Tweeting against corruption:
Fighting police bribery through online collective action

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Abstract
Efforts to utilise Twitter to improve communication in Kenya between officials at the Kenya Police and Ministry of Interior, and Kenyan citizens, are researched specifically addressing efforts to use Twitter to report and combat police corruption. The goal is to assess efforts to use the social networking platform to improve communication channels between officials and citizens, through a mixed methods approach incorporating a content analysis of thousands of tweets sent by four separate government Twitter accounts, as well as interviews with Kenyans who have interacted with the accounts on Twitter. In addition, I assess the potential value of Twitter as a corruption-reporting platform. The research builds on existing ICT4D research, Castells’ communication power theory, as well as collective-action approaches to fighting corruption. The results of the research reveal potential problems of incident-focused social media-based corruption reporting in developing collective-action networks focused on fighting police bribery and broader government corruption. The tendency of social-media interactions to be dominated by relatively meaningless discussions limits Twitter’s value as a useful channel for two-way communication between citizens and officials. Social media-based anti-corruption efforts dedicated to building collective-action networks focused on long-term solutions, rather than highlighting individual incidents, may be more effective in fighting corruption.

Keywords: Bribery, collective action, corruption, Twitter, Web 2.0, new media, Kenya, police

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Preface

While I was working as an Interview Producer at Al Jazeera’s The Stream, Kenyans on Twitter were some of our most active and responsive community members, consistently pitching us fascinating stories from Kenya. We also had the opportunity to engage with Kenyans through Twitter in the lead-up to Kenya’s 2013 elections. These experiences and interactions paved the way for this thesis, as Kenya’s active Twittersphere is a ripe arena for research into online politics and governance. Thus, I must first and foremost thank #KOT (Kenyans on Twitter) for both inspiring and providing the data for this research. I also would like to thank Professor Jakob Svensson, Digital Media and Society Programme Director, who encouraged me to pursue this research, and the Spider Center for providing me the funds to travel to Nairobi in April to carry out interviews with Kenyan Twitter users. My advisor, PG Holmlöv, took time out of his leisurely summer to continue giving me feedback and direction, which I am very grateful for. I also must thank Nanjura Sambuli, research manager at iHub in Nairobi, who provided me practical advice, which proved to be invaluable while I was in Nairobi. Last but certainly not least, I must thank my sambo Annie for putting up with me while I was very stressed out, and listening to me rant about uncooperative software and my own procrastination. Writing this thesis has been a challenging and incredibly rewarding experience.

Zachary Alfred
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1. Introduction

Robert (his name and other details have been changed for his own protection) was angry as he sat across from me at a booth in Java House, a trendy cafe in Nairobi’s Central Business District.

Two days before we met, he had been driving his pick-up truck through southern Nairobi on his way to get some supplies for the first construction job he had had in five months. Having borrowed some money from his mother to pay for construction supplies and gas for his truck and only having 50,000 shillings (3,900 SEK) before he started the job, he was low on cash, but excited about the prospect of getting paid for the first time in months. However, on his way to complete the job, a police officer stepped in his way, costing him a valuable day and a significant chunk of the little money that he had left.

He was pulled over by a policewoman who accused him of using the wrong lane while going through a roundabout: “She pulled me over, she took my driving license, then she told me to park the car on the side of the road”. Robert thought the charge was absurd, describing the lanes on the street: “It's not drawn, it's not marked. How am I supposed to know where to go?”

According to him, the police officer requested that he follow her to the police station, a demand that he refused: “I wasn't going to go there because I know she was going to ask for a bribe. And she took that as defiance, you know”.

The policewoman responded to his refusal by reaching into his car, an act he claims is illegal, and tearing off his insurance sticker, which provides proof of insurance in case of an accident. He explained, “If she takes the insurance sticker out of the car, you can't drive that car, because if anything happens, you'll be in a lot of trouble. So she took the sticker and she left”.

Despite the risk, Robert got back into his truck and he and his brother, who had been in the
passenger seat, followed the officer to the police station, which he says was only about 400 meters away.

After what he says was a 3.5 hour wait at the station, and having discovered that the officer had also accused him of assault, he reluctantly paid a 1,000 shilling (78 SEK) bribe, and went home. He described his reasons for paying the bribe:

Let me explain to you. It’s simpler to bribe a police officer rather than follow the course of the law. Simply because, one: the system is so slow, it is so slow. You waste a lot of money and you have to get a lawyer. Lawyers cost money and that whole case is dragged along and the justice system is usually biased towards the police, police officers. Whatever a police officer says is actually taken as the truth. So you’ll be there defending yourself, and you’re the one who’s gone to court to try and get justice because a police officer did something to you. [...] It’s like they’re this mafia people who do their thing. It’s either I pay or you’ll have a very hard time. It’s that simple. The police are just licensed thugs with guns”.

According to research from Transparency International and information available on IPaidABribe.or.ke, a Kenyan bribery confession website, incidents like Robert’s are quite common in Kenya, especially when dealing with the police, perceived to be the most corrupt institution in Kenya and one of the most corrupt institutions in East Africa. However, less common is what Robert was doing on Twitter as the incident was happening.

He had photographed the police officer removing the sticker from his car, and then tweeted the photo to @Ma3Route, a smartphone app and Twitter account which crowd-sources and distributes traffic updates and incidents of police and driver misbehaviour, and David Kimaiyo, the Inspector General of the Kenya Police. He had hoped that Kimaiyo might reply, but said he did not expect him to. @Ma3Route did share the photo, which was retweeted three times, but neither Kimaiyo nor any other public official responded to his complaint.

While he was frustrated by the incident, including the failure of fellow citizens and public officials to respond to his tweet, he explained his low expectations: “The complacency in
this government, in this country, it’s ridiculous. Why would the president, the inspector general, the deputy president... why would they be on Twitter if they’re not going to do anything about it? Don’t act like you're reachable but you're not. It's like PR, it's actually PR. It's frustrating”.

He was also frustrated by his fellow Kenyan citizens, whom he described as “passive”. He summed up his views on Twitter culture in Kenya: “People get angry about something for awhile, then they tweet about it. And the next day they've forgotten about it completely. Because there's nothing they do. We have that state of mind here, you know. Even if you make up a lot of noise, nothing will be done”.

He explained that he was hopeful that Twitter could be used to organise people, but said it required more action by public officials to actively respond to complaints made on the website: “If the guys in authority are reacting the way they're supposed to, it would be quite helpful. You know, we have a bad culture in Kenya. People don’t listen to you unless you have power, and that makes people feel very, very useless. So people just vent. It’s like a kid throwing a tantrum, then a couple of minutes later people forget, because nothing will change”.

Robert’s attitude toward Twitter organising and government complacency was echoed by more than a dozen Kenyans who I interviewed for this study, many of whom said they are active online and follow politics with a voracious appetite, but are frustrated by the government’s failure to deliver on promised corruption crackdowns.

The government of President Uhuru Kenyatta has promised to make government more transparent and reduce corruption, creating a presidential corruption-reporting website in October 2013 and also launching a crackdown in February 2014 on what Kenya’s Daily Nation newspaper described as a government cartel “made up of businessmen working in cahoots with senior civil servants” (Namunane 2014).

The president has also been vocal about the negative impacts of corruption, saying in a
statement, “Corruption is to the economy and the nation at large what cancer is to the human body. It disgraces and debases a nation” (Adan & Chai 2014).

However, the vast majority of individuals interviewed for this study expressed doubt about the sincerity of the Kenyatta administration’s anti-corruption efforts, including their efforts on Twitter, as will be discussed in Chapter 4. Despite this, Twitter remains a ripe platform on which to conduct research into the pro-transparency and anti-corruption potential of social media, precisely because citizens and public officials compete for public attention on the forum while both claiming to be using the service to fight corruption.

This thesis analyses the anti-corruption potential of Twitter, using the Kenya Police and Ministry of Interior as a case study. I have analysed thousands of tweets from Police Inspector General David Kimaiyo (@IGKimaiyo), the Kenya Police (@PoliceKE), Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Interior Joseph Ole Lenku (@joelenku), and the Ministry of Interior (@InteriorKE). I have also interviewed 18 Kenyans who were chosen from a random sample of Twitter users that had interacted with one or more of the four accounts during November 2013, and attempted to analyse tweets that mentioned one of the four accounts during that time. Combined, these approaches have provided a thorough picture of the way police and ministry of interior officials are using Twitter, as well as how their use of the site is being perceived by those who have interacted with them.

2. Context

The Internet, social networking, and Twitter in Kenya
The growth of Internet access and the use of mobile phones in Kenya has been rapid. According to the Communications Commission of Kenya, there were more than 21 million Internet users in the country as of December 2013, which is the first time that the number of Kenyan Internet users, according to the CCK, was greater than half the country’s population. December’s 21 million figure is 2.1 million more than in September 2013, just three months before (CCK 2013). A survey from Pew Global, released in February 2014, estimated the number of Kenyan Internet users at approximately 36 per cent (±4.3 per
cent) of adults 18 and over (Pew Research Center 2014).

For a country with a GDP per capita (adjusted for PPP) of approximately $1,800 (12,300 SEK), ranking it below Bangladesh, Sudan, and Yemen (CIA 2014), Kenya has a high Internet penetration rate (Pew Research Center 2014), which jumped more than 60 per cent from 2012 to 2013 (CCK 2013). According to Pew, 62 per cent of Kenyan Internet users go online daily and 76 per cent of them use Facebook or Twitter (2014).

Regarding Twitter penetration in Kenya specifically, there is no data on the number of active Twitter accounts in Kenya. However, a January 2012 report, How Africa Tweets, from Nairobi-based Portland Communications, found that Kenya was the second most active African country on Twitter after South Africa (Onyango 2012). The same study found that, across the continent, a majority of users use the service to follow politics (55 per cent), national news (68 per cent), and international news (76 per cent) (Portland, 2012). Importantly, these users were quite young: 60 per cent of them were between 21 and 29 years old (Ibid.).

The 2014 version of How Africa Tweets shifted focus to cities, finding that Nairobi has approximately 250,000 active Twitter accounts, 6 per cent of the total population of 3.36 million. Despite the fact that the vast majority of Kenyans use Kiswahili in their everyday conversations, 81 per cent of tweets geo-tagged from Nairobi were written in English (Portland 2014).

**Twitter culture in Kenya — Who are #KOT?**
Kenyans on Twitter are commonly known by the hashtag #KOT, and are known for using the service in order to organise protests, sometimes focused on serious issues, but often making fun of politicians or other African countries. “We have an army on social media, it’s like the ministry of defence. We have navy, we have land, we have the air force, and then we have social media. So, you don’t mess with Kenyans, because when you do, you will pay for it”, Kenyan comedian Eric Omondi told BBC Trending in May (BBC Trending 2014).
Many Kenyan Twitter users have used the service as a form of protest, organising hashtag campaigns criticising public officials and foreign journalists for comments perceived to be offensive. For example, in March 2012, US-based news channel CNN characterised a bombing in downtown Nairobi as “violence in Kenya”, a portrayal that angered many Kenyans on Twitter, who took to the social networking platform to criticise CNN’s coverage of the bombing using #SomeoneTellCNN (Kabweza 2013). In another example, South African journalist Imran Garda, who himself often criticises portrayals of Africans in Western media (see Garda 2012), received an angry response from Kenyan Twitter users who apparently misunderstood a satirical tweet he sent mocking Western journalists covering the 2013 Kenyan elections (Sahan Journal 2013).

In a more recent and more serious example, Kenyans took to Twitter to reprimand Kenyan Cabinet Secretary of the Interior, Joseph Ole Lenku, following the Westgate Mall attack in Nairobi in September 2013, which killed scores of mall-goers. Using hashtags #TweetLikeOleLenku and #OleLenku, users criticised the government’s response to the attack, as well as what they perceived as conflicting information shared by Ole Lenku. After initially estimating the number of attackers at 10 to 15, Lenku said that five of the attackers had been killed, but no bodies had been found and none of the attackers had escaped (The Stream 2013). This prompted numerous tweets like that of one user, who wrote, “To kill a lion takes strength but to tell a nation 15-5=0 that my friends takes courage, strength, steadfastness, brevity and God #OleLenku” (Ibid.). The attack, carried out by Somali militant organisation Al-Shabaab, was also live-tweeted by the group on a number of English-language Twitter accounts that were routinely shut down by Twitter (Hinnant 2013). Following the account shutdowns, Al-Shabaab would create a new account and email it out to journalists that were on its press list. The shutdowns were so frequent that the group had created six separate accounts by the time the attack was over (Ibid.).

For the Ministry of Interior and the Kenya Police, which were responsible for securing the mall following the raid, the attack was an early test of their social communication capabilities, as the accounts of Ole Lenku and Kenya Police Inspector General David
Kimaiyo were created just two weeks before the attack took place. Daveed Gartenstein Ross of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies in Washington, DC, characterised the government’s response as “a model for poor crisis communication” (Ibid.). Daudi Khamadi Were, director of projects at Ushahidi, explained:

> Tweets from government urging Kenyans to hug each other during the height of the crisis were ill timed as the country waited to hear the fate of the hostages still held inside the shopping mall. Building credibility online, just like building credibility offline, takes time (Were 2013).

Despite the challenges faced by the government in its efforts to communicate with citizens online, the government of President Uhuru Kenyatta has embraced Twitter in its communication strategy. Although many Kenyans criticised the government’s response to the attack, it was a test of their communication efforts on social media, and may have provided public officials the opportunity to improve their social communication strategy, especially that of the police and interior ministry, both of whom were criticised for their response.

**Current efforts to use Twitter for government communication**

Since the attack, the interior ministry has indicated that it — including the police force, which it oversees — would be using Twitter as a way to strengthen its communication potential with Kenyan citizens (InteriorCNG Ministry 2013). The use of Twitter is part of a broader strategy by the government of President Kenyatta to strengthen e-government services, branded as an effort to increase the efficiency and transparency of government and crack down on corruption. Kenyatta’s government also launched a new website and SMS service in October, whereby Kenyans can report incidents of corruption directly to the office of the president (PSCU Digital 2013).

The president’s website is in addition to the anonymous corruption reporting portal on the website of the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), which was established in 2011 under President Mwai Kibaki. The EACC replaced the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission (KACC), which was founded in 2003, but disbanded in 2011. The addition of
the president’s own anti-corruption portal, in addition to the EACC’s previously existing one, raises questions about its sincerity and legitimacy, as there is no indication that the two portals are linked. In addition, while the EACC releases an annual report detailing the corruption reports made through the site, and their response to those reports, the president’s own website provides no such information.

Alongside soliciting corruption reports through @-mentions, the Kenya Police have hinted that they are monitoring the hashtags #iReport and #SecureKenya, with which they invite citizens to alert them to incidents of corruption or crime (Kenya Police 2013). David Kimaiyo, the Inspector General of Police, has also used Twitter as a platform with which to broadcast an anti-corruption message, writing on February 7, “[National Police Service] has emerged No.1 in corruption but I urge officers to handle over the corruption mantle to other agencies and say NO to corruption. #RRI” (Kimaiyo 2014).

**Corruption and corruption reporting in Kenya**

Kenya has long faced corruption problems, with the police consistently perceived as the most corrupt institution in the country (Transparency International—Kenya 2013). Transparency International’s 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranked Kenya at 136 of 175 countries surveyed (Ibid.), with 175 being the worst. Relative to other East African countries, Kenya fared relatively well as a whole, ranking behind Uganda, Burundi, and Tanzania and ahead of only Rwanda in overall likelihood of bribery. However, Kenya’s police are perceived to be by far the most corrupt institution in Kenya and ranked second out of 53 total sectors in East African countries. According to TI, bribes paid to police officials account for more than 33 per cent of total bribes paid in Kenya (City and Local Councils come in second at 14.4 per cent). Additionally, “The police in Kenya recorded the highest probability of a respondent actually paying a bribe upon encountering a bribery situation. This was also the highest probability encountered in the region” (Transparency International—Kenya 2013, 17).

According to a 2012 survey from the Independent Policing Oversight Authority (IPOA),
created in 2012 as an independent civilian body responsible for monitoring police behaviour and investigating complaints, 67 per cent of respondents perceived the police to be the most corrupt institution in Kenya. For comparison, the institution that ranked second in this survey was government hospitals, at 16 per cent (IPOA 2013).

According to the EACC’s most recent annual report, they received 3,355 corruption reports in the 2012/2013 fiscal year, a drop of 36 per cent from 5,230 in the previous fiscal year (EACC 2013, 3). The commission attributes this drop in part to the establishment of the IPOA. Of the 3,355 reports made to the EACC, 1,423, or 42 per cent were taken up for investigation. A plurality of those reports, 26 per cent, were bribery-related.

Among the 1,688 investigations that were either completed or carried out during the 2012/2013 fiscal year (including cases still under investigation from previous years), 55 were completed. Of those 55, 28 were taken to court, and 8 recommended for administrative action (Ibid.). This indicates that a low number of corruption reports ultimately result in the prosecution or punishment of the offending official.

The IPOA, which also takes complaints of police misbehaviour, received 250 complaints between July and December 2013, finding that 115 of the 250 (46 per cent) fell under their authority. During that same time period, the oversight authority began investigations into only 22 cases, most of which dealt with issues like unlawful killing, deaths in police custody, and sexual abuse (IPOA 2013, 12). Given that, it appears there were few resources provided to responding to petty corruption.

In addition to existing government anti-corruption measures, there have been a number of independent non-governmental efforts launched in order to raise awareness and draw attention to the persistent problem of petty bribery in Kenya, especially among the police forces. IPaidABribe.or.ke, launched in December 2011, provides an anonymous and public platform for Kenyans to confess to paying bribes. Though the platform has of late not been very active (there were only five reports made in June 2014, for example), since 2011 it has received more than 6,300 confessions, with bribes totalling more than 174 million shillings
(SEK 13.5 million) (I Paid A Bribe u.d.).

The website Ma3Route, which crowd-sources traffic information from Nairobi drivers and distributes that information via a mobile phone app and Twitter account, has also been involved in reporting corruption incidents. The service will often share information on Twitter relating to places where police officers are sharing bribes and attempt to get Inspector General Kimaiyo to respond to tweets photographing or alleging corrupt behaviour by police officers.

Although the examples of Ma3Route and IPaidABribe.or.ke may be unique cases, the presence of citizen-driven, web-based, anti-corruption efforts hints that there may be an appetite among Kenyans for similar government-based initiatives. As Internet penetration continues to grow in Kenya, and more and more Kenyans are using social media website to both consume and share information, the potential of such efforts to initiate substantive change may be expanded. Thus, as the public officials do claim to be using Twitter in order to combat corruption within the police force, the relevance of this study emerges.


The relationship between Twitter and corruption may not be immediately apparent; even making an attempt to analyse the relationship between the two may sound overly optimistic in terms of the impact of social media on governing processes. However, researchers in a number of fields — including political science, ICT4D, and media — have assessed various aspects of corruption, ICT diffusion, and social media, which can be used to effectively bridge the gap between the two topics, and thus establish a theoretical relationship between the two. While establishing a causal relationship between Twitter use by citizens and officials and perceived corruption levels would be difficult at this stage, assessing whether or not Twitter use could be impactful is more feasible. This will be accomplished by assessing existing research and theories, and combining them with my
own analysis into Twitter in Kenya.

**ICT, Government Transparency, and Corruption**

Existing literature on the relationship between ICT diffusion and e-government in promoting government transparency and reducing corruption is relatively sparse; however, some researchers have established a positive relationship between ICT diffusion and a reduction in corruption. The expansion of ICTs, specifically e-government and social media initiatives, has been touted as a means to promote openness and transparency in government, by “promoting good governance, strengthening reform-oriented initiatives, reducing potential for corrupt behaviours, enhancing relationships between government employees and citizens, allowing for citizen tracking of activities, and by monitoring and controlling behaviours of government employees” (Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes 2010, 265).

Twitter as a platform has the potential to influence at least two of these factors. First, Twitter can improve the relationship between officials and citizens by providing a direct means of contact between them, facilitating multidirectional mass communication — from officials to citizens, citizens to officials, and citizens to other citizens — through a number of the website’s affordances, including followers, hashtags, and @-mentions. Second, as seen in Kenya, Twitter can be used as a platform for citizen reporting of misbehaviour from government employees, by sharing the details of incidents with specific accounts and hashtags. However, there are limits to Twitter’s effectiveness in bridging such communication barriers, as demonstrated in a study of the use of Twitter by members of the United States Congress (Golbeck et al., 2010). Golbeck, Grimes, and Rogers argue that, while Twitter does support direct communication between officials and citizens, its effectiveness is likely to decrease as more users join the site, as “there is a limit to how much meaningful personal communication one person can undertake” (Ibid., 1620-1621). Their concern regarding the scalability of effective communication as the user base increases reflects findings in a study from India comparing the effectiveness of using social media to improve direct democracy by local and national government bodies. Upadhyay and Ilavarasan found that local efforts were more effective than national efforts, and that local efforts also result in better participation (2011, 352). This issue must be taken into
consideration when analysing the use of Twitter by Kenyan officials at the national level.

Golbeck et al. furthermore found that the site was being used by members of Congress for outreach, rather than transparency, explaining that “the content of the tweets does little to improve insight into the activities of Congress, improve governmental transparency, or educate the readers about legislation or issues” (2010, 1621).

The Kenyan government under President Uhuru Kenyatta has expressed a willingness to promote transparency initiatives, including the adoption of a corruption reporting tool on the official presidential website and the claim to be using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to not only communicate with citizens, but to also allow citizens to communicate directly to government officials. However, whether or not these initiatives are effective and sincere remains to be seen, as scepticism remains of their impact and intentions. While Bertot et al. establish an overall positive relationship between the expansion of ICT services, which provide greater communication potential to citizens as well as increase the speed of information dissemination among citizens and discourage government corruption, it is less clear how ICT dissemination impacts communication processes between citizens and officials or what the weaknesses and limits may be of certain platforms like Facebook and Twitter, especially as more officials and agencies adopt the platforms as means of communication with citizens.

Though broader trends have been identified, the process by which this accountability happens through ICT diffusion remains under-researched, especially relating to citizens using social media tools like Twitter and Facebook to hold governments accountable. Thus, this research will examine the ways in which Twitter is being utilised by Kenyan officials, and how that is perceived by Kenyan Twitter users that have actively interacted with Kenyan officials using the social networking platform.

From a political science perspective, corruption is “caused by deficits in the democratic systems such as power-sharing, accountability and transparency, governmental checks and balances” (Gaskins 2013, 17). Therefore, a technology that increases accountability and
transparency, as well as the power of citizens, may decrease levels of corruption. ICTs like Internet access and mobile phones have the potential to do this by providing the means to “informing citizens of relevant information regarding government and society” (Ibid., 24).

Through social media, this information dissemination can be carried out directly by citizens, in addition to those traditionally in control of mass communication channels, like governments and news media. This can be accomplished through a number of processes, including citizens and civil society organisations having the means by which to efficiently share information on incidents of government corruption with their fellow citizens as well as officials, and organise around causes and concerns.

In Kenya, specifically, this can be seen in the case of the viral #JusticeForLiz effort, which mobilised around a 16-year-old girl, Liz, who was allegedly gang raped and thrown into a pit toilet. As punishment, the police had the alleged attackers, three of whom Liz identified to the police immediately following the attack, cut the grass at the police station. Once the case was publicised by Kenya’s Daily Nation newspaper, police officials at the highest level, including Kenya Police Inspector General David Kimaiyo, were pressured to address the incident. This fits well what Upadhyay and Ilavarasan, studying social media and e-government in India, write, “In case of government bodies, [social media] act as public forums for grievance redressal, for dissemination of information and for gathering suggestions from the people, in addition to reduce corruption” (2011, 351).

Although Upadhyay and Ilavarasan’s research highlights some of the potential uses of social media to these ends, it does not assess the processes and mechanisms by which social media use by citizens and officials may ultimately promote a decrease in corruption. While promoting transparency and decreasing corruption are not exactly the same thing, the two are linked, and an increase in transparency should also lead to a decrease in corruption practices: “More information delivered to citizens in a more timely fashion is expected to increase the transparency of government and empower citizens to monitor government performance more closely” (Kim, Kim & Lee 2008, 43). Summing up the relationship between information dissemination and corruption, they explain:
Because the government has more control than citizens over the flow of information, members of the government are prone to corruption. In order to narrow the distance between citizens and government, it is necessary to monitor the government’s work and provide citizens with information about administrative processes and outcomes regarding, for example, permits or applications (Ibid.).

While assessments of social media's impact on communication power vis-à-vis the relationship between citizens and officials is often analysed in the context of organising mass movements against existing political powers (see Gerbaudo, 2012), this thesis will attempt to utilise communication and social movement theory in an attempt to analyse social media’s potential to impact specific issues related to governance: in this case the persistent problem of police corruption in Kenya and its impact on the everyday lives of Kenyan citizens.

**Horizontal mass-communication networks and communication power: new repertoires of contention online**

In order to assess the process through which social media platforms may impact the communication power of citizens vis-à-vis public officials, this paper will utilise Manuel Castells’ concept of horizontal mass self-communication. I will begin by introducing the concept of power in relation to communication processes, as defined by Castells. The concept will be useful for providing a starting point for a discussion that at its root centres on the transparency of government and the accountability of government officials to citizens, an accountability that can only exist if citizens possess ample communication power.

Castells writes, “Power is the relational capacity that enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favour the empowered actor’s will, interests, and values” (2013, 10). This view of power fits quite well within the context of the relationships that police officers and government officials have with citizens, specifically in Kenya, which has limited transparency and a deeply embedded culture of
corruption. If a police officer attempting to bribe an officer can favour his or her own interests at the expense of the driver that has been stopped, a power asymmetry exists.

Continuing, Castells furthers his argument, writing that "...power relies on the control of communication, as counter power depends on breaking through such control. And mass communication, the communication that potentially reaches society at large, is shaped and managed by power relationships, rooted in the business of media and the politics of the states" (Ibid., 3). Within Kenya, this potential to break through traditional power relationships has gained increased relevance as of late, due in part to the implementation of a law which increases state regulation of news media content. The law, according to Kenya’s leading newspaper the Daily Nation (Nation Reporter 2013), allows the government to fine media houses up to $230,000 for breaching a code of conduct. It has been denounced as “draconian” and “unconstitutional” by journalists and NGOs inside and outside of Kenya (Ibid.).

Within such a context, social media may emerge as an increasingly important means by which to challenge existing power relationships, providing more communication power to citizens through horizontal mass communication, which facilitates the transfer of information outside of traditional state or corporate-owned mass media. Castells explains: “Indeed, these horizontal networks make possible the rise of what I call mass self-communication, decisively increasing the autonomy of communicating subjects vis-à-vis communication corporations, as the users become both senders and receivers of messages” (2013, 4). Within a context of increased state regulation of traditional mass media, the autonomy of citizens using social media creates a challenge to a state apparently stifling mass communication, as it remains outside of a mass media context and relatively free from interference. Paolo Gerbaudo, in his book Tweets and the Streets, describes Castells vision of mass self-communication as carrying “the promise of autonomy from bureaucratic structures and increasing scope for political and social engagement below” (2012, 22). This vision not only conceives mass self-communication networks as independent from government bureaucracy, but, in addition, free from other “controllers” of communication nodes. Castells writes:
The technology of communication that shapes a given communicative environment has important consequences for the process of social change. The greater the autonomy of the communicating subjects vis-à-vis the controllers of societal communication nodes, the higher the chances for the introduction of messages challenging dominant values and interests in communication networks (Castells 2010, 412 my emphasis).

Thus, combined with the contention that ICT diffusion has a negative impact on corruption levels, the increase of mass self-communication through ICT-enabled social networks may play a role in this relationship by challenging the dominant values (in this case a tendency to accept corruption behaviour as the status quo), highlighting incidents of government corruption, thereby creating greater awareness of challenges to corrupt behaviour among citizens and officials alike. Although this thesis does not assess whether or not Twitter use by Kenyan citizens and police officials does decrease corruption incidents, it will assess the process by which Twitter-enabled mass self-communication may occur, and whether or not there may be limits to its potential to challenge existing communication power structures, and where those limits may occur.

**Corruption as a collective action problem: costs to resisting corruption and culturally embedded practices**

In order to assess how this rise in mass self-communication may impact corruption and/or transparency, it is important to understand why corruption persists and the various approaches to challenging corruption. At its root, corruption persists due to an imbalance of social power between officials and citizens (in our study this is manifested primarily in the relationship between citizens and police officials). Weber defines social power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” ([1922] 1978, 53, via Castells 2013). While there are various ways to lessen this disparity of social power, Bertot et al. identify three main approaches to combating corruption, specifically: social change, administrative reform, and law enforcement (2010, 265). The social change approach, which will be utilised in this study, “is based in the idea of reform through social
empowerment of citizens by allowing them to participate in institutional reform movements and by cultivating a civil, law-based society as a long-term deterrent to corruption” (Ibid., 265).

Within Kenya, Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell found that this power asymmetry persists in part due to a widespread collective action problem. Their research, which assessed the failure of past corruption reform efforts in Kenya, used principal-agent theory to explain corruption within the context of two main assumptions: First, “that a goal conflict exists between so-called principals (who are typically assumed to embody the public interest) and agents (who are assumed to have a preference in favour of corrupt transactions insofar as the benefits of such transactions outweigh the costs)” Secondly, “agents have more information than the principals, which results in an information asymmetry between the two groups of actors” (2013, 452). They argue that this information asymmetry creates a situation in which the short-term benefits to citizens when participating in corrupt practices far outweigh the long-term costs (Ibid., 457). For example, if a driver is stopped by a traffic cop who asks her to pay a bribe in order to be let off, the driver generally has two options: First, she can pay the bribe, and leave. Second, she can refuse and put herself at the mercy of the traffic cop, who may arrest her and take her to the local police station, where she could spend a night in jail and potentially face additional charges. Such incidents are destined to be repeated, as “in their individual encounters with public officials, the majority of citizens in the end still seem to perpetuate rather than fight corrupt exchanges” (Ibid., 455).

Persson et al. posit that this can be considered a collective action problem, arguing that such incidents could be largely eliminated, but are not, because citizens cannot trust other citizens to not engage in corrupt behaviour: “All the actors may well understand that they would stand to gain from erasing corruption, but because they cannot trust that most other actors will refrain from corrupt practices, they have no reason to refrain from paying or demanding bribes” (Ibid., 457). Thus, in order to change people’s behaviour, it is important to change how people perceive the behaviour of others. Mungui-Pippidi, taking a similar view of corruption as a collective action problem, argue that ICT-based solutions may be
effective, writing, "Our finding that Internet access is closely associated with control of corruption shows that there is huge potential in using online media to build control of corruption" (2013, 114). Their vision of how online media may decrease corruption hinges on the potential of online media to create collective-action networks, which they see as essential to fighting corruption. They write:

Strange as it may sound, opening an Internet cafe in every village may be a more effective approach to anticorruption than the establishment of an anticorruption agency. The key is to help build sustainable collective-action networks around them until the society reaches a reasonable level of normative constraints, so that these corruption fighters no longer remain isolated and exceptional (Ibid., 114).

While the logic of traditional collective action is built around existing organisations, digital technology, specifically Web 2.0 platforms like Twitter, has allowed for the proliferation of web-based activism that exists outside of traditional social movements or long-term campaigns (Earl & Kimport 2011, 181). Web 2.0 platforms like Twitter allow for coordinated action without co-presentation, existing outside of the boundaries of traditional activism, which is characterised by a multitude of types of campaigns, which can be short, sporadic, or long-term (Ibid.). However, this transformation of activism within a digital sphere also fosters incidents of contention (i.e. moments of online protest) that are not necessarily connected to a long-term movement strategy or goal, making the “connection between contention and more enduring social causes” a variable, rather than a common trait of collective-action movements (Ibid., 187). In the context of Kenyans using Twitter to fight police corruption, this distinction is important, as many Kenyans on Twitter appear to only tweet about corruption when they are asked to pay a bribe or someone else tweets that they have been asked to pay a bribe. In this sense, building an enduring anti-corruption movement on Twitter may require more than tweeting at officials when incidents of corruption occur. Instead, Twitter users may be better served by tweets with a long-term anti-corruption focus, rather than focusing on specific incidents.

Summing up the theoretical review, the link between decreased corruption and ICT diffusion is clear; however, less understood is the process through which this might occur.
Using Manuel Castells’ communication power theory, I propose that one of the processes by which this decrease in corruption may occur is by providing citizens the opportunity for mass self-communication within a networked public. This gives people the means to fight the information and communication power asymmetry that exists, specifically at moments of corruption or when police ask citizens for bribes, by providing them the means of broadcasting police misbehaviour with the hope that enough people will see it. The audience would hopefully include police and ministry of interior officials themselves, compelling them to act. While this potential certainly exists through Twitter, the incident-focused nature of it may actually prevent users from fostering a long-term anti-bribery or anti-corruption movement, due to the disconnect between short, sporadic moments of contention and long-term social movements.

4. The Study

Research Questions
The main focus of this research is to assess the potential of Twitter to be used as a tool for fighting corruption, analysing the ways in which Kenyan police and interior ministry officials are using Twitter, the ways in which Kenyan twitter users are engaging with officials through the social networking platform, and, finally, what Kenyans on Twitter think about the value of that interaction and its potential for fighting corruption.

The four research questions are as follows:
1. To what extent are four selected, Kenyan police and authority Twitter accounts used to expose or combat corruption?
2. How are Kenyans interacting with the four accounts on Twitter?
3. What is the assessment of Kenyans that have interacted with the four accounts on both the value of that interaction and Twitter's potential as a tool for fighting corruption through mass self-communication?
4. What is the potential of Twitter as a tool for fighting corruption, specifically the prevalence of bribery among the Kenya Police force?
Hypotheses

After a cursory review of the four accounts, I expect that there will be a wide range of types of activity and focuses among the four accounts, despite what should be relatively consistent themes and messages. The accounts include two Twitter accounts (@IGKimaiyo and @PoliceKE) belonging to the Kenya Police, and two accounts (@JoeLenku and @InteriorKE) belonging to the Ministry of Interior. Among the four accounts, I expect the number tweets and interactivity of the four accounts to vary widely. Specifically, one should expect the accounts @JoeLenku and @IGKimaiyo to be more personal and interactive than the two institutional accounts @PoliceKE and @InteriorKE. While @IGKimaiyo and @PoliceKE will likely be focused more on police-specific issues, I expect @JoeLenku and @InteriorKE to have a broader focus, including security, immigration, and of course police matters.

Regarding the interactions of Kenyans with the four accounts, I expect there to be a fair amount of meaningful interaction, including corruption reports, comments, and questions from citizens to public officials. This meaningful interaction will be accompanied by a majority of tweets that do not relay or request meaningful information.

I expect the Kenyan citizens to be optimistic about the government’s use of Twitter. This prediction is based on personally viewing a handful of exchanges between citizens and Inspector General Kimaiyo, who appears to be responding to reports of corruption and questions from citizens via Twitter.

While Twitter may not be the perfect platform for engaging citizens with government officials, it does possess a number of characteristics that may enable meaningful citizen to government communication and vice versa, but may need to be wielded in particular ways. While the empirical results of this study may or may not reveal that Twitter is being used to fight corruption in a meaningful way, it may provide insights into the limits of Twitter, as well as provide examples of specific instances in which it does or does not work.


**Methodology**

This research combined qualitative and quantitative methods, and data was gathered and processed between February and July 2014. For the first quantitative portion of the research, I analysed the 3,068 tweets sent from the four official accounts — @IGKimaiyo, @PoliceKE, @JoeLenku, and @InteriorKE — between September and December 2013. The timeframe begins with the official launch of the accounts in early September, and ends on December 31, 2013.

While this research began as an effort to address government transparency and corruption among the police and ministry of interior as a whole, interviews with Kenyans and analysing the data soon revealed that the primary application of Twitter in fighting police corruption would be focused on street-level situations, in which citizens are coerced into paying bribes by low-level police officials. While President Kenyatta’s recent crackdown on corrupt officials even within his own cabinet serves as a reminder that corruption exists at the highest levels of government, this thesis will not address that, as the interactions of Kenyans on Twitter with police and interior ministry officials appears to be focused primarily on low-level bribery scenarios.

Tweets were analysed using QSR’s NVivo 10 program, and coded based on their content and whether or not they were sent as a ‘reply’ to a tweet sent by another user. The two-part coding allows for a two-part analysis. First, coding based on content allows for an analysis based on the types of issues the four accounts are focused on. Second, the ‘reply’ coding enables an analysis of how interactive the accounts are. Are they simply for broadcasting, or are the officials interacting with Kenyan Twitter users in a meaningful way?

For the second quantitative portion, I performed a brief keyword search of 5,496 tweets that mentioned one or more of the 4 official accounts and were sent in November 2013. The choice of November was two-fold: First, I wanted to avoid tweets sent during the Westgate Mall attack in September 2013. Second, I wanted to avoid the international #JusticeForLiz campaign that took place in October 2013. The month of November provided a window that was both void of any large-scale events, and left two months for
the officials, whose accounts were launched in September, to establish their tweeting habits.

While I did not prefer to perform a keyword search, and did intend and attempt to carry out a content analysis similar to that performed on the tweets from the four official accounts, doing so proved impossible, due to the randomness of the tweets and due to a lack of context.

For the qualitative portion of the research, I conducted interviews, ranging in length from 20-35 minutes, with 18 Kenyan Twitter users. They were found via a random sample of Kenya-based Twitter users that had in November 2013 interacted with the four official accounts. Of the 61 Twitter users contacted for possible interview, 40 did not reply, and two declined. The remaining individual initially accepted the interview request, but did not reply to any of my messages once I arrived in Nairobi.

The 18 interviews were all conducted in Nairobi between April 11 and 20. 15 interviews were conducted in person at various cafes and offices in Nairobi, and three interviews were conducted over the phone or Skype. The locations and times of interviews were chosen in order to maximise convenience for interviewees, as well as provide a calm atmosphere. All interviews included the same general set of questions (see Interview Guide); however, consistent with the approach of *The Active Interview* (Holstein & Gubrium 1995), the wording and order of questions was variable.

The 15 interviewees that provided their age were all between 23 and 43 years old, with an average age of 30. Notably, despite the randomness of the sample, 15 were from Nairobi, and 16 were male, with only two female interviewees and only three interviewees from outside Nairobi.

Eight of the 18 worked in communications and media fields, four were in business, and three worked for international NGOs. The others included a student, a missionary, a professional club DJ. Generally, the interviewees considered themselves middle class.
Table 1: Interviewee demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation/Field</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>Literature publishing</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Music production (DJ)</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Did not share</td>
<td>NGO Communications Officer</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>IT/Communications</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Entertainment writer</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
<td>Loitokitok</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Researcher at NGO</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Communications assistant at NGO</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Social Worker/Graduate Student</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Tech start-up founder</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Missionary/Pastor</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Travel Agency Marketing</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Businessman/Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Communications Consultant</td>
<td>Nairobi</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Assistant Manager at Company</td>
<td>Mombasa</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>NGO Worker</td>
<td>Garissa</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overrepresentation in the sample of Nairobians may have been the result of the sample drawing on geo-tagged tweets, which are typically made from smartphones, making the sample skew toward wealthier city-dwellers. However, it is unclear why the sample was so predominantly male; it may be the result of what Kenyan women’s rights advocate Elizabeth Maina described as the “patriarchal nature of politics in Kenya, which is characterized by marginalization, exclusion of women and constricted involvement often defined by gender roles” (Maina 2013).

The overrepresentation of Nairobians and men does not invalidate the information
gathered in the interviews; however, it will be taken into account when analysing the content of the interviews.

**The four Twitter accounts**
The four accounts analysed for this study include two Twitter accounts belonging to the Kenya Police, the national law enforcement body, and two accounts belonging to the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, henceforth referred to as the interior ministry, which oversees the police, immigration service, prisons, and corrections. The focus of this case study is the police; the Interior Ministry was chosen for comparison, as it oversees, is responsible for, and thus deals with many of the same issues as the police.

Overall the four accounts varied widely in their tweet content, interactivity, and frequency. For example, while the account belonging to the interior ministry (@InteriorKE) sent more than 1,500 tweets between September and December 2014, an average of more than 12 per day, the account of the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry, Joseph Ole Lenku, sent just 92 tweets, an average of less than one per day (see Figure 2).

The two accounts belonging to the police include @PoliceKE, the official Twitter account of the national police service, and @IGKimaiyo, the official Twitter account of police Inspector General David Kimaiyo, the head of the police. When tweets were collected on February 15, 2014, @PoliceKE had 46,015 followers and @IGKimaiyo had 51,934 followers.
Prior to conducting any analysis of the data, I expected that @PoliceKE would have been used primarily for broadcasting official messages, with relatively little interaction with other Twitter users, and that @IGKimaiyo would have a more personal take, with potentially more interaction (primarily through @-mentions and replies). Additionally, I expected the Kenya Police to have a consistent Twitter presence throughout the period analysed (September through December 2013). While I was correct on the first expectation, the Kenya Police’s Twitter presence was inconsistent and gradually declined week by week.

@IGKimaiyo’s tweet presence dropped off significantly between September and December (see Figure 3). Although the reduction in tweets sent between September and October could be attributed to the especially high number of tweets that he sent during the Westgate attack (211 tweets between September 16 to 22), the low numbers in December indicate an overall downward trend.
However, @IGKimaiyo did maintain a high level of interactivity (measured through replies) — more than 60 per cent of his tweets were sent in reply to another user (see Figure 4), most from Kenyan citizens.

Apart from those about the Westgate attack, the other tweets sent from the account included a mix of broadcasting information about his work and official policy, as well as a small percentage of “miscellaneous” tweets unrelated to official policy questions. These miscellaneous tweets include those wishing followers “good morning” and sharing passages from the Bible.

For the purposes of studying interactivity and the power of horizontal mass communication networks, @IGKimaiyo’s reply tweets are an important metric. Analytically, the replies can be split into three categories, including responding to reports of corruption or crime, answering questions, or “miscellaneous” tweets, which includes responding to tweets that are nothing beyond a simple greeting (see Figure 5).

This breakdown was chosen in order to assess further the types of replies that were being sent by Kimaiyo, to specifically address the types of tweets that he was responding to.

It appears that the high proportion of replies helped to establish his reputation as being responsive to tweets, which will be further explored in the analysis of the interviews. By consistently responding to tweets, he became an outlet for citizens attempting to use Twitter to lessen the communication divide between themselves and their leaders.
In stark contrast to the account of its inspector general, the Twitter account of the Kenya Police — @PoliceKE — tweeted only sporadically and had very little interactivity. In fact, the account only sent a total of three tweets during all of November and December 2014 (see Figure 6); the last tweet for the year was sent on December 14.

The police account sent the vast majority of its tweets during the September Westgate mall attack, tweeting very little outside of this time. Of the tweets unrelated to the Westgate attack, only 42 were informative, showing a low-level of tweeting outside of the days immediately following the Westgate attack (see Figure 7).

While 54 of @PoliceKE’s tweets were replies to a comment by another user, the vast majority of the replies were in response to questions about the account’s creation or about the Westgate attack.

The two accounts belonging to the Interior Ministry, @JoeLenku, belonging to the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Interior, and @InteriorKE, the official account of the ministry, did not mirror the activity of the two police accounts.
To begin, the @joelenku account was similar to @PoliceKE in its activity trends, including a high level of activity in September followed by almost no activity in October, November, or December (See Figure 8). While the account averaged more than 2 tweets per day in September, it sent only three in October and two in November. Although there was a slight uptick in activity in December, the account still averaged less than one tweet every three days.

@joelenku’s steep drop of in total activity after September mirrors that of @PoliceKE; however, the account remained relatively inactive during the Westgate attack, sending only 18 tweets related to the attack (compared to 255 for @PoliceKE, 91 for @IGKimaiyo, and 703 for @InteriorKE).

Among the informative tweets shared by @joelenku (see Figure 9), 29 of them were directly related to the establishment of digital communication platforms for the various departments of the Interior Ministry, including the police. That leaves only 25 informational tweets to deal with other issues. In essence, the @joelenku Twitter account has not used Twitter effectively, either to engage with Kenyan citizens or share information.
In stark contrast to @joelenku’s failure to tweet consistently, the account of his ministry was by far the most active Twitter account of the four, tweeting more than 1,500 times during the four-month period (see Figure 10). While @InteriorKE’s total tweets did decrease month to month, the overall decrease in Twitter presence was less than that of the other three accounts.

Even in December, @InteriorKE averaged more than five tweets per day, compared to just one tweet per day for @IGKimaiyo and one tweet every six days for @PoliceKE.

Overall, the tweets from @InteriorKE were relatively varied, with approximately one-third being either informative or replies (see Figure 11). Among the replies, the majority were sent either during the Westgate attack or during official Twitter chats, where officials from the Interior Ministry answered questions from Kenyans via Twitter during a predetermined period of time. If tweeted at for reports of corruption or crime, @InteriorKE almost always referred the Twitter user to @IGKimaiyo.

Figure 10: @InteriorKE’s total tweets by month between September and December 2013.

Figure 11: @InteriorKE’s total tweets between September and December 2013, sorted based on content. (Note: Due to the presence of manual ‘retweets’ — i.e. inserting an RT in front of another Twitter user’s tweet and resharing it — @InteriorKE demanded an additional category.)
This tendency, combined with a combative and dismissive tone present throughout many of the Twitter chats, may have contributed to the low level of engagement that the account received from Kenyans on Twitter.

To conclude, the four accounts vary widely in their use of Twitter. This includes inconsistency in how often they tweet, how often they engage with other users through replies, and the amount and types of information shared through the social media platform. This may indicate a lack of coherent strategy across the various accounts, indicative of a situation in which public officials are poorly equipped to deal with reports of corruption and crime, or to even consistently broadcast anti-corruption messages via Twitter.

**Tweets from the #KOT**

While an analysis of the accounts provides insight into the behaviour and practices of the officials operating them, I have also performed an analysis of the tweets from users engaging with the accounts, in order to determine the types of tweets being sent most often to the four accounts and whether or not Kenyans are engaging with them on serious issues.

The analysis was carried out through a keyword search of more than 5,000 tweets sent during November 2013 mentioning one or more of the four accounts. Prior to carrying out the keyword search, I attempted to code a sample of 1,700 of the tweets, using a similar method that I used when analysing the four official accounts. However, this proved unfeasible, as the stream of tweets was impossible to categorise consistently, due to the diverse nature of the tweets, and the wide array of issues that they mentioned.
Of the four accounts, users mentioned @IGKimaiyo by far the most often, tagging his handle in more than 66 per cent of tweets mentioning one of the accounts in November 2013.

Despite the fact that @IGKimaiyo had far fewer tweets than @InteriorKE, users tended to engage with him far more (See Figure 12). While @IGKimaiyo did not send as many tweets in reply to tweets from other users, he did engage in a more personal way. He answered questions from users outside of an official schedule, and also responded to reports of crime and corruption actively. This contrasts to the replies of @InteriorKE, which tended to take place during official question and answer sessions (Twitter chats).

The tweets sent by Kenyan Twitter users to the four accounts also included a significant minority that mentioned the police, including tweets complaining about police officers, crime, bribery, and corruption. Of the more than 5,000 tweets, more than 20 per cent mentioned police officers, while 3.26 per cent mentioned bribery and 1.86 per cent mentioned corruption (see Figure 13). Even though, as a percentage of the total, this does not indicate a high level of engagement on issues of corruption, the 179 mentions of bribery in November add up to approximately six tweets per day. However, this low level, combined with my inability to accurately code the vast majority of tweets, also indicates a high level of what Upadhyay & Ilavarasan characterise as “meaningless discussions” that they write, “may lead to administrators overlooking serious participation. Mediation and monitoring of participation are important, but at the cost of direct representation by the citizens” (Upadhyay & Ilavarasan, p. 352).
As a response to this problem, I created a word-cloud using a word-frequency query in NVivo 10 (see Figure 14). The query reveals that, matching earlier results, @IGKimaiyo remains by far the most mentioned term, and he remains at the centre of a large majority of conversations happening with the four accounts, just as he is at the centre of the word cloud.

Common issues include concerns about traffic (seen in mentions of *matatus, licence, vehicle, traffic,* and *driver*), security (seen in mentions of *killing, arrested, nyumbakumi, siege, insecurity, carjacked,* and *victims*), and corruption (seen in mentions of *bribes* and *corruption*).

While the issues that citizens are tweeting about to officials are serious, the stream of tweets sent to officials, especially @IGKimaiyo, may create problems for officials when trying to keep track of new and on-going conversations. The problem is two-fold. First, the large volume of tweets (an average of 183 per day in November) means that officials are required to read many tweets every day in order to keep up with citizens complaints and concerns. Second, many of the tweets are not necessarily regarding important issues or questions they can answer, so they must sort through a large amount of relatively meaningless tweets in order to find those to which they are able to respond.
Interviews: scepticism and optimism
The 18, mostly male, urban interviewees were asked about a wide variety of issues related to police corruption, the government officials’ use of Twitter, in addition to their own assessment of the usefulness in using social media in order to address issues surrounding corruption. While the 18 interviews were organised as part of a random selection of Twitter users, the sample, 89 per cent male and 83 per cent Nairobian, may indicate that Twitter is currently the arena of a largely urban, predominantly male, elite. However, the small sample size does not allow for any scientific conclusions to be reached regarding this issue. Despite this, I believe the sample is indicative of the current Twitter community in Kenya.

The interviewees’ perceptions of the various issues discussed generally did not vary widely, with most expressing similar viewpoints on a variety of topics, with some exceptions. In general, interviewees were sceptical of the officials’ tweets in a number of ways, including the quality of the tweets, the accuracy of the information shared, as well as the willingness of officials to respond to complaints via social media, and their commitment to following up with such complaints.

This analysis will be broken down into three parts. First, I will present the interviewees’ views on the persistence of corrupt behaviour, especially in regards to police bribery. Second, I will present their opinions on the way in which officials are using Twitter. Third, I will present their assessments of the potential of Twitter as a tool for fighting corruption.

Causes of corruption
The interviewees gave four main reasons for the persistence of corruption, including blaming the system for encouraging corruption or being weak, blaming politicians for a lack of political will, and blaming their fellow citizens for engaging in a culture of corruption. However, by far the most cited reason for the persistence of corruption was the belief that it is easier to give a bribe than to go through due process. Eight of the 14 interviewees who mentioned this issue cited the difficulty of actually going through the judicial and bureaucratic process, which they said often requires a visit to the police
station, long waits for paperwork, the payment of a bond of up to 10,000 Kenyan shillings (784 SEK), and a court appearance. They also said the fines for various traffic violations often exceed the amount demanded in the bribe. One interviewee described this process:

The highest [corruption] in Kenya is traffic. Every time you get caught — this is, speeding — in Kenya you’re not given a ticket. If you get caught you get arrested. So you’re taken to the police cell, either pay the cash bill, come back, or sometimes they take you to court the same day. So it takes the whole day. So sometimes Kenyans find it convenient to pay a bribe. If the fine for speeding is 5,000 shillings, Kenyans will easily give 1,000 shillings to get off, to get off wasting time and also get off paying. The short-term benefits far outweigh the long-term benefits (Interviewee nr. 13).

While, on the part of the citizen, the temptation to pay a bribe — in order to avoid both paying a larger fine and wasting time — seems to play a major role in this process, four interviewees also mentioned poor police pay and discipline as another contributor. For example, one interviewee explained:

Traffic police officers generally don’t want you to follow due process, they’d rather settle on the side with you. Pay a bribe and move on. But if you want to follow the correct channels, they get annoyed (Interviewee nr. 1).

Another said:

Somebody bribes [the police officer] with 500 shillings, that is a meal for a day or two. Instead of going to the court, if they do find you on the wrong side of the law, take you to the station, you part with a larger amount in bribes (Interviewee nr. 6).

This person, and others, indicated that when one does refuse a bribe and is taken to the police station, other officials at the station often demand additional bribes in order to complete the paperwork and services so that the driver can continue on their way. Thus, in order to avoid engaging in corrupt behaviour, Kenyans sometimes must not refuse just one bribe, but multiple bribes, which would likely require a willingness to waste a lot of time. While the situation is quite desperate for citizens attempting to avoid bribery, three interviewees blamed Kenyans for their willingness to pay bribes, despite the consequences that often follow a refusal to pay. One person summed it up, explaining, “Everyone gives
bribes, everyone gets away with it, so why should I not do it?” He continued:

Even if today a friend of mine is arrested, and gives me a call and says I am arrested. The first thing I will do is go to my bank and get some money and go down to the police station. So like, how much do I need to pay to get my friend out. So it’s more of a cultural thing where everyone has accepted, you know, it’s another way of doing things. It’s another way of sorting out issues. So you have a situation where all of us complain about corruption, but when something hits home we need to pay a bribe to get out of this (Interviewee nr. 6).

Corrupt behaviour, on the part of both police officers and citizens, emerges in a context in which police pay and a lack of discipline within the force incentivises corrupt behaviour on the part of the police. At the same time, citizens pay bribes in order to avoid wasting time and paying a larger fine.

In this sense, police bribery remains a largely structural problem, taking place in a system that is inherently flawed. This view was echoed by six interviewees. Two provided colourful metaphors for describing this problem, and efforts on the part of government to reduce corruption. One individual compared it to trimming branches when an entire tree should be cut down:

Sometimes corruption is so deeply rooted that sometimes what you remove are twigs and branches, and the roots are still there. So as long as you’ve cut down the branches and the leaves but the roots are still there, the tree will still grow (Interviewee nr. 14).

The second compared it to changing the spark plugs on a broken down car:

Let’s say, you have a car that is broken down. Not just the engine, almost the whole car has a problem. You cannot fix the spark plugs and then expect the car to start working if you haven’t fixed everything. That is the problem (Interviewee nr. 2).

Seven interviewees blamed this persistent structural problem on an unwillingness of politicians and government officials to fix the problem, even when presented with evidence that could be used to punish police officers and citizens that are caught engaging in
corruption. This stems from a belief that more senior officials are also benefitting from this corruption:

Even reporting corruption by the policemen, becomes very hard. We see the policemen on TV, get caught taking bribes red handed, but then they are senior police, you can do nothing. I hear the money they collect, their seniors have been allocated some of the money. Everyone gets to benefit on their side from the corruption (Interviewee nr. 8).

The sense among interviewees that there is widespread complacency among senior officials within the police and government was quite widespread, and, perhaps not surprisingly, also echoed in their criticism of the officials’ use of Twitter.

In sum, a large majority of interviewees considered the government to not be serious about tackling corruption problems, especially in regards to the persistence of bribery among the police force. There was also a widespread perception that bribery problems persist in an inherently flawed system that encourages police officers to engage in corrupt behaviour due to poor pay and encourages those stopped by police to pay bribes in order to avoid an expensive and time-consuming bureaucratic process.

Perceptions of police and ministry of interior tweets

Overall, interviewees expressed doubt about the government efforts on Twitter, in regards to the quality and consistency of information provided, the frequency of tweets, and the responsiveness of officials to complaints by citizens made through the platforms. The following is a selection of comments that represent views held by the majority citizens interviewed:

— This digital government thing, I guess it’s, for lack of a better word, to look cool or something. It really is ineffective (Interviewee nr. 6).
— I think a lot of them are for show (Interviewee nr. 16).
— Social media is supposed to change how government interacts with Kenyans but they've been using the old paradigm where someone is on a pedestal and issues a statement and that’s it. There is no interaction; it is a one-way street
One interviewee even reported being blocked on Twitter by the police inspector general after tweeting him a report from an incident of corruption:

It’s hot air. 3 or 4 weeks ago, I captured a cop receiving a bribe along a highway. If you have evidence, a raw photo, a raw video… I tweeted that, copied Ma3Route, copied police. By the way, I was blocked by [IGKimaiyo] because of that. You share with them and then what? There was a time I really complained about cops receiving bribes on the road, and I tweeted fast and furious, I was blocked. So I can’t even copy him on communication. They don’t take criticism (Interviewee nr. 15).

However, though most commentaries were sceptical, two commenters did say that they thought Kimaiyo’s efforts were sincere, and effective:

If you go to [Kimaiyo’s] timeline, you see he is responding to us. For me, I can see it is helping us. It is another way of being able to communicate our issues with the relevant authorities (Interviewee nr. 2).

Taking into account the data revealing that more than 60 per cent of Kimaiyo’s tweets were replies, it may be surprising that the overall perception among interviewees is that the Twitter accounts are ineffective and insincere. However, these perceptions appear to be grounded in two main issues. First, multiple interviewees reported that the information is not useful or even accurate or consistent with other official statements or reports. For example:

Some [government agencies] are using Twitter for cover up. You see a lot of contradictions with the police Twitter account. The police spokesman is saying something else. IG Is saying something else. It has to do with who is managing which agency twitter account and the leeway they've been given. With some there's uniformity between whatever they’re saying to the media, whatever they’re saying on the Twitter account, or whatever means they're using. With some there are a lot of contradictions, I’ve noticed the Kenya Police Twitter account (Interviewee nr. 4).

This perception appears to be rooted partly in the perceived communication failures of the police and interior ministry in response to the Westgate attack in September 2013 (see The
Stream, 2013), which was cited by five interviewees. However, nine of 13 interviewees that specifically addressed the responsiveness of the government to questions and complaints on Twitter said that the police and interior ministry accounts do not respond to reports from citizens very often. For example:

I think one of the trends if I may mention is its very easy for government officials to respond to positive tweets. Like if I say the police are good, within five minutes, the IGKimaiyo, whoever is handling that, will tweet me and say thank you. If I report a corruption incident, I most likely won’t get a response. If I criticise the government, most likely I not get any response (Interviewee nr. 13).

However, while others said the police did sometimes respond, there were widespread complaints that when officials did respond claiming they would act, they actually did not. For example:

You tweet a police officer, a senior at the police station, and they tell you they will follow up but they actually don’t (Interviewee nr. 6).

In general, most interviewees said that the police either did not respond to reports, or, when they did respond, the issue was never followed up on in a meaningful way.

Despite their doubts about the quality of government tweets and the sincerity of interaction, numerous interviewees gave various reasons for why they believe tweeting about incidents of corruption is valuable, and why they believe other Kenyans tweet to government officials. These reasons included the following: A belief that government officials do see their tweets, whether or not they respond to or act upon them. To mobilise attention to problems and incidents among their fellow citizens. And, finally, because it is a good way of relieving frustration in regards to government inaction. On the first point, seven interviewees said they do believe someone in government sees their tweets, even if they do not respond. For example:

Just like me, when I tweeted Kimaiyo he did not reply directly, but he saw it. It was retweeted. Even if he’s not replying, the fact that its being retweeted you see you also feel like he’s seen it (Interviewee nr. 2).

Another explained:

Absolutely Twitter helps to get access to government officials. Now they are just a
tweet away (Interviewee nr. 7).

Five interviewees also said that they tweet at government officials even though they know nothing will be done in response to their tweets. Two people explained:

— It helps you relieve your frustration, and I think Kenyans are hopeful people. Maybe one day, they will actually do something (Interviewee nr. 13).
— In my view, rarely to people expect something to be done just because they tweeted (Interviewee nr. 8).

In sum, many interviewees were doubtful of the sincerity and responsiveness of government accounts. Despite this, however, the majority said they either would continue tweeting to government accounts, including the police and interior ministry, in order to raise awareness among their fellow Kenyans about issues they think are important or because they believe government officials do see their tweets, whether or not they respond. This result has interesting implications for the study, as it raises questions not considered in the initial research question. While this research set out to answer certain questions about the ways in which the police and ministry of interior were using twitter, and how that use was perceived among Kenyans, I did not expect Kenyan citizens to perceive value in tweets even if they did not believe the government would respond or act upon them. However, this result has interesting implications for the perceptions among interviewees regarding the future potential for Twitter as a tool for promoting transparency and fighting corruption.

Potential for Twitter as a tool for fighting bribery
Among the interviewees, many expressed optimism for the potential of Twitter to have an impact on the effects of police bribery and broader corruption problems, through two primary ways. First, tweeting anti-corruption messages (and reports of corruption) may encourage others to do the same. Second, if police officials signal that they are taking Twitter reports seriously, more people will tweet. Three interviewees specifically mentioned the rapid scaling effects of Twitter. One user, for example, explained his
thought-process:

It will begin with two people. Maybe three months down the lane it will be 1,000 people. And maybe by the end of December it will be 10,000 people complaining about a certain road or activity or process. So maybe those 10,000 will make the government act. Maybe perhaps one being the initiator, it will take a snowballing effect by December and then it will happen. I wouldn't give up. I wouldn't sit back and not do anything just because I know the government won't act. At least I did my best (Interviewee nr. 15).

While only three individuals mentioned this specific sentiment, seven interviewees said that they do believe Twitter has the potential to be used as a tool for fighting bribery, and believe current trends in using Twitter to report corruption are positive. However, even though the scaling impacts were mentioned, a wider subset of individuals expressed their belief that Twitter will not be an effective tool for fighting corruption and bribery unless officials are more responsive to reports of bribery via Twitter, including releasing information showing that they are following up on tweeted corruption reports, and possibly pursuing prosecution or discipline of the accused officers. For example:

I think if the police accounts, the IGKaimaiyo account, the Lenku account, including the president’s website on corruption, were actually responsive and show some kind of feedback that we are taking action on these things that you guys are tweeting about, I think it would become more widespread than it is right now. People still do take pictures now, and then I see some of those, you know, this is a cop somewhere on a certain road taking a bribe and then it's shared, and then Kimaiyo says they will take action, you know those generic responses. I think what is failing this whole aspect of corruption that can come in through social media is the kind of feedback that comes from the government, that they’re taking action on what people are posting and tweeting (Interviewee nr. 9).

When responding to reports via Twitter, the most common generic response from @IGKaimaiyo was “noted”. It is unclear what steps the police administrators took further to pursue an investigation of the officers accused. This lack of follow up has had a significant impact on the perceptions of the seriousness of Kimaiyo and other officials’ purported commitment to fighting corruption. It has also revealed an interesting attitude toward the
potential limits of digitally enabled activism (if this behaviour can be characterised as such), which remains dependent on the response of public officials to that activism.

In sum, despite expressing doubt about the current use of Twitter by Kenyan officials, many interviewees believe tweets from Kenyan citizens to officials are valuable, primarily because they believe their tweets will encourage others to tweet as well, which they hope will also spur even more people to tweet. However, many expressed that the effectiveness of this tactic will remain limited until public officials begin responding meaningfully to those tweets.

5. Analysis

Comparing the overall behaviour, interactivity, and tweet content of the four government accounts throughout the last four months of 2013, it appears that there is little coordination among them or an overall strategy that they are using. All four accounts tweeted heavily during the Westgate attack in September, but their Twitter activity either gradually or rapidly diminished in frequency toward the end of the year. In the case of the Kenya Police (@PoliceKE), they ceased tweeting altogether. (As of August 1, 2014, the account has sent just one retweet and no original tweets at all so far in 2014.)

While the account of the interior ministry (@InteriorKE) claimed it would be hosting regular Twitter chats, those chats also ended. Even when it was hosting chats, the information it provided was minimal and it often took a combative tone with Kenyans who tweeted questions to the account.

The account of Joe Lenku (@JoeLenku) remained inactive after the Westgate attack, sending just five tweets total in October and November. The account picked up slightly in December, but the tweets were primarily quotes from a speech he gave.

By far the most interactive account, measured in replies as a percentage of total tweets, mentions by other users, as well as mentions by interviewees, was the account of Inspector
General David Kimaiyo (@IGKimaiyo), as is evidenced in the word cloud. He replied most often to mentions by Kenyan Twitter users, and claimed he would act on at least 172 reports of corruption throughout the four months.

Viewed as a whole, the four accounts present a picture in line with what many interviewees perceived; that is, rather than being legitimate attempts to engage Kenyan citizens and provide them with a two-way communication platform, the accounts appear more suited as part of a public-relations strategy aimed at convincing Kenyans that the government is listening to them and wants to engage. The reality appears to show that the police and ministry of interior have not developed a comprehensive strategy toward their tweets, and are unprepared to either deal with conversations with Kenyans on Twitter or to respond to reports of bribery made through the platform.

However, only a small percentage of tweets mentioning the accounts appear to have been serious attempts at engaging, which also presents a challenge in line with what Upadhyay and Ilavarasan describe as “casual or meaningless discussions” (2011, 352) that require public officials managing Twitter accounts to sort through mountains of tweets not relevant to them in order to find, and possibly act upon, a small minority of tweets asking meaningful questions or relaying useful information. They conclude that this potential monitoring of tweets by officials responsible for managing the accounts (not necessarily the primary owner of the accounts, in the case of @IGKimaiyo and @JoeLenku) diminishes the potential of direct contact between citizens and the public officials they intend to contact. However, in this case, it appears that this monitoring is not happening, meaning that, rather than having contact with account managers, the Kenyan Twitter users may have no contact at all.

Although a number of interviewees expressed that they do believe government officials see their tweets even if they fail to respond, there is no evidence suggesting that is the case. Certainly my own experience attempting to code tweets by content reveals that finding meaningful tweets with which to engage may be difficult for public officials, even if their engagement attempts are sincere. The testimony of one Kenyan Twitter user, who claimed
that @IGKimaiyo blocked him following a corruption report made via Twitter, suggests that — if this is indicative of Kimaiyo’s approach to Twitter — he is not serious about his claims to desire to improve communication between citizens and officials via Twitter. In fact, Upadhyay and Ilavarasan’s research suggests that, in lieu of account managers sorting tweets in order to find those with which they can meaningfully engage, officials are ignoring or passing over most of the meaningful tweets in which they are mentioned.

Given this, it is not surprising that a majority of interviewees expressed scepticism about the sincerity of the government’s supposed efforts to use Twitter in order to fight corruption and allow citizens to both share their opinions and report corruption incidents. Both their behaviour and the opinions of those I spoke with suggest that, as one user put it, the effort is “to look cool”. Even measuring the effectiveness of the officials’ Twitter use as a public relations effort, it would appear they are failing. Very few users expressed confidence in their approach. Further evidence suggesting the public relations nature of Twitter effort is the fact that there are three existing pathways to report corruption anonymously online that the accounts do not regularly refer users to.

Despite this, the fact that @IGKimaiyo is at least responding to some users’ reports suggests that there may be potential in using Twitter as a real-time corruption tool; however, it may require a more concerted effort carried out through officials responsible specifically for responding to corruption reports and making sure those reports make it to the appropriate body (usually the EACC or the IPOA). In this sense, many interviewees identified this potential, but identified two potential barriers to this: First, Kenyan Twitter users may be discouraged from reporting if they do not believe action will be taken on those reports. Second, the government must actively respond to reports and carry out the necessary investigations, something that Kimaiyo, Lenku, the Kenya Police and Ministry of Interior have not demonstrated they are doing.

Despite this, interviewees expressed that they do believe Twitter does have the potential to aid in improving communication and decreasing bribery. However, many believe this will require the government to change its view of Twitter and take it more seriously as an anti-
corruption tool. Though, from a theoretical perspective, specifically addressing the assessment of corruption in Kenya as a collective action problem and the potential of new media to change the way in which citizens organise for collective action, focusing on specific incidents of corruption may not be as effective as wielding Twitter in order to encourage officials to be more responsive to reports made via existing and established channels. The focus on specific incidents may ultimately lessen the voices of citizens expressing their opinions and reporting corruption via Twitter: rather than speaking with one unified voice, citizens reporting individual incidents are lost in a sea of casual and meaningless interaction.

In this sense, the limits of Castells’ horizontal mass self-communication, at least in this specific context, are revealed. Despite the fact that Twitter users do have the potential to tweet about a corruption incident to their followers and public officials, they remain dependent on both the official to respond to the complaint in a meaningful way, and a broader collective action network that may or may not rally around their cause and demand the government act. As previously cited, Castells writes:

> The greater the autonomy of the communicating subjects vis-à-vis the controllers of societal communication nodes, the higher the chances for the introduction of messages challenging dominant values and interests in communication networks (2013, 412 my emphasis).

Even though tweets reporting specific incidents are able to challenge the interests of the police officer demanding a bribe or otherwise misbehaving, thus far the strategy appears ineffective in developing long-term opposition to corruption, especially police bribery.

Returning to Mungui-Pippidi’s work on fighting corruption through collective action, she highlights the need for “normative constraints, so that these corruption fighters no longer remain isolated and exceptional” (2013, 114). It remains unclear whether highlighting corruption incidents on Twitter, especially directly to public officials via @-mentions, is effective. Thus, in order to establish such a collective action network, it may be necessary for such corruption reporting tweets to be linked to a larger movement or collective action network committed to exposing police misbehaviour and advocating corruption reform.
While efforts like IPaidABribe.or.ke, current Twitter trends, the IPOA, and the EACC provide platforms for Kenyans to report corruption incidents, they do not facilitate advocacy via collective action networks, encouraging Kenyans to refuse to pay bribes or for more long-term anti-bribery reform. Drawing from the research of Persson et al. and Mungui-Pippidi, a network-based collective-action approach that not only reveals corruption incidents to followers and public officials, but also advocates for specific anti-corruption reform efforts, including encouraging Kenyan citizens who encounter bribery situations to refuse to engage in corruption, may be more effective. Thus far, public officials do not appear to have responded meaningfully to reports of corruption made via Twitter, and interviewees acknowledged that method’s reliance on active responses from public officials.

Although Castells’ mass self-communication does occur on Twitter, by remaining reliant on government officials for its efficacy, this approach is self-limiting. It has also thus far failed to develop a long-term sustainable collective-action network, perhaps due in part to its focus on incidents, rather than long-term reform.

Persson et al. advocate for an approach to corruption that does not just highlight incidents of corruption and ask public officials to respond and punish corrupt officials, but instead argue for the importance of “chang[ing] actors’ beliefs about what ‘all’ other actors are likely to do so that most actors expect most other actors to play fairly” (2013, 464). This is in addition to an approach that fixes the incentives for engaging in corruption, which in the case of police bribery in Kenya would change the rewards for engaging or refusing to engage in corruption. Utilising their approach, Twitter use, which develops long-term collective action networks, not only shares anti-corruption messages and highlights incidents where citizens face bribery, but highlights incidents in which citizens face bribery and refuse to engage in it.

While citizens may be able to utilise Twitter to develop collective action networks dedicated to promoting individuals who refuse to engage in bribery, Persson et al. also indicate that sustainable change takes action from top-level government officials as well.
Writing on countries that have transitioned from corrupt to less-corrupt systems, they explain:

[T]he new rules of the game reached far beyond the existence of formal monitoring and sanctioning mechanisms to include also shared expectations holding that most other people could in fact be trusted to be honest. In particular, countries that have successfully transferred from corrupt to less corrupt systems of rule seem to share the characteristic that actors at the very top of the system—that is, high-level public officials—have served as role models (2013, 465).

Taking this into account, the apparent failure of police and ministry of interior officials to convince Kenyan Twitter users that they are acting seriously on corruption not only fails to contribute to decreasing bribery, it actually contributes to the entrenchment of existing corruption practices by discouraging citizens actively interested in fighting corruption from continuing to resist.

**Results**

This section contains summaries of the results, specifically addressing the individual research questions.

First, regarding the extent to which the four selected, Kenyan police and authority Twitter accounts have been used to expose or combat corruption, activity by the four Twitter accounts may be more damaging to anti-corruption efforts than it is helpful. By tweeting anti-corruption messages yet failing to respond sincerely, they are discouraging Twitter users from reporting corruption. Even though it would be beneficial for them to respond meaningfully to reports and complaints, a more long-term solution may be to integrate efforts on Twitter with existing corruption reporting platforms, including that of the EACC and IPOA, which are also required to report the number of complaints they receive and the number of investigations they carry out. Additionally, my hypothesis that the four accounts would contain relatively consistent themes and messages has proven to be false. In order for the four accounts to maintain consistent messaging, content, and themes, there would have likely been coordination and planning as to how the individual accounts would be used, which does not appear to be the case.
Second, while some Kenyans are engaging with the accounts in a meaningful way, including attempting to report corruption incidents, officials are not responding consistently to reports and most interactions. This is in part due to the large amount of content that is either not related to corruption reporting or difficult for officials to respond to because of the large volume of tweets. This is consistent with my hypothesis. However, a long-term strategy focused on encouraging Kenyans to refuse to engage in corruption and highlighting incidents in which Kenyans refuse bribery offers would likely be more effective.

Third, the perceptions among interviewees of the way in which the police and interior ministry officials are using Twitter are widely sceptical. The vast majority believe that officials are not using the platform seriously, and rather than using it to collect information, they believe officials are using it for public relations and information-sharing purposes. This is contrary to my hypothesis, which was based on an initial examination of exchanges between Kenyan Twitter users and public officials. Despite evidence that Kimaiyo does respond to some corruption reports and complaints, it does not appear that those reports and complaints are followed up upon by officials.

Finally, despite revealing problems associated with current efforts in Kenya to fight police corruption via Twitter engagement, this research shows that Twitter remains a powerful tool for increasing the communication power of citizens relative to public officials. This is consistent with my hypothesis. Although attempts to engage with public officials in a way that forces them to respond meaningfully to individual tweets has so far proven ineffective, a citizen-initiated strategy that encourages the development of collective-action networks focused on long-term change and refusing to engage in bribery would address the collective-action problem as described by Mungui-Pippidi (2013) and Persson et al. (2013).
Potential Research Limitations
If I had had the opportunity to redesign this research, I would have interviewed more Kenyan Twitter users, as well as provided a better overview of the profiles of Kenyans interacting with public officials through Twitter. This would have allowed for a more scientifically sound analysis of the opinions of Kenyan Twitter users regarding their perceptions of the four official accounts. Additionally, it may have been possible to design a more comprehensive approach to analysing the tweets from Kenyan Twitter users to the four accounts, taking into account the large volume of difficult-to-follow conversations and tweets that involve the official accounts.

Finally, while analyzing the four accounts from the interior ministry and police did allow for a comparison of their tweets and revealed that there is no coherent strategy among them, comparing the police accounts at the national level to local efforts would have provided useful data for furthering the research of Upadhyay and Ilavarasan, which compared local and national-level social media efforts from public officials. For example, Chief Francis Kariuki (@chiefkariuki), a police official in Nakuru, Kenya using Twitter for community policing, could have provided a useful comparison to the Twitter use of Inspector General Kimaiyo.

6. Conclusion
This research attempted to tie together existing academic work on ICT4D, mass-self communication, as well as corruption research focused on developing collective-action networks. While Bertot et al. found an overall a positive correlation between ICT diffusion and a reduction in corruption, I attempted to examine corruption and ICT diffusion in a more specific context, specifically the use of Twitter by Kenyan citizens to fight corrupt police practices through Twitter-based corruption reporting. Although this process-oriented approach was difficult, and ultimately found that current efforts in Kenya to fight corruption through Twitter do not appear to be making measurable progress, my approach revealed certain challenges to current practices, as well as highlighted ways in which citizens in Kenya may change their approach in order to provide greater independence
from officials, by creating collective-action networks dedicated to long-term change rather than addressing specific incidents.

Twitter remains a tool that citizens can use to better their communication power and ultimately challenge existing paradigms and dominant messages being promulgated by public officials. While using Twitter to report specific incidents of police corruption in Kenya appears to have been thus far ineffective, it remains a tool that has been employed by activists in other contexts to mobilise around specific causes and demand the government act. By developing collective-action networks focused on sustaining long-term change in behaviours by police officials and citizens alike, Kenyans may be able to challenge the current paradigm without requiring action by officials in order to make their voices heard.

This does not excuse officials — who thus far appear to not be taking Twitter seriously — from accountability. Rather, by unifying around specific causes rather than asking officials to respond to individual incidents, citizens would ultimately increase their own communication power by speaking with a unified voice.

In linking the existing understanding of overall ICT diffusion as correlating to a reduction in corruption with research focused specifically on how citizens interact with governments and the importance of collective-action networks in combating corruption, I hope to have demonstrated that such research is not only useful, but feasible. By examining communication processes at the micro level, I was able to identify specific problems with current new media-based approaches to corruption in Kenya, and provide potential solutions to existing problems.

Similar research in other countries that may have used Twitter or other new media platforms effectively would provide further understanding of both corruption-fighting initiatives and new media-based initiatives that increase mass self-communication and provide the means to developing sustainable collective-action networks.
Bibliography


Additional Resources

Interview Guide

Interviews were conducted in Nairobi between April 11-19, 2014, in various cafes and offices, apart from three that were conducted via Skype or over the phone. While all interviews followed the same general structure outlined below, the order and wording of questions varied. This method is consistent with that outlined by Holstein and Gubrium in their 1995 book *The Active Interview*.

**First section, regarding personal Twitter use and public officials**

What social media sites do you use regularly?
What do you use them for?
How often do you tweet?
What do you tweet about?
Do you ever go on Twitter just to see what others are tweeting about, but don’t tweet yourself?
What kinds of people or organisations do you follow on Twitter?
What types of tweets from others do you find most interesting?
Do you follow any Twitter accounts operated by politicians or the government? Which ones?
ALTERNATIVE: What types of government or political Twitter accounts do you follow?
Have you ever used Twitter to communicate with the government? If so, who have you communicated with?
Do you think Twitter could potentially be used to change the way people interact with politicians and government? Is this change for the better?

**Second section, regarding corruption in Kenya**

Do you think corruption is a problem in Kenya?
If so, what types of corrupt actions are people engaging in?
If you saw corruption happening, would you use or have you ever used Twitter to report it?
Do you think most people in Kenya would do so?
Why or why not?
Which government bodies do you think are most corrupt?
Do you think the government is doing enough to fight corruption?
What types of things are they doing?
What do you think they should be doing?

**Third section, regarding activism**

Have you ever participated in an online campaign like #JusticeForLiz?
Do you know anyone who has?
Would you ever be interested in joining an online action or protest via social media?
What types of issues do you care most about?
Have you ever participated in a protest, online or on the street, related to any of these issues?