

EXAMINING TWITTER POLITICAL DISCOURSE IN KENYA: THE CASE OF
#ELECTIONSKE2017 DURING THE 2017 ELECTIONS

By

DENVER N. OCHIENG

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Communication, Cinematics & Creative Arts in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Communication Studies

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY – AFRICA

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, institution or university other than the United States International University in Nairobi for academic credit.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

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APPROVAL PAGE

In accordance with United States International University-Africa policies, this thesis is accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Communication Studies.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge God for his constant guidance and for empowering me to grow throughout my studies. I would also like to acknowledge my supervisor, Dr. Lucy Gichaga, whose constant counsel and patience guided me toward completion of my thesis, and she continued motivating me to fearlessly pursue my academic journey. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the faculty at the School Communication, Cinematics & Creative Arts who have inspired and challenged me to bravely achieve academic excellence through thought-provoking lectures and inspiring academic consultations; may God continue blessing all the lecturers who have witnessed my growth over the years.

I must also acknowledge my mother, siblings, and friends for constantly motivating me during the hard times and pressuring me to constantly do better. This degree is not a one man journey; it is a reflection of the company that I keep around me. Thank you.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this paper to my mother, Ms Robi Koki Ochieng, who has tirelessly supported me and constantly pushed me to be better. Your academic journey has not only inspired me to dream and think bigger, but has challenged me to go above and beyond to reach my goal. May God continue blessing you.

I also dedicate this paper to my siblings, Myra Ochieng and Paul Odhiambo, for tolerating me and my life-changing journey. May this achievement inspire you to continue being great.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IEBC	:	Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission
NACOSTI	:	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
USIU-A:	:	United States International University Africa
KOT	:	Kenyans on Twitter
API	:	Application Programming Interface
ET:	:	Equality Themes
IT:	:	Inclusivity Themes
PI	:	Problematization of Issues

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Equality: This refers to a situation in which different social groups in similar social positions are presented with similar opportunities and rights/treatment (Cambridge University Press, 2019). In this context, equality refers to the expression of issues pertaining to equality as operationalized in the codebook and its subsequent impact on Kenyan online political discourse in regard to Twitter as a public sphere platform.

Inclusivity: This is defined as the act of accommodating different social groups or individuals with the intent of treating them all fairly and equally (Cambridge University Press, 2019). In this context, inclusivity refers to the expression of issues pertaining to inclusivity as operationalized in the codebook and its subsequent impact on Kenyan online political discourse in regard to Twitter as a public sphere platform.

Problematization of Issues: This is defined as the process of calling into question the status of something that was previously considered unquestioned (Suffern, 2019). In this context, problematization of issues refers to the expression of problematized issues as operationalized in the codebook and its impact on Kenyan online political discourse in regard to Twitter as a public sphere platform.

Political discourse: These are points of conversation in regard to a political context (Blitvich, 2010). In this case, political discourse refers to the expression of opinion, through tweets, pertaining to political issues in the context of Twitter as a public sphere platform.

Cyberspace: This is defined as a time-dependent set of interconnected information systems and the human users that interact with these systems (Ottis & Lorents, 2011). In the context of this study, cyberspace refers to online platforms in which Kenyan online political discourse occurs.

Cyber Culture: This is a wide social and cultural movement that is closely linked to advanced information and communication technologies, their emergence and development, and their cultural colonization (Macek, 2005). In terms of the study, cyber culture refers to the culture developed by Kenyans to express themselves through online platforms.

Microblogging: Twitter is a microblogging site built to enhance conversations/discourse through the use of short messages (tweets). In this case, Twitter is viewed as a public sphere platform used to enhance Kenyan online political discourse. A microblog is defined as a web platform which fills a gap between blogging and instant messaging, allowing people to publish short messages on the web about what they are currently doing (Passant, Hastrup, Bojars, & Breslin, 2008). In terms of the study, microblogs refers to Twitter as a platform.

Thematic Areas: A theme is defined as, "...an implicit topic that organizes a group of repeating ideas." (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016). With this in mind, thematic areas are defined as emergent areas or topics which are aggregated based on topics of interest derived from big data. In this case, thematic areas refer to themes as defined within the study and their impact on Kenyan online political discourse.

Public Sphere: Is defined as the central arena for societal communication; it is further conceived as a space where opinions are expressed, problems of societal concern are discussed, and collected solutions are developed communicatively (Wessler & Freudenthaler, 2018). In terms of the study, public sphere refers to Twitter as a public sphere space for online political discourse.

Electioneering Period: Electioneering is defined as the act of convincing people to vote for a certain political ideology or political party (Cambridge University Press, 2019). In the context of the study, the electioneering period is the period within which the elections process began, from

the voter registration process to the campaigns and the eventual inauguration of Kenya's president on November 28, 2017.

Hashtag: A hashtag is defined as, "...a marker of meta data, which is a set of data that describes and gives information about other data." (Shapp, 2014). In the context of the study, a hashtag is not only a marker to other users talking about the elections as defined as a scope, it is also used as branding of Kenyans on Twitter who were actively talking about the election.

ABSTRACT

As a result of high internet penetration in Kenya, political discourse has slowly shifted to cyberspace effectively forming online public spheres. With this in mind, this study sought to examine themes of inclusivity, equality and problematization of issues on Twitter during the Kenyan 2016/2017 elections using the hashtag #electionske2017. The study used the public sphere theory by Jurgen Habermas to examine political conversations of Kenyans on Twitter. To accomplish this, the study applied a quantitative research approach and used content analysis to analyze a random sample of 3,000 tweets collected over a period of 1 year, 11 months. Results indicated that 56% of the tweets analyzed contributed toward Twitter as a public sphere, therefore qualifying Twitter as a viable public sphere platform. Out of the 56% of tweets which contributed toward a public sphere, 87% sought to problematize issues, 11% touched on issues to do with equality, and 2% touched on issues to do with inclusivity. This indicates that although Twitter can be harnessed toward being a healthy public sphere, it requires more inclusive discourse and views from different social groups need to be given an equal opportunity to be discussed. The study recommends that Twitter users need to not only analyze political actions by different stakeholders, but also have to include more perspectives and equally analyze the issues expressed by “weaker” social groups. The study recommends that further studies be carried out on the nature of sentimentality of views expressed and that academia should find a way to engage with Twitter to enable easier access to historical data.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Online Political Discourse

Over time, social media has increasingly had an effect on political discourse, digital platforms have had significant influence of political narratives the world over, and more often than not the influence has been negative in nature (Bolter, 2019). With this in mind, it is essential to understand what political discourse is. By definition, political discourse is defined as the active participation of all political participants, part of which involves dialogue and debate over issues pertaining to governance of a state (Blitvich, 2010).

The information age has not only revolutionized how we communicate with each other, but has also inspired behavioral change among participants of the cyber culture, resulting into social and political revolutions as a result of online political discourse. Eltantawy and Wiest (2011) noted that there was a positive correlation between the success of the anti-government protests in Egypt and the eventual stepping down of the country's then leader, Muhammad Hosni El Sayed Mubarak. In fact, social media, specifically through microblogging social networking sites such as Twitter, helped push the resistance agenda through an already networked public. Social media effectively became the public sphere where socio-political grievances could be discussed, effectively creating online platforms for political discourse. Ranney (2014) noted that the reason as to why the Occupy Wall Street movement enjoyed worldwide success was through galvanizing messaging which was primarily shared and distributed through social media. This underscores how important social media has become in regard to mobilizing individuals toward following a social movement and ideologies, and in driving action, and therefore drives online political discourse.

Dutta and Bhat (2016) argue that the reason as to why this is so is due to the fact that above and beyond the shared underlying motivation for a shared point of contention, social media has the power and ability to actively recruit members, and these online spaces enable debate over matters of public interest, effectively fostering online political discourse and the resultant public sphere. Hamilton (2016) noted that social media was a key element in the Black Lives Matter movement and was essential to the overall success of the movement which affected viable change in the law enforcement arm of governance.

The fact that cyberspace creates a virtual meeting space (public sphere) where the public can freely express themselves without fear or favor creates a band wagon effect. This discourse is in view of the fact that social movements are not created by one variable but by a set of variables which create an interaction effect which expedite the mobilization process (Lopes, 2014). Additionally, Stark, Hyll, and Behrens (2009) argue that social media as an information distribution channel is effective due to the fact that as a medium, social media is the fastest and cheapest in comparison to other forms of information distribution channels. These factors set a precedent as to why microblogs (such as Twitter) are extremely important in modern day mobilization of social movements and resultant political discourse that happen on these platforms. This is one of the reasons as to why social networking sites are now considered the new public sphere.

Based on this outlook, and the rising popularity of microblogging sites such as Twitter in regard to political discourse, one would assume that discussion/debate amongst a networked society is engaging and participatory in nature, especially in regard to political issues. The internet has effectively enabled engagement between different socio political classes. Stewart (2017) asserts

that Twitter is a valuable platform especially in regard to gaining novel perspectives in respect to a specific phenomenon.

Guenauer (2016) notes that use of social media enabled new narratives in election campaigns in Meghalaya and as a result it may have altered public discussions and how campaigns were conducted. This underscores how important social media is in political discourse and how shifting online discussions can become in influencing political decisions.

Given this influence one has to wonder whether this influence comes from engaging and participatory discourse and whether this discourse is influenced by overarching political beliefs or agenda. Poulakidakos and Veneti (2016) note that online political discourse (on Twitter) especially from political parties had propagandistic messaging which followers then shared and debated on. If the source of political messaging (political parties) use propaganda rhetoric online to engage with different socio political classes and stakeholders, it is then paramount for scholars to analyse the nature of online political discourse and seek to understand context, engagement and eventual effect of online political discourse and whether online platforms are viable public spheres.

Kasenally and Awatar (2017) noted that during the 2014 Mauritius election, a lot of content that was analyzed on social media was repurposed content from traditional media sources, with a small percentage of content being produced for the purpose of distribution on social media. The study also noted there was no engagement and in fact a lot of communication that occurred was one-way communication. In regard to sentimentality, the tone of messaging was generally negative. This study seeks to understand whether similar instances were experienced during the Kenyan 2016/2017 electioneering period and whether Twitter as a platform was a viable public sphere.

Kamau (2014) noted that social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter had the ability to inspire engagement on political discourse and to encourage democratic conversations of Nairobi youth, if used correctly. This underscores the power of social media on political discourse. Odinga (2013) reiterates the power of social networking sites and new media in general in regard to political discourse in Kenya especially during the 2007 and 2013 elections. She also noted that new media increased citizen participation that was not present before which empowered Kenyans however, the level of democratization within the democratic process of election was not increased. This study sought to establish whether similar trends emerged in regard to thematic areas of online Kenyan political discourse during the 2017 electioneering period by use of the hashtag *#elections2017ke* on Twitter so as to establish whether Twitter as a platform qualified to be a viable public sphere.

1.2 Kenyans on Twitter

As established, Twitter is increasingly being used in political discourse between all established political actors, recently this influence has been noted in major elections such as the recent American elections (Yaqub, Chun, Atluri, & Vaidya, 2017). This scenario is also played out in Kenya as Kenyans are increasingly using Twitter as a political discourse platform (Gitonga, 2015). However, to gain more understanding of political discourse and Kenyan elections one has to understand the context with which elections are carried out in Kenya.

Historically, Kenyan politics has been very polarizing; this has been as a result of historical tribal prejudice, increase in poverty gap and lack of proper legal and political structure especially in regard to the electioneering process. Wanjiku (2017) ascertains that ethnicity adversely affects political functions in Kenya and the existent legal structures and bodies set out to mitigate this issue are not strong enough to execute this function. Kanyinga (2014) notes that historically,

electioneering periods have turned violent tracing back as far as 1992 when multi party politics was introduced. He further notes that long-standing governance issues are contributing factors to violence experienced during electioneering periods, which can be indicative of an increase in poverty gap amongst other issues which Kenyans seek to rectify during elections as a democratic function.

Electioneering periods in Kenya have historically been violent as a result of the reasons mentioned above and also, in part, as a result of media practices which catalyze violent behavior. Given the advent of social media and the gradual shift of the public sphere gravitating toward the online space, this study sought to explore political discourse on Twitter during the Kenyan electioneering period of 2016/2017 under the hashtag #electionske2017 to establish emergent themes of equality, inclusivity and problematization of issues whose combination institute a healthy and viable public sphere.

Riess (2017) on his study on how digital media influenced politics and political discourse in Kenya during the 2013 electioneering period noted that, "...the expression of existing ethnical prejudices still in existence shifted to the social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter." He also noted that, "In nearly every ethnical conversation one could find mediating comments, for example: "Lets shun our tribal affiliation for national unity but remain partisan in ideology for political diversity...Let's give hatred a break" or "Admin stop spreading statements which may trigger violence, this is not the appropriate time for making such comments. Solve the problem don't be a problem." A lot of users tried to pacify the arguments and to mediate between the commenters." Given this outlook, this study sought to explore online political discourse during the 2017 Kenyan electioneering period to establish whether the same trends emerged during the

recently concluded elections and to also draw thematic areas around online political discourse in Kenyan politics during the electioneering period.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Online political discourse between political actors—both vertically and horizontally—has of late been increasingly anchored on Twitter (Jungherr, Schoen, & Jürgens, 2016). However, the potential for these conversations to get polarizing and even steer away from issues is real (Bolter, 2019), and these effects can not only be seen on Twitter but can move from online spaces to the real world. As such this furthers the need to study if Twitter as a platform is a viable public sphere for political discourse in Kenya to determine the communicative value of discourse on Twitter seeing as the discussions on these platforms can influence offline political action.

One major advantages that Social Media offers in regard to tracking of political discussion is that general sentimentality and thematic areas can be tracked in real time and be retraced as historical data due to the fact that social media aggregates data or topics based on shared interests, also, meta tags such as hash tags can be used as functional tools used to aggregate related topics (Lipshultz, 2018). Given this function sentiment on electoral tensions could be traced back and be tracked in real time and mitigating measures by different electoral stakeholders can use this information to inform subsequent steps. Bandipo (2016) argues that new media and its ability to effectively disseminate information played a key role in avoiding post electoral violence in Nigeria's 2015 election this was due to the fact that new media technologies enabled visualization of the country's social challenges in an empirical format. Key variables were able to be tracked and sentimentality could also be tracked in real time. This insight puts emphasis on the fact that it is important to study emergent online political discourse trends during the 2016/2017 elections so as to monitor emergent themes which will help scholars and all stakeholders in Kenyan elections

to come up with measures to enhance political discourse so as to enhance democratic conversation on the platform.

Engaging and participatory political discourse has the ability to not only effect change but help the public to engage and discuss on vital issues, tensions and common or varied points of contention. Given the fact that social media is now considered the new public sphere it will be interesting to investigate whether there is interactive participation and engagement between different socio political classes. Poulakidakos and Veneti (2016) sought to examine whether there was participatory political discourse on twitter between Greek politicians, counterparts and their constituents/public at large. The duo noted that, "... neither the examined Greek politicians and parties nor their constituents exploited the new platform in order to immerse themselves in an interlocutory environment." The study sought to analyze whether the same trend was emergent during the 2016/2017 Kenyan electioneering period so as to critically analyze online political discourse and research further on how to increase effectiveness of such platforms in regard to interactive engagement on sociopolitical issues.

Tully and Ekdale (2014) note that above and beyond the fact that Twitter is a space where Kenyans get to engage with fellow Kenyans, the platform can also be used to critically analyze and push development agenda. They cited the #occupyparliament Twitter hashtag which was used by the citizenry to communicate displeasure of MP's move to increase salary and benefits despite Kenya's financial position. Through the hashtag, Kenyans eventually demonstrated in protest of parliament's lack of consideration of the public's opinion. This study sought to give insight on whether issues were critically analyzed by citizenry on Twitter so as to legitimize Twitter as a viable space where all political participants can problematize issues effectively contributing toward a healthy public sphere.

The study sought to examine emergent themes of political discourse on Twitter during the electioneering period of 2016/2017 to not only support the notion that networked information comes together to form highly integrated systems but also study the logic of how digital information affects society and how information is the most essential resource in production and consumption in the digital space. The study also underscores how cyber culture is pervasive in all aspects of communication and influence. The study sought to support the notion of the pervasive nature of the digital space and the resultant influence that cyber culture now has in all aspects of life including socio political discourse (Terranova, 2016). As such, this study sought to explore the attributes of conversations on Twitter on political discourse during the Kenyan electioneering period of 2016/2017 so as to establish whether Twitter is a viable public sphere.

1.4 Study Purpose Statement

The study seeks to examine the frequency of themes of Inclusivity, Equality and Problematization of issues on Twitter, by content related to the hashtag *#electionske2017*, during the Kenyan 2016/2017 so as to determine whether Twitter is a viable public sphere platform.

1.5 Study Objectives

As such the study puts forth the following objectives:

1. To analyze problematization of issues on Twitter, by use of *#electionske2017*, during the 2016/2017 Kenyan elections in regard to how it shaped Kenyan online political discourse.
2. To highlight themes of equality on Twitter, by use of *#electionske2017*, during the 2016/2017 Kenyan elections in regard to how it shaped Kenyan online political discourse.

3. To examine themes of inclusivity on Twitter, by use of *#electionske2017*, during the 2017 Kenyan elections in regard to how it shaped Kenyan online political discourse.

1.6 Study Rationale

The theoretical basis of this study is anchored on the Public Sphere theory by Jurgen Habermas in 1962, which seeks to define the public sphere as a communicative space where healthy public political discourse can be conducted (Habermas, 1989). Over time the theory has developed to virtual spaces (online spaces) effectively forming online public spheres, supporting the necessary conditions for healthy debate that develop from conversations due to engagement on cyberspace by a networked society (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). This study examines the influence and power of a networked society during Kenyan elections based on the fact that Kenya has the highest internet penetration in Africa (Workman, 2017). The study advances these assumptions in a recent Kenyan election perspective. The study seeks to inspire future research on the impact and influence of a networked society in a pervasive manner, quite specifically in regard to political discourse and influence. It seeks to inspire further research in to analysis of online sociopolitical discussions and what these discussions mean to communicators and scholars alike, in regard to how to effectively the use of these platforms inspires constructive engagement, conversations and participation. The study sought to put into focus the value of social media as a platform for expression of political ideas.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study seeks to investigate sentimentality and thematic areas that arise from online political discourse on Twitter during the 2017 electioneering period. Twitter was chosen as the ideal platform of study due to the fact that Twitter as a platform has the ability to enable a public sphere because the platform empowers politically engaging average citizens to express themselves and promotes citizen journalism between different sociopolitical classes. Also, the platform has the ability to facilitate for one to one and one to many communication models which was easily accessible to various sociopolitical classes (Carpenter, 2010).

The study period is 1 year 11 month (January 2016-November 2017) because of the heightened political engagement during this time between voter registration in January 2016, the eventual election on August 8, 2017, the repeat elections on October 26, 2017 and the eventual inauguration of president Uhuru Kenyatta on November 28, 2017 (Appendix A). During this time democracy was put to test and political discourse was healthy seeing as Kenyan were carefully examining the Kenyan electoral body (IEBC) throughout the election period. The study uses #electionske2017 due to the fact that during the study period under review, the hashtag was used most to express opinions on ongoing events which resulted to this particular hashtag trending most during and even after the period under review. Also, the term Ke and the year 2017 was used in the hashtag under study (#electionske2017) for spatial location purposes to ensure that the election period under scrutiny was 2017 and that the Kenyan election in particular (represented by the term Ke) was the context within which the study was conducted. Buchel & Pennington (2017) asserts that this helps streamline search queries to ensure that data mined is line with research objectives.

The inclusion criteria will be mining and examining tweets data under the hash tag #electionske2017. This excludes non-related information that may be tagged to that hash tag such as advertisers who try to get salience on the platform through the said hashtag.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The study puts forth three limitations, namely:

1. The study only investigated one hashtag, which may not be representative of other conversations that went on within Twitter. Conversations not referenced under the hashtag may dynamically add other aspects which this study may not capture in regard to online political discourse.
2. The study only investigated one platform (Twitter) which may not be representative of the whole spectrum of online Kenyan political discourse
3. The study period was not able to fully capture sentiments of Kenyans on Twitter during the whole electioneering period (early 2016 to late 2017) as the access to this data on Twitter is limited.

1.9 Assumptions of the study

The study assumes that subsequent conversations on Twitter with the hashtag are part of Kenyan political dialogue. Also, that users who tweeted are in Kenya. The study assumes that the people participating in the #ElectionsKE2017 hash tag participate on conversations on Twitter in regard to national debates. It goes on to assume that spectators on Twitter add gravity to online political discourse by the mere fact that they are online and are aware of the issues expressed. The research assumes that followers on Twitter believe that conversations on Twitter are a credible

source of information. This will help the study draw insights on patterns of conversations on Twitter. The study also assumes that social media users are not unique participants, some participants may be corporates trying to gain salience and some users may be bots.

1.10 Chapter Summary

The study explored the attributes of conversations on twitter on political discourse during the Kenyan electioneering period of 2016/2017. The study is important as it adds knowledge to networked societies and the impact of new media on society and is able to examine whether online discussions are constructive or whether online discourse is simply a reflection of offline discussions especially in regard to political discourse during the Kenyan electioneering period. Also, little research has been conducted on thematic areas resulting from online political discourse on Kenyan elections and whether these conversations are positive in regard to the quality of democratic conversations on Twitter. This study helps researchers identify channels which can be used for political discourse. The study also helps IEBC, civil society and human rights bodies to employ the right channels for positive political discourse so that the country can advance politically.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

As with any other form of academic research this study is based on literature pertaining to the topic of interest. As such this chapter seeks to define the public sphere in an online context. The chapter will also look at the available resources on political discourse on online public spheres. Literature will primarily be centered on Jurgen Habermas's public sphere theory and how the same is being applied in Kenya's online political discourse.

2.2 Public Sphere Theory

The Public Sphere theory was proposed by Jurgen Habermas in his treatise "The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere; An Inquiry into the Category of Bourgeois Society" which describes the public sphere as a critical communicative space where private people come together as a public to debate and engage with public authorities over crucial issues that guide general rules and governing relations (Habermas, 1989). Simply put Habermas views the public sphere as a space where different stakeholders, within a democratic governance set up, are able to engage and exchange ideas with the main aim of establishing governance rules and ways of relating with different stakeholders. Initially this space was reserved for elites otherwise known as the bourgeois public sphere however this was in a 17th century European historical context where the audience was spectative and not active in these debates as they were carried out in public spaces such as coffee houses or town halls.

However, as information and telecommunication technologies advanced, political discourse became more inclusive of public opinion through mass media and the public sphere shifted toward inclusion of more stakeholders such as the media who acted in the interest of the public. In this

sense, journalists and public actors who journalists deem fit were considered as modern versions of the elites (Habermas, 2006). However, this was not in view of competing interests within the mass media space between social and societal responsibilities and profit motivations.

Bruns and Highfield (2015) argue that given the fact that various questions have been raised on the integrity of the public sphere as a critique to the theory, especially during the mass media phase of the theory, the duo note that with the advent of various other platforms of expression such as social media the public sphere is now more fragmented than ever based on mutual interests and aggregation of content based on user interests. They further note that these ‘sphericles’ have the ability to form an online public sphere if different sphericles interact with each other on matters of common interest. This type of interaction constitutes for an online public sphere within twitter as a platform however, this only represents a fraction of the total realm of online public spheres.

Gimmler (2001) noted that the public sphere is based on the core propositions that a public sphere, “...highlights the role of open discussion, the importance of citizen participation and the existence of a well-functioning public sphere...”. This study also noted that based on these propositions the internet could fit into the concept of a public sphere and could influence the quality of political debates. Recently Su (2016) supported this notion by noting that the digital revolution has the potential of creating a form of a virtual public sphere which encouraged discourse between both the state and online democratic forces.

Given the fact that Habermas theories the public sphere as a communicative space between individuals and the public governance arm of a democracy, he further institutionalized this space along 3 institutional criteria. These criteria include equality, problematization of unquestioned areas and principle inclusiveness.

Boulianne (2015) noted a positive correlation between social media use and participation in civic and political life this is indicative of the communicative space that social media is if viewed as a public sphere. Coleman and Freelon (2015) support this notion by noting that social media has become increasingly important in mediation and medialization of political practice therefore asserting social media as a viable public sphere. This study seeks to explore whether Kenyan online political discourse on Twitter is communicative in nature and whether it can be a viable healthy public sphere.

2.3 Public Sphere Theory Constructs

2.3.1 Equality

Equality is defined as the act of ensuring that individuals are not treated differently in any way as a result of their sex, age, social or financial standing (University of Edinburgh, 2016). From a governance perspective all stakeholders within a democracy should be treated equally and no one is above the law. Within a public sphere, views from all these stakeholders are treated with the same importance and engaging debate between all these players should be a key variable within a healthy public sphere.

Contextually, the early public sphere, which were physical spaces, served as platforms where the elite met and debated on matters art, literature, culture and politics, however, these platforms were highly segregated. As time passed and social justice pressure grew among these platforms for equality of different points of view, equality came to the forefront of public sphere discussion. As such the public sphere viewed arguments based on the merits of an argument and not on pre supposed notions of the debater. This became an important criterion for a viable and healthy public sphere.

Habermas (1989) noted that a public sphere, "... preserved a kind of social intercourse that, far from pre-supposing the equality of status, disregarded status altogether.", he further noted that debate on a public sphere was based on, "... the authority of the better argument could assert itself against that of social hierarchy and in the end can carry the day...". This cemented the notion of equality being an important criterion for a healthy public sphere.

This study examined the viability of Twitter, as an online public sphere, so as to establish whether views from individuals who are disempowered within the community were encompassed. Data gathered gave insight into the frequency with which issues of the disempowered were covered within Kenyan online political discourse.

2.3.2 Inclusivity

Inclusivity is defined as the act of creating an environment where all people feel valued and have access to similar opportunities as every other individual (Riordan, 2014). Within a democratic set up inclusivity means that all stakeholders within a democracy are valued and have similar opportunities to access services and resources.

Historically, the public sphere was only reserved to an "exclusive" elite which effectively hindered this opportunity to other individuals, whose input may have enriched the debate. However, with increased social justice pressure and the public sphere effectively evolving from being a physical space to a virtual space, inclusivity became a key criterion to a healthy public sphere.

Habermas (1989) noted that, "... issues discussed became "general" not merely in their significance, but also in their accessibility: everyone had to be able to participate.". He noted that even as the early public sphere was only reserved for the elite, the debate was done so in view of the general public. Discussions between private individuals was in view of the larger public in

regard to context. This reiterated the importance of inclusivity as a critical tenant of a healthy public sphere.

This study to analyzed whether Twitter as a public sphere platform really held and valued views across a cross section of Kenyans with different backgrounds. Seeing as Kenya has the highest internet penetration in Africa, with a majority of the population accessing these platforms via mobile phone devices (Omondi, 2018), the study sought to note if views expressed really constitute for a healthy and inclusive public sphere in Kenya, where views and opinions from people of different backgrounds are expressed and considered/included within debate.

2.3.3 Problematization of Unquestioned Areas

Problematization of unquestioned areas (Issues) is defined as the ability of the public to critically assess and analyse issues based on the merits and demerits of the issue at hand. Historically, this function was left to institutions such as the court for interpretation and debate however, with the advent of capitalism more people had access to information which in turn put the public in a position to be able to critically analyse issues and question preset constructs and challenge them based on an issues' merit (Habermas, 1989). As a result, debate between governments and its publics became central to the public sphere since it is through this engagement that a society agrees on how they are to be governed and how all stakeholders will engage with each other.

This study sought to assess whether conversations on Twitter critically analyzed issues that arose from the Kenyan electioneering period of 2016/2017. Data gathered showed whether points raised were analyzed based on their merit or were analyzed based on presupposed political or tribal biased.

2.4 Theory Growth

Çela (2015) noted that communication of political messages are increasingly being communicated through an online virtual sphere (online public sphere). She further noted that communication between the communicator of political messages and the intended audience has further been made more effective by the use of social media, which effectively encouraged engagement and debate. This was previously deemed difficult due to the fact that traditional media acted as a bridge between these two parties which made it harder for authentic engagement. The study noted that more and more people are joining social media sites which has diverted political discourse debate from traditional media houses to the online spaces. This has effectively enhanced political discourse showing that the public sphere is slowly shifting from the traditional media as contemporary public sphere platforms to social media as platforms of expression and engagement on political discourse.

This study seeks to examine the role of traditional media in Kenya given the fact that social media plays an important role in political discourse. Data gathered will be able to assess the gravity of online political discourse on Twitter.

Graham (2015) noted that online political discourse encouraged equality by encouraging debate from individuals with opposing views. Views expressed on different online platforms were debated on the basis of the merit of their arguments and not on pre supposed biased based on backgrounds. Unlike traditional media which was limited in expression of different points of view, new media platforms encouraged debate by giving everyone a fair chance to comment on issues of public political interest.

Power (2016) noted that Habermas's view of inclusivity did not dis-allow participation however, in the case of China, the public was not only denied access to the public sphere but

political participation, based on debate, was restricted due to censorship efforts on the part of the Chinese government. This shows how Twitter as an online public sphere platform is under jeopardy of influence by governing bodies which may in turn effectively put into question the future viability of online spaces as public sphere platforms for online political discourse. The possibility of tampering by organizations and governments puts the concept of an online public sphere at risk.

As a critique to his own theory Habermas notes that a public sphere which is worthy of democratic polity depends on the quality of discourse and the quantity of participation (Calhoun, 1992). In essence this study seeks to assess the quality and quantity of discourse on Twitter in terms of online political discourse in Kenya seeing as Twitter as a platform is only a fraction of the cumulative number of online public sphere platforms. As such for the study to gain internal and external validity it is important to underscore important theoretical growth milestone to further outline the constructs that the study examines and how they are operationalized. As such appendix A is a theory growth matrix to outline the advancement of the study.

Given the growth and evolution that the theory has gone through over the years this study asserts that given the assumptions that Fraser (1992), Calhoun (1992) and Benhabib (1992) put forth the initial theory was flawed in the sense that it overlooked essential determinants/indicators of a modern day public sphere. As such this study suggests that given the assumptions put forth by Fraser (1992) for operationalization purposes the study focuses on Gender as an indicator to inclusion as a construct for a healthy public sphere and social equality as an indicator to equality.

To further add context, initially the public sphere was run by the bourgeois society which was highly patriarchal in nature, as such views from women were not included in discourse which put the utopian idea of democracy of a public sphere in jeopardy especially in late capitalist economies

or countries such as in our current Kenyan scenario. As such gender inclusion becomes a vital indicator to inclusion within a healthy public sphere.

In terms of equality, the bourgeois society was elitist in nature and the initial conception of the public sphere as seen by Habermas was not in view of the fact that views from a disempowered section of the state were not heard. As the public sphere evolved the civil society played a critical role in ensuring the disenfranchised are heard. It is then paramount to use the mention of Kenyan civil society bodies and election observers on Twitter as an indicator of expression of equality seeing as the mention of the said bodies relate around issues to do with equality as defined above. The study also used Chapter 8 of the Kenyan constitution which seeks to make provision for the disempowered within our society by giving special parliamentary seats which therefore ensures that the views of the disempowered and disenfranchised are expressed in parliament. The groups include; the youth, women, the disabled (differently abled) and workers (The Republic of Kenya, 2010). Given this the study also operationalized issues surrounding the youth, women (not as a gender inclusion issue in leadership), the disabled, and workers as indicators of expression of equality.

2.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.5.1 Public Sphere theory in communication Studies

As alluded to above, the public sphere theory is viewed as a communicative space where all political actors are able to interact on matters to do with governance, the theory is skewed toward political communications studies but can also be used in other communication studies concentrations seeing as the theory can be used to assess communication infrastructure (Communication for Governance and accountability Program , 2019). In the case of this study the public sphere is viewed as a space where Twitter users send and receive information within the

platform and the content within the resultant interaction can be used to gauge whether the information being passed along can constitute for a public sphere space as indicated theory constructs.

Schäfer (2015) notes that indeed digital public spheres have optimized communication throughout various political actors by enhancing both vertical and horizontal communication by different political actors; he further notes that different communication styles are enhanced through digital public spheres.

2.6 Social Media as Public Sphere Platform Studies

In regard to equality on online public sphere, particularly on Twitter, Iiris Ruoho, Jaana Kuusipalo, Erkkä Railo, Erkki Karvonen, Jiri Nieminen, Eliisa Vainikka and Jukka Huhtamäki (2014) noted that equality in regard to power distribution, contemporary power structures were simply replicated in the online space. Therefore, existent hierarchical powers were maintained on online public spheres rather than offer a medium where these structures could be challenged and questioned. This study showed that online public sphere challenged the notion of equality on online public spaces. This study seeks to explore whether similar trends were realized during the electioneering period of 2016/2017 on the Kenyan online public sphere on Twitter.

Ryder (2017) noted that despite the fact that Twitter as a platform propagated views of individuals with similar political opinions, this didn't mean that the platforms didn't have the ability to foster healthy, engaging debate between individuals with different political beliefs. This demonstrates the fact that social media has the ability to problematize political issues which inspired debate between individuals or publics with different political views, which in turn inspired healthy debate which critically assessed possible solutions to these problems. This study seeks to investigate whether similar trends were present in the Kenyan online public sphere on Twitter.

Rasmussen (2014) argues that with the advancement of social networking sites the online public sphere has become more fragmented due to the fact that the content of interest is normally aggregated based on user preferences and the resultant interactions within these sites further challenge the notion of inclusiveness within an online public sphere. Wang (2017) however counters this notion by noting that there were equal and inclusive debates which enabled the Chinese online public sphere to express their opinions on political discourse through three different Chinese events.

2.7 Social Media and political Social Movements studies

O'Hallaran (2016) notes that despite the fact that Twitter as a platform encourages fragmentation of an online public sphere, into fragmented chat rooms or sphericals of individuals with similar points of view or opinions, Twitter has the ability to turn into a viable public sphere by utilization of a hashtag which aggregate common topics of interest between different sphericals. This study validates the use of Twitter as a viable platform to study online political discourse since use of a hashtag can constitute the right environment for an engaging public sphere.

Best and Meng (2015) noted social media discussions may echo the state of democracy in a country further noting that Kenyan democracy is undergoing consolidation, noting that many tweets were based on tribal identity as well as campaign policy during the 2013 Kenyan elections. This study seeks to assess whether similar trends were apparent in the 2017 Kenyan election by drawing out thematic areas and taking a step further by analysing sentimentality.

Chin, Zappone, and Zhao (2016) noted that during the 2016 American elections a lot of sentiments expressed on Twitter was of a humorous nature with laughter ranking high in the Likert scale used to measure sentimentality. This study seeks to explore whether similar trends were present during the 2016/2107 electioneering period in Kenya by Kenyans on Twitter.

2.7.1 Twitter and Kenyan political social movements studies

Mukhongo (2014) asserts that indeed social media has become a powerful online public sphere for political discourse in Kenya by encouraging debate on issues of public interest. She also noted that the youth use images to communicate their opinions on certain socio-political issues. Though these images do not strongly communicate meaning, they have subtle meaning which other youth can decode and understand. This study will be able to explore whether a lot of images were used during the 2016/2017 electioneering period and whether similar these images were similarly decoded or interpreted based on their conveyed messages.

Jackson (2017) argues that Twitter, as a platform in Kenya, can be used to express counter narratives with reference to issues of social injustices. This study seeks to establish whether counter narratives were established during the electioneering period of 2016/2017 and whether Twitter as a platform played a big role in this.

Olorunnisola and Douai (2013) reiterate that social media in Kenya was used as a powerful platform to encourage citizen participation on Kenyan political discourse. This study seeks to enhance this train of thought by critically looking at Twitter and whether this platform supports the environment of a healthy online public sphere.

2.8 Themes and Sentimentality studies

Jayasanka, Madhushani, Marcus, Aberathne, and Premaratne (2013) define sentimentality as an expression of positive or negative attitudes in the form of text. Tran (2019) posits that sentimentality is a necessary measure in social media studies as it helps measure the feeling (whether positive or negative) of users sentiments online. However, the challenge with measuring sentimentality is that applications are not able to interpret meaning from slang, or inferred text

seeing as semantics are subject to the context of interaction and sociopolitical and geographical factors.

Chen and Lu (2017) noted that a lot of sentiments expressed online are negative in nature, however, these negative points of view pushed actors within online public spheres to participate in these debates which led to healthy online discussion on the merits or demerits of a particular issue. This study seeks to establish whether similar trends were experienced during the 2016/2017 electioneering period especially in regard to expression of tribalistic opinion.

Garimella, Morales, Gionis, and Mathioudakis (2018) established that Twitter as a platform effectively developed echo chambers where opinions from a particular train of thought were shared and amplified amongst users of similar interests. This study seeks to examine whether this trait inhibited healthy discussion on political discourse during the Kenyan 2016/2017 electioneering period.

2.9 Hashtag #ElectionsKe2017

News Vision (2017) reports that Twitter was able to give live updates of election process including results by use of the #electionske2017. Odera (2017) noted that #electionske2017 was essential in trying to push the gender inclusion narrative in political discourse on Twitter. Wangari (2017) asserts that the hashtag was also essential as a digital activism platform where participants used the platform to campaign against digital bullying of female politicians. This particular hashtag was so pertinent to online political discourse in Kenya during the 2016/2017 electioneering period that was used by IEBC as a branding tool to track communication on matters to do with the elections (IEBC, 2017).

This underscores how important this particular hashtag was in regard to reporting of election proceedings and results. It helped Kenyans engage in terms of differing points of views from different individuals.

2.10 Conceptual framework

This study's conceptual framework is informed by the Public Sphere theory and explains the relationship between a healthy public sphere and the presupposing conditions (equality, inclusivity and problematization of issues) whose contributions enable a healthy public sphere. In this case, Kenyan online political discourse is the dependent variable because political discourse enables a public sphere. The presupposing conditions mentioned above depend on online political discourse whose constitution create an online public sphere space.

As demonstrated above equality is an essential theory construct and as explained the indicators are heavily dependent on the equal assessment of views expressed by socially "weaker" groups as demonstrated in the constitution and by bodies which are meant to represent their interests. As such the suggested indicators are views expressed by or around civil society bodies, the youth, women and the disabled.

As highlighted, inclusivity is an essential construct and as explained the theories formative assumption that all views are included was a flawed assumption especially from the perspective of gender inclusion. As such, this study based gender inclusion in leadership in terms of political discourse as an indication of inclusion in Kenyan online political discourse.

For a healthy public sphere to occur, issues need to be problematized and critically analyzed based on the merit of arguments presented. Given this premise, the study used both formal and informal avenues through which issues are problematized in regard to political discourse. As such,

the study used leadership attributes, the law, the media and tribalism as indicators of problematization of issues.

Given these conditions, the study puts forth the following conceptual framework:

(a) Independent variables:

- ❖ Equality
- ❖ Inclusivity
- ❖ Problematization of areas/issues

(b) Dependent variable: Kenyan online political discourse

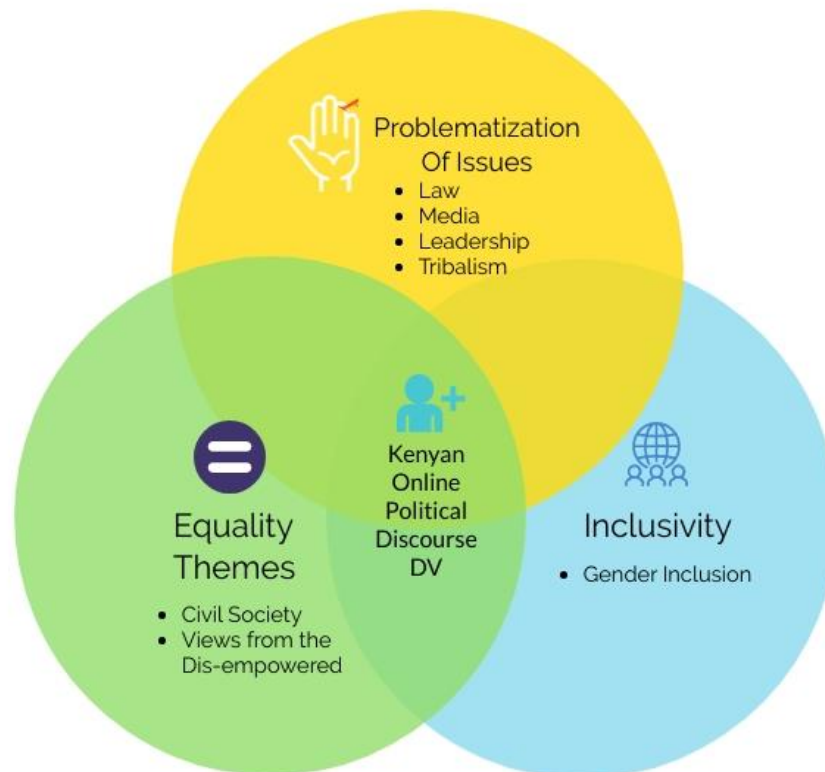


Figure 2. 1: *Conceptual framework*

2.11 Research Questions

Based on the theory constructs noted above and emerging themes on Twitter political discourse under #electionske2017, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How did “problematization of issues” on Twitter shape the direction of political discourse during the 2016/2017 Kenyan elections?
2. What is the frequency of “equality themes” expressed on Twitter in regard to the nature of political discourse during the 2016/2017 Kenyan elections?
3. To what extent were “inclusivity themes” expressed on Twitter in regard to the nature of political discourse during the 2016/2017 Kenyan elections?

2.12 Chapter Summary

Healthy public spheres constitute for healthy democratic discussions devoid of space, time or geographical constraints. For any healthy public sphere to exist presupposed conditions such as equality, inclusivity and critical problematization of issues have to be in place for healthy and constructive debate to take place. This chapter validates the fact that an online public space is present in online Kenyan political discourse and sets a precedent for further insight into thematic areas expressed on Twitter in regard to political discourse. It further validates the need to critically analyze the 2017 Kenyan electioneering period to further analyze whether similar online political discourse trends which are experienced globally are replicated within the Kenyan context.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study sought to examine content on Twitter to establish themes and opinions expressed in conversations around the Kenyan 2016/2107 electioneering period. As such, the study employed quantitative data collection methods as a research design to establish the impact of these themes on online Kenyan political discourse to establish whether Twitter is a viable public sphere.

3.2 Research Approach

Seeing as the study sought to provide insight on thematic areas and opinions of conversations on Twitter during the 2016/2017 Kenyan electioneering period, data gathered was analyzed through a quantitative research approach. With this in mind, the study used SPSS and Microsoft Excel as a research tool for analysis. Data gathered was analyzed for veracity and value of data gathered through Twitter (Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2017).

3.3 Research Design

The study employed content analysis as a basis for data analysis. Content analysis has the ability to analyze and derive meaning from data and draw concrete conclusions based on the data gathered (Polit & Beck, 2006). Furthermore, content analysis has the ability to examine all types of written text no matter the source of the material (Mariette, 2016). This provides the perfect conditions to test the theoretical constructs identified above. Also, content analysis is also able to establish insight, which helps gain more perspective on online Kenyan political discourse and whether Twitter is a viable public sphere.

The study obtained data over a period of 1 year 11 months from January 2016 to November 2017 based on IEBC's official calendar (see Appendix D). The study period ended in November due to the fact that the second election officially concluded and the winner was announced on November 28 2017 after the initial annulment of the results of the August 8th elections.

The study used a tweet as a unit of analysis under the hashtag #electionske2017. The study harvested 7,000 tweets under the hashtag and used random selection sampling (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011) to come up with a sample selection of 3,000 tweets. The study then used SPSS and Microsoft Excel as analysis tools to be able to establish quantitative empirical data around the themes mentioned above.

3.4 Measures - Operationalization of Variables

Seeing as the themes identified in this study need to be defined on the basis of the objectives of the study. The study seeks to analyze independent variables based on the following criteria:

1. Equality: This study sought to define equality based on the participation of civil society on Twitter meaningfully contributing to crucial political discourse by commenting on sociopolitical issues around the electioneering period. Also, the mention of these civil society bodies was used as a measure seeing as conversations around these bodies are indicative of expression of issues to do with equality. Also, expression of issues to do with the disenfranchised/disempowered i.e. the youth, women, the disabled and workers, were used as markers of expression of issues to do with equality (equality indicators).

2. Inclusivity: This study sought to define inclusivity based on gender inclusion in leadership. Seeing as female representation within the Kenyan parliament is wanting (Mwere, 2018), it is vital to establish whether similar trends are present in political discourse on Twitter and its eventual effect on Twitter as a public sphere. As such, issues

to do with gender balance within parliament/governance roles can be used as an indicator of inclusion.

3. Problematization of areas/Issues: The study seeks to define problematization of issues based on critical analysis of issues in regard to political discourse on Twitter during the study period suggested above. This looks at engagement based on the quality of opinions expressed and engagement through tweets, re-tweets and conversation threads.

3.5 Population and Sampling Design

Due to recent social media privacy infringement cases, a lot of social networking sites have had to restrict access to user activities and details. Recently, Twitter decentralized access from third party entities such as data sift to its own platform. Seeing as full access to all the tweets is an expensive venture the study gained access to tweets under the hashtag #electionske2017 within the suggested study period through Twitter advanced search.

The study used 7,000 tweets as a population of tweets mined during the months of January 2016 to October 2017. Using simple random sampling 3,000 tweets were analyzed. To achieve this, the study selected a population of 7,000 tweets using the hashtag #electionke2017, the study then used Microsoft excel to randomize the tweets then selected the sample accordingly.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethics are upheld the researcher ensured that the study was cleared by the USIU-A IRB office (see appendix B), as well as NACOSTI (National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation) (see appendix C). The study was considerate of access to the data mined from as well as Twitter as a platform when interacting with tweets as copyright belongs to the platform and the tweep.

Online research methods usually raise questions as to how users' anonymity and confidentiality of users shall be upheld. To mitigate this issues Beninger (2017) recommends that the user names of the tweets under study be withheld and tweets shall be scrutinized based on the assigned number of a tweet that established during sampling. With this in mind the names of the authors of the tweets mined were redacted from the study

3.7 Research Procedures

3.7.1 Research tool/instrument

Based on the research method that has been established the study developed a code book (Appendix E) based on the independent variables set in the conceptual framework. Given the theoretical constructs identified above the code book operationalized terms on the following anchors; equality, inclusivity and problematization of issues. Equality was anchored on the constitutional definition of the disenfranchised in society. Inclusion was anchored on exclusive nature with which the theory was developed. Problematization was anchored on traditional platforms which were responsible for mediation of political discourse such as the law and emergent platforms such as the media. Contextually the study also tribalism as a basis of problematization seeing as historically tribalism has been vital in political discourse.

3.7.2 Validity and Reliability

A pilot study of 300 tweets were analyzed to establish intercoder reliability so as to ensure that the tweets fit the rationale that is in line with research objectives to achieve internal and external validity. The pre-test was used to check whether the code book, addressed the issues set forth by the study. As such the study trained 2 qualified coders over the period of 3 days, then conducted the pretest over the period of 3 days from May 1st to May 7, 2019.

SPSS version 10 was used to establish intercoder reliability along the three preselected variables, namely, equality, inclusivity and problematization of issues. With each variable measured for intercoder reliability, variable 1 (equality) yielded a result of a 0.854 Cohen kappa scores, variable 2 (inclusivity) yielded a result of 0.830 and variable 3 yielded a Cohen kappa score of 0.843 as shown below. See appendix (F)

Table 3. 1: *Cohen Kappa score for equality; 0.854*

		Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.854	.102	14.837	.000
N of Valid Cases		302			

According to Ziai (2017) any Cohen Kappa score that is above 0.81 can be interpreted as almost perfect agreement between two coders during the pilot study of a coding process. This means that according to the coded terms and the inter rater reliability process both raters agreed on the operationalization of terms which sought to define equality as measured at a value of 0.854 as illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3. 2: *Cohen Kappa score for inclusivity; 0.830*

		Symmetric Measures			
		Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.830	.118	14.447	.000
N of Valid Cases		303			

As mentioned above any Cohen kappa value above 0.81 means that there was almost perfect agreement between both coders during the pilot study (inter rater reliability). As inferred in Table 3.2 with a value of 0.830, this showed that there was a favorable measure of content that touched on issues of inclusivity as operationalized in the codebook.

Table 3. 3: *Cohen Kappa score for problematization of issues: 0.843*

Symmetric Measures					
		Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.843	.037	14.651	.000
N of Valid Cases		302			

As illustrated in Table 3.3 content which sought to problematize issues as defined by the codebook attained a Cohen kappa score of 0.843 this means that both coders agreed on the terms are set out through the pilot study.

Given the validity of the results of the pre-study, the study analyzed the remaining data over the period of April 2019 and established themes which emerged from the remaining data set (2,692 tweets).

3.8 Data Collection

As referenced above access to historical data was a challenge, despite this, the researcher was able to gain access to historical data through Twitter advanced search. Seeing as access to the total amount of data is limited Twitter advance search allows users to access randomized historical tweets throughout the duration of the metadata of interest or in this case #electionske2017. Given this feature the researcher manually copied accessible tweets throughout the studies scope to an

excel document which accumulated to a population of 7,000 tweets. This data was then treated to delete repeated tweets or tweets which did not have sufficient text content such as content which had emoji's.

After data was treated to ensure that the data was truly randomized for internal validity purposes the tweets were each assigned a unique number and randomized accordingly using the Microsoft excel randomize feature. A sample of 3,000 tweets were then selected from this randomized data set, which was then used for data analysis.

3.9 Data Analysis

The study used SPSS to establish intercoder reliability of the research instrument (codebook) through a pilot study whose results as indicated above. The researcher then created different tables of the different variables under study on Microsoft Excel and based on the presence or lack of a specific variable used a series of 1's and 0's to indicate presence, 1 being present and 0 being lack of a specific variable. These results were then tabulated according to each variable and summed up using the sum function of Microsoft Excel. The results were then separated according to variables under study and emergent themes which were then translated to charts using Excel's charts feature.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined steps that were taken to establish a valid data set, whose results could be generalized to the total Kenyans on Twitter population. The study used content analysis as a data collection method by analyzing tweets using the #electionke2017 and used SPSS and Microsoft excel as data analysis tools which enabled the researcher to establish trends on themes of

conversation on Twitter during the Kenyan electioneering period of 2016/2017 so as to establish whether Twitter was a viable public sphere.

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The data was organized based on initial analysis of emergent themes of the total tweets analyzed followed by analysis based on the independent variables under study namely equality, inclusivity and problematization of issues as key themes.

4.2 Overall Results Summary: Emergent Themes and Themes of Equality, Inclusivity and Problematization of Issues

Out of the total sample size of 3,000 tweets, 2,692 tweets were analyzed in this study, 300 tweets were used in the pilot study and were accordingly redacted from the study. Out of the 3,000 tweets under review, 8 tweets were inadmissible for study due to the fact that their quality wasn't at par with what the study aimed to achieve, as such they were redacted from the study. Beyond the variables under review other emergent themes were categorized as defined below.

From the analysis 693 tweets, 26%, of the total 2,692 tweets analyzed were expressions of sentiments/opinions toward the activities around the elections. There was heightened expression of opinions around August to the eventual November 28 inauguration. Seeing as the nature of sentimentality is not under review the nature of these sentiments were not investigated.

Out of 2,692 tweets 638 tweets, 24%, of the tweets analyzed touched on issues which sought to question the legality of the whole electioneering process, issues problematized under this theme not only questioned the legality of certain issues around the elections but also questioned the actions taken by IEBC, the constitutional body tasked with carrying out the elections. As such, the mention of legality, the law, the constitution, and the constitutional body itself (IEBC) can be categorized under law and fall under the whole subset of problematization of issues as operationalized in the codebook.

Out of 2,692 tweets 572 tweets, 21% of the tweets analyzed touched on issues which sought to question leadership qualities of key public figures involved in the election. These public figures not only include electoral candidates but also included the IEBC chairs who represented the body. The mention of these personalities is viewed as the problematization of leadership qualities that these individuals have. As such the names of these personalities and the subsequent analysis of their leadership qualities is categorized as leadership and fall under the subset of problematization of unquestioned issues as operationalized in the codebook.

Up to 322 tweets, 12% of the total 2,692 tweets analyzed, were tweets which sought to report on issues associated with the election. These tweets more or less were acts of citizen journalism with the intent of informing fellow Twitter users on issues which are not prominent. These tweets also included tweets which shared links to other sites so as to fill an information gap.

Another 166 tweets, 6% of the total 2,692 tweets analyzed, touched on issues which sought to express equality within the content of the tweets. As defined in the codebook issues which touched on the disempowered within the society namely the youth, women, the disabled and workers were operationalized as an expression of equality within the content of the tweets analyzed.

Again, 119 tweets, 5% of the total 2,692 tweets analyzed, mentioned political parties. These tweets not only sought to critically analyze political decisions made by the two opposing parties but also sought to refer to political ideologies which these parties adhered to.

Only 60 tweets, 2% of the tweets analyzed, sought to advocate for peace during these politically tense times. The comments were made to help cool down tension and rationalize with fellow Kenyans to consider their fellow Kenyan so that the country does not fall back to the 2007 post-election violence scenario.

Up to 51 tweets, 2% of the tweets analyzed, sought to problematize the role of the media during the electioneering period. The content within these tweets sought to analyze the performance of the media and fall under the subset of problematization of unquestioned issues as operationalized in the codebook.

Only 36 tweets, 1 % of the total 2,692 tweets analyzed, sought to problematize the expression of tribal comments within the content of the tweets. The content within these tweets sought to provide empirical evidence of the level of tribal comments or problematization of tribalism expressed on Twitter under the scope of the study. This falls under the subset of problematization of issues seeing as tribalism has been a major topic in Kenyan political discourse both online and offline.

However, 35 tweets, making up 1% of the total 2,692 tweets analyzed, touched on issues to do with inclusivity of gender issues within Kenyan online political discourse under the scope of the study. As defined in the codebook issues which touched on the inclusion of women in leadership was operationalized as the expression of inclusion within the content of the tweets. A breakdown of the share of these themes both emergent and defined under the scope of the study is shown in Figure 4.1.

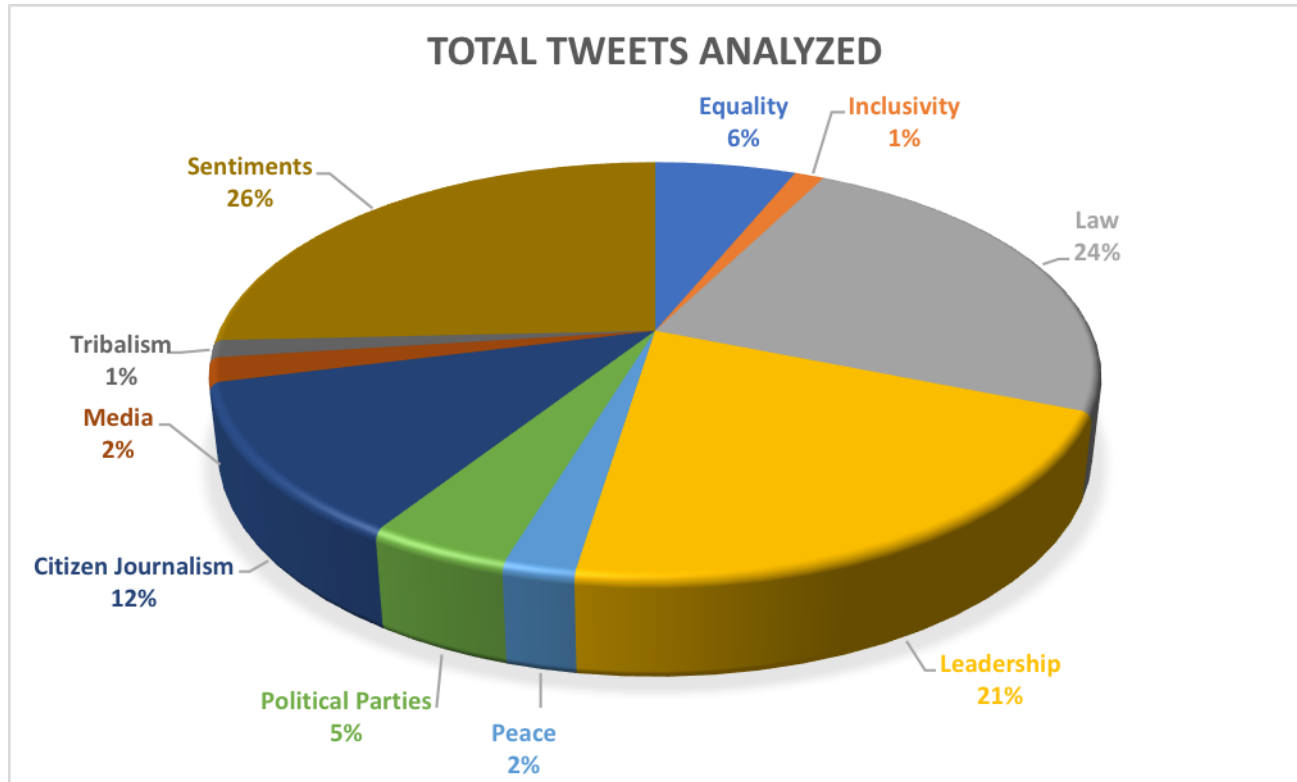


Figure 4. 1: *Share of emergent and defined themes under the scope of the study from the tweets analyzed*

Out of the total 2,692 tweets analyzed, 1,498 tweets (56%) touched on themes under the scope of the study (independent variables). In other words, 56% of the tweets analyzed touched on issues which contributed toward a public sphere through the expression of the variables under review. Below is a breakdown of the percentage of the themes which emerged from analysis and the themes which the study seeks to assess/analyze.

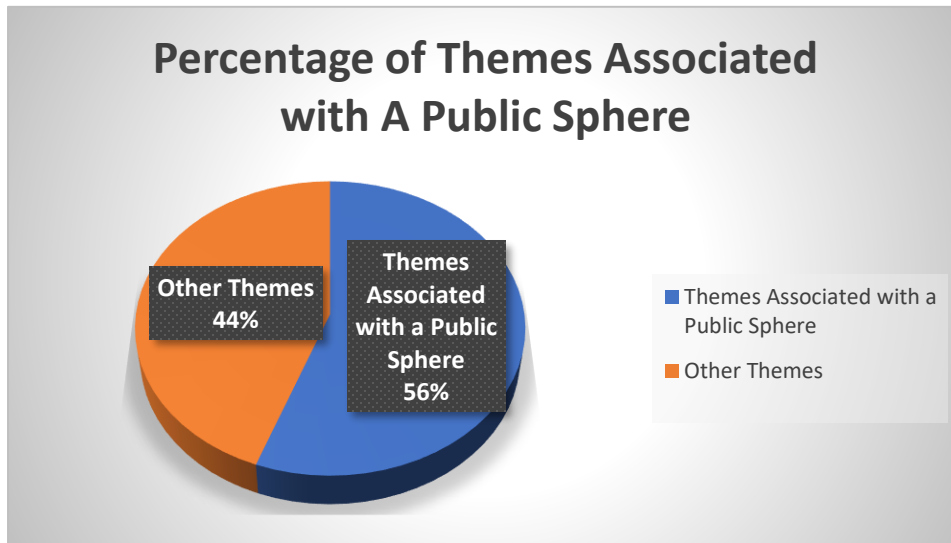


Figure 4. 2: *Percentage of the content which contributed toward a public sphere and the percentage emergent themes*

Out of the 2,692 tweets, majority of the tweets, 56% sought to contribute toward a public sphere as shown above. Figure 4.3 shows a breakdown of the share tweets which contributed toward a public sphere according to the themes under study (i.e. ET, IT and PI) which indicates that although Twitter is a viable public sphere platform, it is not a healthy platform.

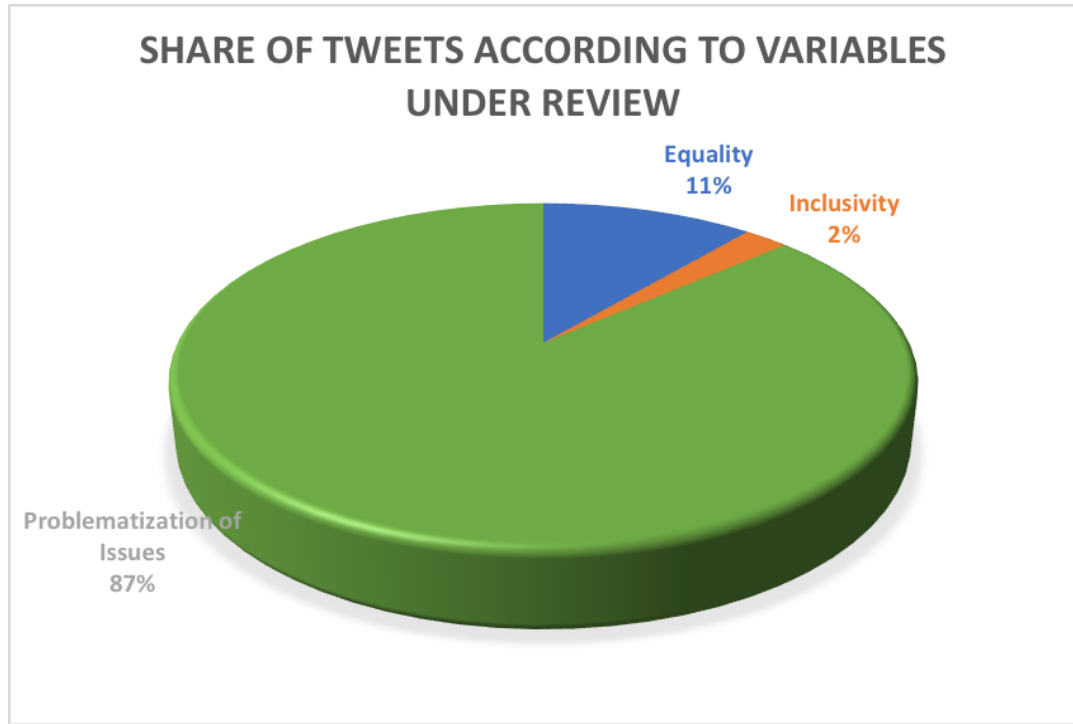


Figure 4. 3: *Share of tweets according to variables under review*

4.3 Problematization of issues on Twitter findings – RQ1

RQ1 sought to measure the extent with which issues were problematized on Twitter during the 2016/2017 electioneering period and how its shaped Kenyan online political discourse. As indicated in the chart above out of the 1,498 tweets which contained issues which contributed toward a public sphere, 1,297 tweets,87%, of the tweets contained content which sought to problematize unquestioned issues or areas. Below is a chart further indicating the issues which were problematized.

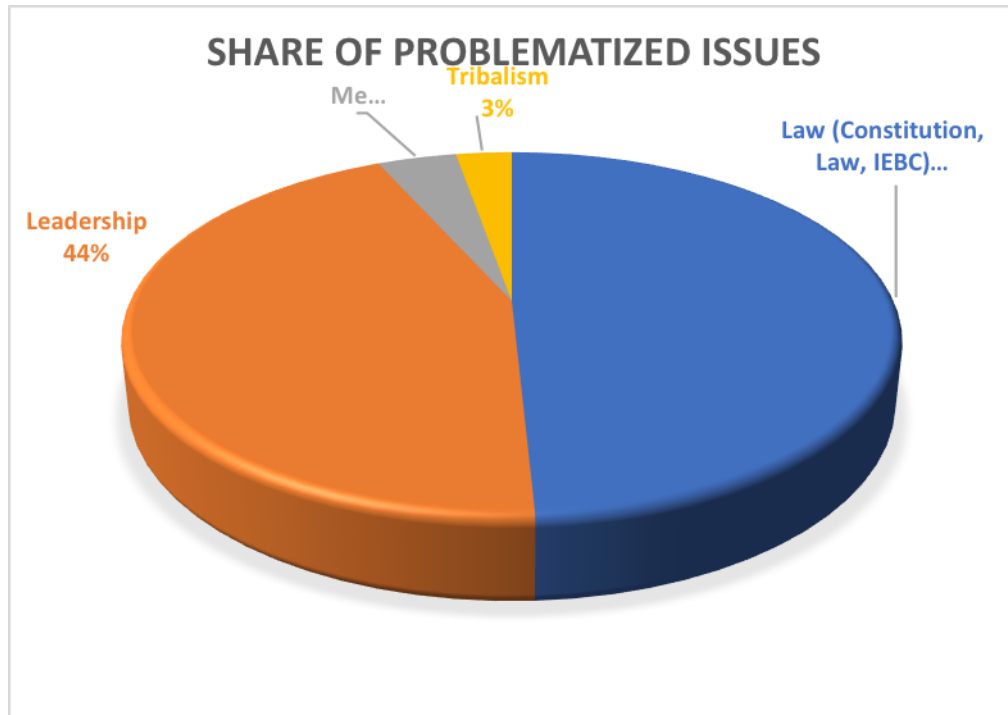


Figure 4. 4: *Breakdown of share of tweets under problematized issues*

Out of 1,297 tweets which fell under problematization of unquestioned issues/areas, 638 of the tweets analyzed, 49%, touched on issues to do with the legality and the law in regard to the elections and the electioneering process. These tweets included mentions of the constitution and IEBC since the body is the only legally mandated body tasked with carrying out the election.

Overall, 572 tweets, representing 44% of the tweets analyzed, touched on issues to do with the problematization of leadership qualities through the mention of the names of key personalities in the elections. These personalities included both electoral candidates and IEBC senior officials (chairs) who spoke on behalf of the institution.

Again, 51 tweets, 4% of the tweets analyzed, sought to critically analyze and question the function and performance of the media during the 2017 elections. The content of these tweets not only sought to analyze the mention of specific media houses and their performance but also

categorized the performance of professions within the media fraternity such as journalists as categorized under problematization of unquestioned issues/areas (PI).

Only 36 tweets, 3% of the tweets analyzed, sought to not only categorize the mention of specific Kenyan tribes as a marker for problematization of tribalism but also viewed the role of tribalism as a construct in Kenyan politics as an indicator of PI.

Results indicate that there was a lot of problematization of issues on Twitter as broken down above. In fact, out of all the tweets whose issues contributed toward a public sphere problematization was the highest theme at 87%. This implies that Twitter was heavily used for problematization of unquestioned issues/areas.

4.4 Equality on Twitter Findings RQ2

RQ2 sought to analyze the extent to which issues of equality were expressed on Twitter during the 2016/2017 electioneering period and how it shaped Kenyan online political discourse. Out of 1,498 tweets which contributed toward a public sphere, 166 tweets, 11%, contained content which expressed issues pertaining to equality (ET). As operationalized in the codebook (appendix) issues which related to the expression of issues to do with the youth, women, the disabled and the workers of Kenya were categorized as concerns by these social groups. Also, the mention of Kenyan civil society bodies and election observers who are tasked with representing the interest of the people was categorized as expression of issues to do with ET as operationalized in the codebook. Results indicate that issues relating to equality were addressed, however, at a low percentage of 11%.

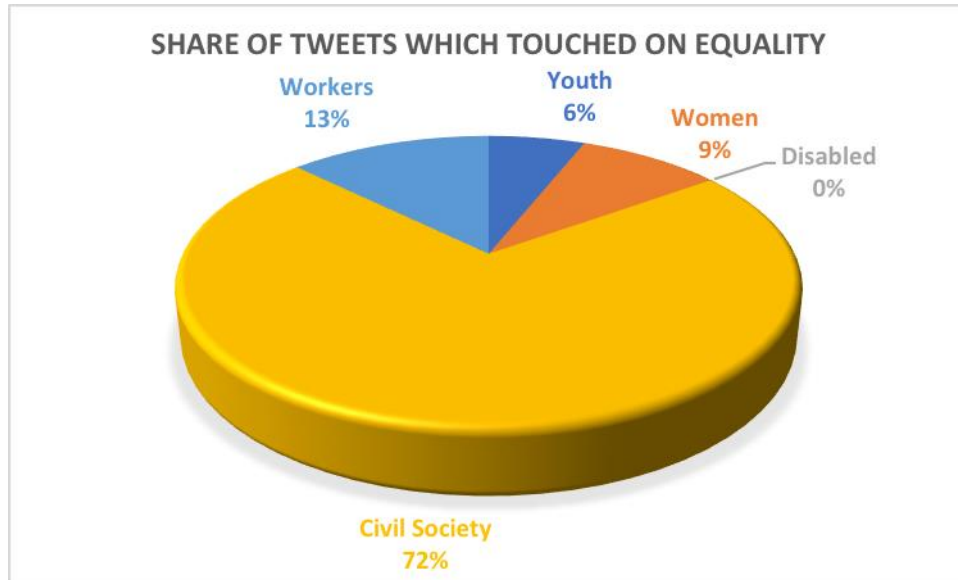


Figure 4. 5: *Breakdown of tweets which touched on equality*

As demonstrated in Figure 4.5, out of the 166 tweets which had ET as operationalized, 120 (72%) of these were tweets which mentioned civil society bodies, 21 tweets, 13%, of these tweets sought to advocate for the rights of workers, 15 (9%) of these tweets touched on grievances that women were facing under the scope of study, 10 tweets, (6%) sought to express challenges faced by the youth while no tweets, (0%) sought to express the plight of the disabled in the society.

4.5 Inclusivity on Twitter Findings

RQ3 sought to measure the extent to which issues of inclusivity (IT) were expressed on Twitter during the 2016/2017 electioneering period and how it shaped Kenyan online political discourse. Out of 1,498 tweets which contributed toward a public sphere, 25 tweets, 2% of the tweets cited issues related to gender inclusivity more specifically the inclusion of the female gender in leadership as operationalized in the codebook. These issues were categorized based on the performance of women in the elections and critical discourse on their inclusion in leadership.

Results indicate that issues touching on IT were not significantly addressed during the 2016/2017 electioneering period.

4.6 Chapter Summary

Findings indicate that 53% of the content analyzed contributed toward a public sphere and 46% of the content focused on emergent trends as identified above. Out of the tweets which sought to contribute toward a public sphere, 87% of the content were tweets which sought to contribute to PI which therefore established that Twitter was heavily used as a platform for problematization of issues as RQ1 sought to establish.

Findings also indicate that ET were also expressed or addressed however not significant enough to contribute toward a healthy public sphere. At 11% of the tweets analyzed, results indicate that Twitter, as a public sphere platform, was not efficient in terms of equal expression of different social groups as RQ2 sought to establish.

RQ3 sought to establish the extent with which IT were addressed on Twitter and its subsequent contribution toward a healthy public sphere during the 2016/2017 electioneering period and how it shaped Kenyan online political discourse. Results indicate that IT were not significantly addressed, at 2%, it was clear that expression of issues pertaining inclusivity was wanting within the study's scope.

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction: Twitter as an Online Public Sphere Platform and its impact on Online Political Discourse

Majority of the tweets analyzed, 56%, were tweets which sought to contribute toward a healthy public sphere. The remaining 44% of the tweets were tweets which touched on other emergent tweets as categorized in chapter 4. This result confirms assertions put forth by Kamau (2014) and Odinga (2013) which indicate that social media enhances political discourse. Simply put Twitter has the ability to be harnessed toward a healthy public sphere and that the platform is indeed a viable public sphere which supports the sentiments by Loader and Mercea (2011) by noting that indeed social media platforms have the potential to be harnessed toward viable public sphere platforms.

Results support the conclusions made by Carpenter (2010) noting that indeed Twitter did provide a platform for citizen journalism seeing as 322 tweets, 12% out of the total 2,692 tweets were tweets which were essentially, acts of citizen journalism which sought to fill information gaps.

The study was however discordant with views expressed by Thompson (1995) by noting that media did not have an influence over political discourse on Twitter it instead sought to problematize the industry so as to assess its performance. This conclusively shows that Twitter as an online public sphere platform was not mediatized as indicated by Coleman and Freelon (2015).

5.2 Problematization of issues on Twitter findings

RQ1 sought to find out the extent of problematization of issues on Twitter and how it shaped online political discourse. Results indicate that out of the tweets which sought to contribute toward Twitter as a public sphere (1,498 tweets), 87% of the tweets (1,297 tweets) sought to problematize various issues as operationalized in the codebook and defined further in chapter 4.

Out of 1,297 tweets, 638 of the tweets analyzed, 49%, touched on issues to do with the legality and the law in regard to the elections and the electioneering process. This indicates that much like the context of the bourgeois public sphere as theorized by Habermas (1989) the courts still play an important role in a democracy. This shows that as much as the theory is evolving and new public sphere platforms are developing the courts still play a crucial role in online political discourse more so in the Kenyan context which further strengthens the assertions by Boulianne (2015) by noting that social media enhances online political discourse.

A total of 572 tweets, 44% of tweets under problematization of issues, touched on issues to do with the problematization of leadership qualities through the mention of the names of key leadership personalities in the elections. The premise of the public sphere theory is that a public sphere is a communicative space where the government and those who are governed meet to address how they want to be governed Su (2016), in essence this result lives up to the assumptions of the theory since Twitter under the scope of the study was used to address and problematize how Kenyans wish to be governed.

Another 51 tweets, 4%, of the tweets sought to critically question the function and performance of the media during the 2017 elections. The content of these tweets further illustrates that Twitter was not mediatized as earlier thought by Thompson (1995).

Up to 36 tweets, 3% of the tweets analyzed sought to categorize the mention of specific Kenyan tribes as a marker for problematization of tribalism in view of the role of tribalism as a construct in Kenyan politics. This result concurs with Riess (2017) noting there seems to have been a decrease in problematization of tribalism and more pleas directed to Kenyans to be peaceful during this tense political time. This may indicate a shift toward more issue based political discourse, or, may indicate that people are more covert on Twitter when it comes to tribalistic expression however further study has to be done on the same.

These results imply that Twitter was heavily used to problematize issues in view of the platform as a public sphere platform. This implies that Twitter is effective when it comes to debate of political issues however it is not inclusive of different opinions from different social groups and also does not equally discuss issues which pertain to different social groups. It further supports conclusions by Riess (2017) which states that societal patterns are simply replicated online within the Kenyan context. Simply put offline political discourse is replicated online. In this sense Kenyan online political discourse online is highly reflective of a bourgeois public sphere.

5.3 Equality on Twitter Findings

RQ2 sought out to examine the extent with which issues of equality were expressed on Twitter during the 2016/2017 electioneering period and how it shaped Kenyan online political discourse. Results indicate that out of all the tweets which contributed toward Twitter as a public sphere 11% of the tweets exhibited ET. This indicates that indeed ET were expressed and did contribute toward political discourse on Twitter however it also indicates that Twitter is not necessarily a healthy public sphere since issues to do with the disenfranchised were not given an equal opportunity in terms of discourse. The study supports the sentiments by Fraser (1992) by noting that weak publics (who are represented by civil society) have no say over decision making by strong publics, in this

case the public, in general, which does not promote equality. In a sense offline political discourse trends in regard to equality is replicated to online spaces as proposed by Ruoho, *et al.* (2014).

5.4 Inclusivity on Twitter Findings

RQ3 sought to examine the extent with which IT were expressed on Twitter during the 2016/2017 electioneering period and how it shaped Kenyan online political discourse. Results indicate that out of the total number of tweets which sought to contribute toward Twitter as a public sphere, 2% of the tweets touched on issues to do with inclusivity in terms of inclusion of women in leadership as operationalized in the codebook. This indicates that although Twitter is a viable public sphere as indicated above, it is not a healthy one seeing as issues to do with inclusivity were not effectively addressed, this finding supports the sentiments by Benhabib (1992) by noting that indeed the normative assumptions of Jurgen's theory were exclusive of opinions from different demographic groups and this clearly been replicated on Twitter as a public sphere platform. Furthermore, as indicated by Tétreault, (2001) and operationalized by the codebook and further indicated by IT, content on Twitter excluded discourse on inclusion of women in leadership which effectively indicated that political discourse Kenya excludes the female perspective.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Recommendation for political communication on social media

The findings from this study not only validate that Twitter is an effective political communication platform but also shows that Twitter has enhanced political discourse. However, Twitter is not a healthy public sphere platform due to the fact that discourse is not inclusive and does not equally analyze issues by “weaker” demographic groups (social groups). Due to the fact, as established in RQ3, discourse on Twitter is not inclusive, the study recommends that Twitter

users (tweeps) should encourage discourse that is inclusive of different opinions which can be facilitated through social media campaigns facilitated by advocates/advocacy groups of women in leadership.

As established in RQ2 Twitter does not equally analyze issues put forth by various social groups. Given the impression that twitter is an elitist social media platform, Ved (2016) Kenyans can be able to change this impression by being more open minded to issues beyond their status or social groups. The study recommends that civil society bodies should be more active on social media platforms so as to represent the interest of “weaker” social groups in political discourse on different social media platforms. Also, tweeps should be more accommodating to view expressed by different social groups and value arguments based on the arguments merit.

Results From RQ1 indicate that Twitter as a platform was heavily problematized, the platform was used to question various areas however the study noted that horizontal communication between different political actors was not enhanced as referenced by Poulakidakos and Veneti (2016). The study recommends that the higher political class should promote more issue based dialogue so as to enhance discourse seeing as their leadership qualities were highly problematized on the platforms.

Findings not only highlight the role Twitter plays in Kenyan online political discourse but also indicates that democracy is not elevated in this platforms given the reasons mentioned above.

5.6 Limitations of the study

1. Access to historic data on Twitter is limited which delayed data collection and analysis.

2. The scope of the study only involved one social media platform and as such the attributes of this platform cannot be replicated to other platforms.

5.7 Suggestions for Further Study

Given the fact that this study has established that Twitter is indeed a viable public sphere platform, further study needs to investigate the nature of sentiments expressed on Twitter and ways that can enhance Kenyan online political discourse. Further studies should also explore whether similar attributes are present in other social media platforms, so as to qualify whether other microblogging sites such as Facebook have similar online public sphere attributes.

5.8 Conclusion

This study sought to examine the frequency of themes of inclusivity, equality and problematization of issues on Twitter, by content related to the hashtag *#electionske2017*, during the Kenyan 2017 elections and how it shaped Kenyan online political discourse, to establish whether Twitter is a viable public sphere platform. Results indicate that indeed content on Twitter significantly contributes toward a public sphere. Statistically speaking, however, themes which contribute toward a public sphere are not proportionate, which effectively affects the quality of the platform as a healthy public sphere platform.

Though present, content on themes of Equality (11%) and Inclusivity (2%) were not significantly covered in comparison to problematization of issues on Twitter (87%). This indicates that online political discourse on Twitter seeks to heavily problematize and analyze issues however is not inclusive of opinions from different demographic groups and does not equally discuss issues from different demographic groups.

In conclusion, the study shows that Twitter has the ability to enhance democracy by being a healthy public sphere however conditions have to be harnessed to do so. Discourse needs to be more inclusive of opinions from different social groups and has to equally analyze opinions from weaker or less dominant social groups.

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APPENDIX A: THEORY GROWTH MATRIX

Scholar	Focus of Study	Constructs Suggested
Habermas (1989)	Nation State (Bourgeois Public Sphere)	Equality, Inclusivity, Problematization of unquestioned areas
Calhoun (1992)	Public Sphere Theory	Theory advanced from required historical conditions for a healthy public sphere to universal characteristics of human communication as a basis to a healthy public sphere
Fraser (1992)	Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It's not possible to bracket status and identity differences as earlier assumed ● Multiple publics are preferable to an overarching public that would limit points of contestation ● The initial constructs exclude private interests and issues entering the public space but this excludes the fact that expression of private interests enables disclosure which upholds the virtue of deliberation ● The theory's distinction between civil society and state support the fact that weak publics (who are represented by civil society) have no say over decision making by strong publics such as parliamentary bodies which does not promote equality
(Benhabib, 1992)	Models of Public Sphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Democratization is viewed as increase and growth of autonomous public spheres amongst participants ● The normative assumptions was not in view of exclusionary measure such as lack of inclusion of feminine opinion.
Thompson (1995)	Media	Thompson acknowledges Habermas' public sphere as a communicative space but advances the theory by noting that the space evolved and mediatized to an

		<p>extent where media personalities had control over the discourse over the space and personalities gained influence over the course or direction of the discourse. This in turn affected debate seeing as it was guided by the media.</p>
Hauser (1999)	Rhetoric of Public and Public Spheres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● “The idealized universal public sphere <i>conceals the ways in which particular, often marginalized public arenas form and function</i>” ● A universal public sphere “<i>neglects the lattice of actually existing public spheres</i>” ● A universal public sphere “<i>excludes those sub spheres whose members are decidedly interested</i>” ● The initially theorized bourgeois public sphere “<i>contributes to the exclusionary character of the public sphere by constraining open access</i>” ● “<i>Habermas’s model “is at odds with condition of diversity that define civil society.” (53). The idea that consensus will arise out of superior rational arguments in a non-exclusionary state must ignore difference or subsume it.</i>” ● “The norm of warranted assent to be achieved by generalizable arguments is <i>contrary to the particularity of public issues</i>”
Tétreault (2001)	Deconstructing Public Sphere	<p>Underscores how the normative development of the public sphere excluded women</p>
(Loader & Mercea, 2011)	Social Media and Democracy	<p>They note that social media has the potential to become a public sphere as earlier theorized however, they note that this can only be achieved if the platforms remain autonomous and can easily be</p>

accessible to all participants of political
discourse.

APPENDIX B: USIU IRB LETTER



TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

19th February, 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

REF: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH – DENVER N. OCHIENG
STUDENT ID. NO. 635138

The bearer of this letter is a student of United States International University (USIU) -Africa pursuing a Master of Arts in Communication Studies.

As part of the program, the student is required to undertake a dissertation on the “Exploring Twitter Political Discourse in Kenya: The Case of the 2016/2017 Electioneering Period” which requires him to collect data.

Please note that information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes.

Kindly assist the student get the appropriate data and should you have any queries contact the undersigned.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A. Njuguna", is written over a horizontal line.

Prof. Amos Njuguna,
Dean – School of Graduate Studies, Research and Extension
Tel: 730 116 442
Email: amnjuguna@usiu.ac.ke

APPENDIX C- NACOSTI CERTIFICATION



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/19/41911/28453**

Date: **12th April, 2019**

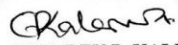
Denver Nyangi Ochieng'
United States International University-Africa
P.O. Box 14634 - 00800
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Exploring twitter political discourse in Kenya: The case of the 2016/2017 electioneering period*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **all Counties** for the period ending **12th April, 2020**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioners and the County Directors of Education, all Counties** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.


GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioners
All Counties.

The County Directors of Education
All Counties.

APPENDIX D – IEBC TIMETABLE



2017 Election Operations Timelines

ID	Name	Days to GE	Duration (Days)	Start	Finish
NO	2017 ELECTION OPERATIONS PLAN	(58)	1,437	Wed, Oct 30, 2013	Thu, Oct 05, 2017
A	ESTABLISHMENT OF RESPONSIVE AND ENFORCEABLE LEGAL FRAMEWORK	527	852	Wed, Oct 30, 2013	Sat, Feb 28, 2015
1	Review election laws to align to constitution and in line with lessons from 2013				Sun, Feb 28, 2016
2	Enact and publish the amended electoral laws	527	852	Wed, Oct 30, 2013	Sun, Feb 28, 2016
3	Develop, enact and gazette Election Campaign Financing Regulations	527	154	Mon, Sep 28, 2015	Sun, Feb 28, 2016
4	Develop, enact and publish the amended electoral regulations	527	112	Mon, Nov 09, 2015	Sun, Feb 28, 2016
5	Review and adopt Elections Results Management framework	465	450	Fri, Feb 06, 2015	Sun, Feb 28, 2016
B	DIASPORA	137	778	Fri, Feb 06, 2015	Fri, Mar 24, 2017
6	Conclude and publish policy on voter registration and voting by Kenyans in the Diaspora	648	267	Fri, Feb 06, 2015	Fri, Oct 30, 2015
7	Develop policy and regulations and hold stakeholders meetings	527	388	Fri, Feb 06, 2015	Sun, Feb 28, 2016
8	Enact and publish regulations for registration and voting by Diaspora	527	388	Fri, Feb 06, 2015	Sun, Feb 28, 2016
9	Establish database on Kenyan citizens residing in the Diaspora	467	158	Mon, Nov 23, 2015	Thu, Apr 28, 2016
10	Map out stations, train officers, and conduct voter registration in the Diaspora	235	61	Mon, Oct 17, 2016	Wed, Nov 16, 2016
11	Train Diaspora staff on voter registration	151	9	Thu, Mar 02, 2017	Fri, Mar 10, 2017
12	Commence voter registration for Kenyan citizens in the Diaspora	137	15	Fri, Mar 10, 2017	Fri, Mar 24, 2017
C	VOTER REGISTRATION	90	1,123	Tue, Aug 04, 2015	Wed, May 10, 2017
C-1	Mass Voter Registration	496	240	Tue, Aug 04, 2015	Fri, Apr 29, 2016
13	Procurement of MVR materials	564	166	Mon, Aug 10, 2015	Fri, Jan 22, 2016
14	ICT preparedness and readiness for MVR (BVR System testing)	550	128	Thu, Oct 01, 2015	Fri, Feb 05, 2016
15	Planning, recruitment and deployment of voter registration personnel	564	22	Fri, Jan 01, 2016	Fri, Jan 22, 2016
16	Planning, preparation of training materials, training of trainers and voter registration personnel training programme	555	104	Tue, Oct 20, 2015	Sun, Jan 31, 2016
17	Voter information outreach and communication	511	124	Fri, Nov 13, 2015	Tue, Mar 15, 2016
18	Develop, approve and implement mass voter registration action plan	622	114	Tue, Aug 04, 2015	Wed, Nov 25, 2015
19	Risk Management, Monitoring and Evaluation of MVR	466	270	Tue, Aug 04, 2015	Fri, Apr 29, 2016
20	Continuous Voter Registration (including Mass Voter Registration phase II)	90	1,123	Mon, Apr 14, 2014	Wed, May 10, 2017
21	Kick start and commission multi-sectoral committees on voter registration-data sharing (stakeholders at national and regional for mobilization of voters and data-sharing)			Mon, Nov 02, 2015	Quarterly
22	Gazettement of VR centres and registration officials	554	4	Fri, Jan 29, 2016	Mon, Feb 01, 2016
D	GENERAL ELECTION OPERATIONS	(29)	338	Tue, Oct 04, 2016	Wed, Sep 06, 2017
D-1	Commencement of GE				
23	Notice of General Election	134	1	Mon, Mar 27, 2017	Mon, Mar 27, 2017
24	Launch Multi-Sectoral General Election Committee	130	36	Fri, Feb 24, 2017	Fri, Mar 31, 2017
25	Establish General Election stakeholders committees	4	93	Thu, May 04, 2017	Fri, Aug 04, 2017
26	Inter-agency and stakeholders committees consultation meetings	182	1	Tue, Feb 07, 2017	Tue, Feb 07, 2017
27	Appoint Returning Officers and Deputy Returning Officers	130	67	Tue, Jan 24, 2017	Fri, Mar 31, 2017
28	Briefing of political parties (PPLC)	249	60	Tue, Oct 04, 2016	Fri, Dec 02, 2016
29	Notice of Suspension of Registration of Voters	(60)	151	Wed, May 10, 2017	Sat, Oct 07, 2017
30	Gazettement of VR Inspection	98	1	Tue, May 02, 2017	Tue, May 02, 2017
31	Publish Voter Register Inspection notice	90	1	Wed, May 10, 2017	Wed, May 10, 2017
32	Certify completion of compilation of register of voters	43	8	Mon, Jun 19, 2017	Mon, Jun 26, 2017
33	Gazette polling stations and tallying centers	13	98	Thu, Apr 20, 2017	Wed, Jul 26, 2017
34	Consultative meeting with political parties liaison committees at constituencies			Monthly	Monthly
D-2	Procurement and Distribution of Electoral Material and Logistics	2	224	Mon, Dec 26, 2016	Sun, Aug 06, 2017
35	Procure General Election transport	4	112	Tue, Jun 06, 2017	Fri, Aug 04, 2017
36	Procure strategic materials	2	224	Mon, Dec 26, 2016	Sun, Aug 06, 2017
36	Authorization of ballot printing	36	1	Mon, Jul 03, 2017	Mon, Jul 03, 2017
37	Printing of ballot papers and delivery	20	22	Wed, Jun 28, 2017	Wed, Jul 19, 2017
38	Airlift of ballot papers	14	18	Sat, Jul 08, 2017	Tue, Jul 25, 2017
39	Clearance at the Airport	8	7	Tue, Jul 25, 2017	Mon, Jul 31, 2017
40	Distribution to constituencies	4	4	Tue, Aug 01, 2017	Fri, Aug 04, 2017
41	Packaging of ballot papers at constituencies	1	3	Sat, Aug 05, 2017	Mon, Aug 07, 2017
42	Accredit Observers	7	9	Mon, Jul 24, 2017	Tue, Aug 01, 2017
43	Appoint Constituency and County Chief Agents	14	2	Mon, Jul 24, 2017	Tue, Jul 25, 2017
44	Appoint Counting Agents	7	2	Mon, Jul 31, 2017	Tue, Aug 01, 2017
D-3	Recruit, appoint, train and deploy election officials	3	88	Wed, May 10, 2017	Sat, Aug 05, 2017
45	Interview and recruit election officials (Presiding Officers (POs), Deputy Presiding Officers (DPOs) and Clerks)	76	15	Wed, May 10, 2017	Wed, May 24, 2017
46	Share data of successful candidates with political parties and other stakeholders	62	15	Wed, May 24, 2017	Wed, Jun 07, 2017
47	Consider Political Parties' and other stakeholders' comments	62	15	Wed, May 24, 2017	Wed, Jun 07, 2017
48	Inspect polling stations and test transmission	3	1	Sat, Aug 05, 2017	Sat, Aug 05, 2017
D-4	Party List Guidelines and Rules/ Procedures and Implementation	41	633	Mon, Oct 05, 2015	Wed, Jun 28, 2017
49	Review Political Party Nomination Rules both for nomination for elective positions and Party List nominations	579	95	Mon, Oct 05, 2015	Thu, Jan 07, 2016
50	Receipt and vetting of party lists to ensure that the criteria set by regulation is met	69	1	Wed, May 31, 2017	Wed, May 31, 2017

APPENDIX E: RESEARCH TOOLS: Content Analysis Code book/sheet

CODE BOOK

STUDY TOPIC: Exploring the nature of online political discourse in Kenya to determine thematic areas and sentiments on Twitter during the 2016/2017 electioneering period.

VARIABLE 1: EQUALITY

- 1. Civil Society:** The mention of any civil society body. The following words or phrases used in a tweet can be used to refer to participation of the civil society bodies in online Kenyan political discourse: Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), Inuka Kenya Ni Sisi Ltd, Katiba Institute, Muslims for Human Rights (MUHURI), Coalition for Constitutional Implementation, Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), Central Organization of Trade Unions Kenya (COTU-K), United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC), election observers, civil society.
- 2. Views expressed by the disempowered:** The mention of any issue of the disempowered within the society. According to the Kenyan constitution the disempowered within our society include; the youth, women, the disabled and workers. As such the study operationalized the following words as issues associated with expression of issues of the disempowered which is an indicator of equality.

VARIABLE 2: INCLUSIVITY

- 1. Gender:** The mention of any gender issue especially toward politics and governance. The following words or phrases used in a tweet can be used to refer to inclusion of gender issues in Kenyan online political discourse: Men, Women, Gender Bill, Equality, Female Representation.

VARIABLE 3: PORBLEMATIZATION OF AREAS/ISSUES

1. **Constitution:** The mention of the constitution. The following words or phrases used in a tweet can be used to refer to problematization of areas/issues: the constitution, democracy, judiciary, IEBC, court of appeal
2. **Law:** The mention of any article within the constitution. The following words or phrases used in a tweet can be used to refer to problematization of issues: article, the constitution, law, courts, reforms, petition
3. **Media:** The mention of any media house or expression of issues relating to the media's coverage on the election can be used to refer to problematization of issues seeing as the role of the media is integral to the electioneering process since they are the public's watchdog and integral in the dissemination of information to the public
4. **Leadership:** The mention of any personality who was integral to the election. This includes the IEBC chairs and the election Candidates (presidential, gubernatorial, senatorial, parliamentary and nominated seats) can be used to refer to problematization of issues seeing as their leadership qualities are being questioned put into question.
5. **Tribalism:** The mention of any tribe or tribal politics can be used to refer to problematization of areas: any mention of any Kenyan tribe, tribal politics.

CODE SHEET

STUDY TOPIC: Exploring the nature of online political discourse in Kenya to determine thematic areas and sentiments on Twitter during the 2016/2017 electioneering period.

NAME OF CODER:

TWEET NUMBER:

DATE OF PUBLICATION:

HASHTAG OF THE TWEET:

Did the following issues appear in the tweet?

Message	Absence	Presence
Civil Society		
Youth		
Women		
Disabled		

Did the following messages appear in the tweet?

Message	Absence	Presence
Gender Inclusion		
Gender Bill		

Did the following messages appear in the tweet?

Message	Absence	Presence
Constitution		
Law		
Tribalism		

APPENDIX F- INTER CODER RELIABILITY

Equality Inter Rater Reliability (Variable 1)

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
C1 V1 * C2 V1	302	99.7%	1	0.3%	303	100.0%

C1 V1 * C2 V1 Crosstabulation

			C2 V1		Total
			.0	1.0	
C1 V1	.0	Count	294	1	295
		% within C1 V1	99.7%	0.3%	100.0%
		% within C2 V1	99.7%	14.3%	97.7%
	1.0	Count	1	6	7
		% within C1 V1	14.3%	85.7%	100.0%
		% within C2 V1	0.3%	85.7%	2.3%
Total		Count	295	7	302
		% within C1 V1	97.7%	2.3%	100.0%
		% within C2 V1	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.854	.102	14.837	.000
N of Valid Cases		302			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Inclusivity Inter
Rater (Variable 2)

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
C1 V2 * C2 V2	303	100.0%	0	0.0%	303	100.0%

C1 V2 * C2 V2 Crosstabulation

			C2 V2		Total
			.0	1.0	
C1 V2	.0	Count	296	1	297
		% within C1 V2	99.7%	0.3%	100.0%
		% within C2 V2	99.7%	16.7%	98.0%
	1.0	Count	1	5	6
		% within C1 V2	16.7%	83.3%	100.0%
		% within C2 V2	0.3%	83.3%	2.0%
Total		Count	297	6	303
		% within C1 V2	98.0%	2.0%	100.0%
		% within C2 V2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.830	.118	14.447	.000
N of Valid Cases		303			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

Problematization Of Issues Inter Rater (Variable 3)

Crosstabs

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
C1 V3 * C2 V3	302	99.7%	1	0.3%	303	100.0%

C1 V3 * C2 V3 Crosstabulation

			C2 V3		Total
			.0	1.0	
C1 V3	.0	Count	223	10	233
		% within C1 V3	95.7%	4.3%	100.0%
		% within C2 V3	97.0%	13.9%	77.2%
	1.0	Count	7	62	69
		% within C1 V3	10.1%	89.9%	100.0%
		% within C2 V3	3.0%	86.1%	22.8%
Total		Count	230	72	302
		% within C1 V3	76.2%	23.8%	100.0%
		% within C2 V3	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Symmetric Measures

		Value	Asymptotic Standardized Error ^a	Approximate T ^b	Approximate Significance
Measure of Agreement	Kappa	.843	.037	14.651	.000
N of Valid Cases		302			

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

