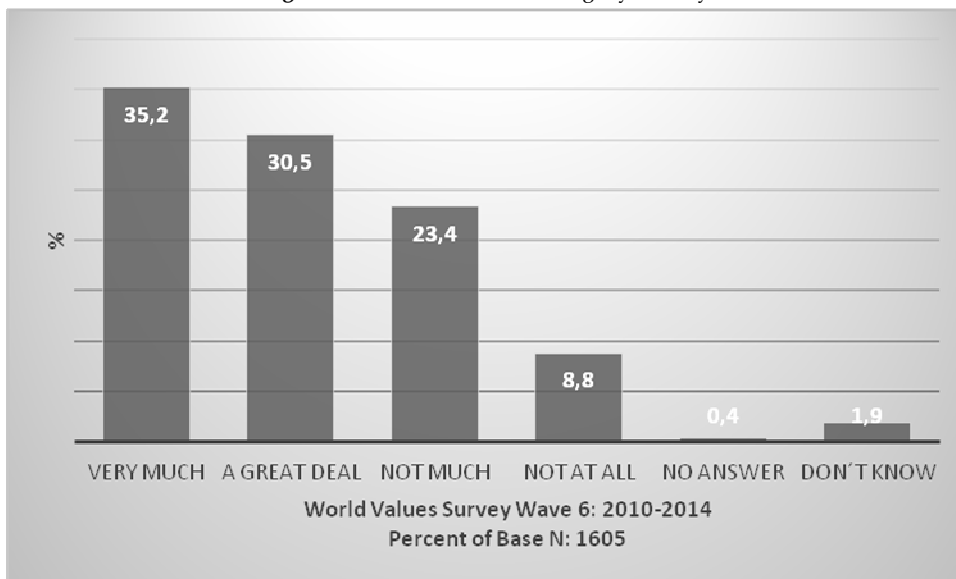


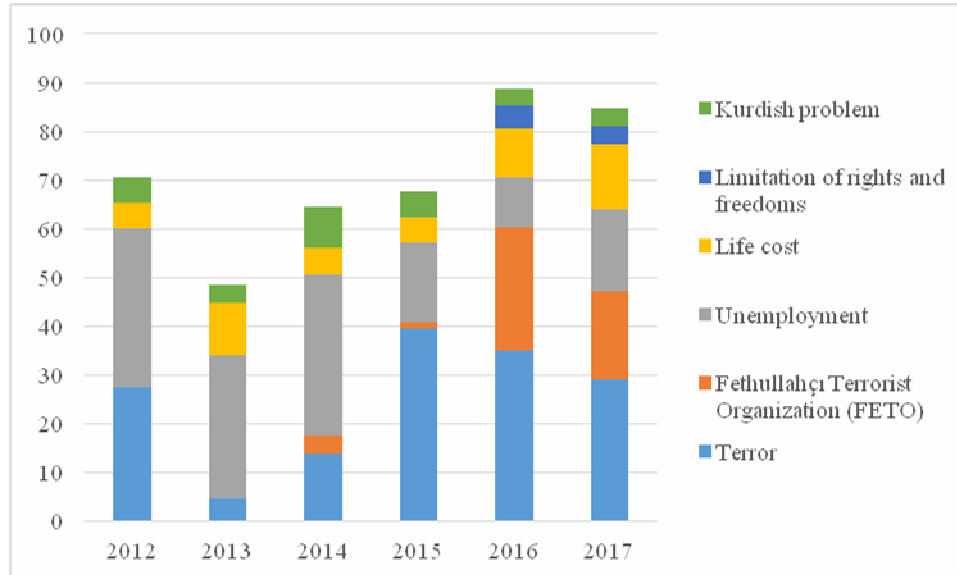
Figure 3. Worries: A war involving my country





Issues as terrorist incidents in the country, worries about border security, problems of immigrants, etc. have raised the anxiety of the citizens. Therefore, there is concern about regional security because of the explosions in major cities and the situation of Syria. In another study conducted in 2017 (Turkey Social-Political Trends Survey, 2018: 15), it was found that the terror has a priority on the country's agenda in comparison to the economic problems:

Figure 5. What is the most important problem in Turkey?



Source: Turkey Social-Political Trends Survey (TSSEA), the Kadir Has University Center for the Study of Turkey, dated January 31, 2018 Report.

One of the reasons why terror is so important on the agenda of the country is the effect of the media. For example, after it was understood that the FETÖ is a terrorist organization, the media shared all the developments with the public and kept the issue on the agenda constantly. Since the politicians frequently mentioned this terrorist organization in their evaluations, the people have been informed of the coup attempt and the subsequent dismissal process on daily basis. Then, in order to avoid such a democracy interruption, articles have been written in schools and universities; documentaries have been prepared and watched; academic magazines have issued private editions in this respect; books have been written; congresses have been organized, democracy watches have been kept and this event has been discussed in political televised sessions for days. So everybody from children in primary schools to the old ages in villages had an idea about this terrorist organization. It is a topic that has been debated in many academic writings whether the media offers positive or negative examples. However, the power of agenda setting is an agreed upon fact. The media determines what the public opinion is to discuss, though not how, and even makes some changes in moral values (Çelik, 2017).

After revealing sensitivity of society against the terrorism, it will be easier to analyse persuasion methods used in phone fraud, which is the main purpose of the study.

B. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Method used in phone fraud in Turkey uncovers an important sociological fact. To understand the motives lie behind the believing in a stranger on the phone contributes to understand the society. The aim of the work is to disclose the conditions that motivate people who are defrauded.

1. Objectives and Method

The assumptions of the work are based on the discourses used in fraud. Twenty-two fraud cases have been compiled from the news of three national high-circulation newspapers. These three newspapers were analysed between March 2017 and March 2018, and the content analysis of the fraud news was made and the statements used by the fraudsters were tabulated. Based on these data, the study is seeking answers to the following questions:

- Why do defrauded persons believe in the person on the phone?
- What is the level of persuasiveness of the defrauder if he claims to be a prosecutor or police officer?
- What social conditions in society allow such fraud?



2. Data Analysis and Findings

Phone fraud news between March 2017 - March 2018 on three newspapers, published at the national level (Habertürk, Sabah and Cumhuriyet), were screened. Content of twenty-two news was analysed and the discourses used by the fraudsters were classified.

Table 1. Number and date of fraud news examined

The name of the newspaper	Date range	Number of news where fraud is included in the content	Number of news where the alert for fraud is included in the content
Sabah (Newspaper 1)	March 2017- March 2018	10	3
Cumhuriyet (Newspaper 2)	March 2017- March 2018	6	2
Habertürk (Newspaper 3)	March 2017- March 2018	6	4
	Total	22	9

The above table was formed by counting the news repeated as one new in the three newspapers examined. In the warning news, it has been seen that certain public institutions and organizations warned and informed the citizens of the methods of the fraudsters.

Table 2. Detailed analysis of fraud news

	Qualities of defrauded persons	Qualities of fraudsters	Fraud amount	Statements used by the fraudster
Newspaper 1	22 years old	32 years old Secondary school graduate Job: Sewing İstanbul	a piece of money and jewelery at home	- (He has introduced himself as a public officer (police).) - "Your father is suspicious of a theft case. Stolen money is in your house. Fulfill the instructions I want. Put all money and the jewelry in your house in a bag and leave it to address we will tell you. Otherwise, your father will be arrested".
	Mom and daughter	- Ankara	-	"There is your name in the investigation of the FETO."
	150 people (at different times)	9 people (acting in groups) Bingöl	-	- (They have introduced themselves as soldiers, police, prosecutors, and judges.)
	61 and 61 years old 2 people	2 people 24 ve 35 years old Eskişehir		- (They introduced themselves as prosecutors and want people's money in the bank.) - "Your identity information has been handed over to the terrorist organization, your money in the bank will be taken by falsified documents, we are following individuals."
	72 years old	2 people Bursa	15 thousand euro	- (They introduced themselves as 'police'.) - "Your ID was used in the jeweler robbery, and the murder was committed during the robbery. We will make comparisons to determine whether there are stealing gold and money in your home or not. A policeman is waiting for you at the address we will tell you, please give all money and jewelry to him".
	-	3 people Şanlıurfa	-	- (They introduced themselves as public servants.)
	1 woman 68 years old Erzurum	2 people Erzurum	1 Reşat gold, two quarters of gold and 7 thousand 500 Turkish Lira	- (They used the name of Eren Bülbül (who was martyred with the fire opened by PKK terrorists in the town of Trabzon, Maçka.) - "You deposited a money in the name of the PKK. I will arrest you. We have your finger on Eren's murder. You will give us money, we will make a military operation. " - (They called from the house phone and introduced themselves as police chief and prosecutor.)
	-	39 people Adana	-	- "You have contact with the terror organization, the Fetö and the PKK."
	70 years old Balıkesir	32 years old	125 thousand Turkish Lira	- (He introduced himself as police.) -"Your ID informations are captured by



	79 years old	İzmir 33 and 24 years old 2 people		terrorists." - (They have introduced themselves as police and prosecutors on the phone and told them that their accounts were captured by the Fetullahçı Terrorist Organization (FETO).) " Your accounts have been captured by FETO, we will do the military operation, withdraw your money from the bank and hand over the officer who will come to your house and we will refund your money after the operation ".
Newspaper 2	Trabzon		300 thousand Turkish Lira	- (Introduced himself as a police officer.) - "At the house of Abdulkadir Masharipov, Istanbul Reina attacker, in Esenyurt, was found in a list which there is your name too."
	Housewife 36 years old Konya	29 and 28 years old 2 people		- (Introduced himself as a police officer.) - "Your identity information has been captured by the terrorist organization. We need to get your fingerprints to absolve you. If you have money in your home, gold, give us. Let us deliver it back to you after the fingerprint review ".
	Artisan 32 years old Konya	29 and 28 years old 2 people		- "3 high-ranking soldiers were caught in the FETO operation. Your ID information has been captured by them. They will get credit with your ID information and send the money to Pennsylvania. We need to get a fingerprint to save you. If you have money and gold, we'll search for fingerprints on them. "
	-	Adana -Şanlıurfa 6 people Their leader is a philosophy teacher that waiting for assignment since long.	-	- (They have introduced themselves as prosecutors and security officers.)
	Retired Konya	4 people	107 thousand Turkish Lira	- (The victim interviewed with four people who introduced themselves as prosecutors, judges, police, and captains, and the victim said that because they always had a radio voice, I did not believe they would be fraudsters). - "They have all the information about me such as the how many children I have or what clothes on me. They said the criminal organization used my name and I have to give some money to get rid of that situation. (the victim's expression) "
	1 person	1 person	5 thousand Turkish Lira	- (They introduced themselves as a police officer to him, after his operation at the bank ATM.)
Newspaper 3	12 people	Ankara	6 million Turkish Lira	- "Your accounts are using by terrorist organizations." - (Speakers have a smooth diction and consists of people who can talk to the victims by introducing themselves as police, judges, and prosecutors on the phone)
	94 people	Şanlıurfa 370 suspect	13 million Turkish Lira	- "You have a connection with the terrorist organization; If you deposit money into the accounts that we will tell you, we will delete your name from the file."
	73 years old	İzmir	200 thousand Turkish Lira (By selling a 5-storey apartment)	- (They said that the name of you had passed in terrorist acts in Diyarbakir.)
	-	Şanlıurfa 4 people	55 thousand 600 Turkish Lira lira	- (They have introduced themselves as public servants.)



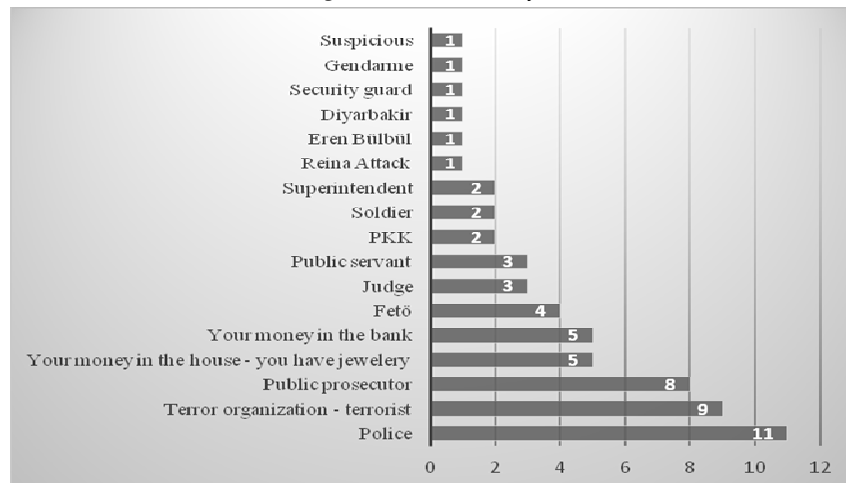
	7 people	33 years old İstanbul	83 republic gold, 32 quarter gold, 6 half gold, 2 gold chains and 2 bracelets	- (He introduced himself as Captain Haydar.) - "A big fraud has been made on behalf of you. I know you are not guilty, your identity has been stolen. I will rescue you from this situation but you have to give us your valuable things for safe until real suspicious get caught. Otherwise, if the prosecutor's office finds valuable goods or money in your house, they will confiscate them and you will be arrested".
	-	10 provinces 80 people	500 thousand Turkish Lira	-(They introduced themselves as police, prosecutor and gendarmerie.)

Table 3. Examine of news alerting for fraud

Newspaper	Institution in news alerting for fraud	Statements in news alerting for fraud
Newspaper 1	Osmaniye Provincial Security Directorate, Community Based Policing Branch Directorate	Brochures titled 'Watch for fraud on banknotes' and 'Phone fraud' have been printed and distributed.
	Governorship of Aydın	By using the names of the Aydın Governor, Deputy Governors, they were being asked for money from businessmen and philanthropic citizens under the name of donations and aid campaigns on behalf of our Governor.
Newspaper 2	Manisa Public Prosecutor's Office	The police department never calls the citizens for a claim like 'you have been found to give financial support to terrorist organizations'. None prosecutor will call on the phone any citizen about a military operation. Certainly do not believe in these types of phones.
	General Command of Gendarmerie	It has often been found that people are frightened, psychologically oppressed or emotionally exploited by means of 'social engineering / scenarios' methods and gave money for imaginary promises.
Newspaper 3	A famous actress	From her social media account, wrote that: "Do not believe such phone numbers when they tell you that 'you are in trouble about your bank account and we will help you'. The fraudsters are doing it to learn your passwords."

The discourse used by the fraudsters reveals conviction techniques. For this reason, it would be appropriate to examine the discourse they use with thematic analysis.

Figure 6. Thematic analysis



C. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyse the expressions used in such forms of fraud and which succeed in convincing the persons. These expressions were reached by analysing the news of three newspapers which broadcast at national level and have different political views. It has been seen that the expressions used for fraud are concentrated around "police, terrorist organization and prosecutor". It shows the power and affect



of institutions on people. Government and public institutions in Turkey is an important centre of confidence and respect. Even if this confidence is shaken by terrorist incidents or dissenting opinions, the state is still the most important institution that should be trusted and not to be contradicted, especially for those who live in rural areas and especially are able to remember the political crises in the historical process. Since the terrorist incidents constantly occupy the agenda by way of media, citizens inwardly believe in the possibility of an incident involving them. Such strong motives explain why citizens deliver to a foreigner their money or valuables in their homes or in the banks with their own hands. People in Turkey do not ask for identity of a person who introduces himself as a policeman, prosecutor or judge because such behaviour indicates that we do not trust the public official and question him, which we will never want.

The results of study also shows the social effects of the terror on people. The most effective reasons why terror is so important on the agenda of the Turkish people is the power of the media. For example, after it was understood that the FETÖ is a terrorist organization, the media shared all the developments with the public and kept the issue on the agenda constantly. And also the sense of confidence in institutions is sometimes influenced by terrorist incidents. Public institutions are more trusted than the media, especially after the military coup attempted by FETÖ, the confidence in the army is shaken. The reflection of the acts of terrorism in daily life corresponds to the feeling of insecurity and fear in the society. Individuals in Turkey tend to consider the security of the state and the public before their own security concerns. Therefore every citizen concerns about the future, security, and power of government, before own security. There are complex perceptions between individual and state in Turkey. That could be an obstacle for individual developments and rights sometimes and that have a relationship with religion also. But otherwise, these people of Turkey can cry together for the martyr who youngs died for the country. This kind of solidarity and sense of partnership is unique.

Security forces in Turkey shows every effort to avoid such fraud. It uses the media, hangs brochures around and constantly informs the public. But the most certain way to end such events is to change the image created by individuals in their heads for public officials and security forces and to teach individuals how to question. However, the terror atmosphere which feeling at the everyday life of citizens must be stopped because it can cause a fear. If the government prevent the media from news dealing with terror, that be worst for press freedom and right to receive news so that the only solution is the end of the terrorist acts as soon as possible both in Turkey and all over the world.

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