

**Title:**                   **Leaking private e-mails into the public domain: A Twitter analysis of public opinion on the Gupta leaks on state capture in South Africa**

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Submission date: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2018

## ABSTRACT STATE CAPTURE

Transparency International, the anti-corruption watchdog, defines state capture as “a situation where powerful individuals, institutions, companies or groups within or outside a country use corruption to shape a nation’s policies, legal environment and economy to benefit their own private interests” (Pilling, 2017). State capture dominated the headlines in South Africa since the Gupta Leaks was disclosed. It consists of between 100,000 and 200,000 emails that disclosed negotiations on dodgy dealings between an Indian family, the Guptas, and a number of influential South African politicians and government officials. The e-mails that were leaked from within the heart of the Gupta empire provided prima facie evidence of corruption and bribery.

The researcher aimed to ascertain how the public reacted to state capture and the leaked e-mails, i.e. what was the public opinion on these matters. He thus conducted a qualitative study in which he captured and analysed 11740 unique tweets on state capture and the Gupta Leaks that were posted on Twitter between 6 June 2017 and 28 November 2017. He made use of the nCapture and nVivo software in conducting a stakeholder and thematic analysis. The stakeholder analysis offered insight into the “public” part of public opinion whilst the thematic analysis delved deeper into the “opinion” part. The results showed widespread condemnation of the phenomenon as well as strong support for calls to bring the perpetrators to book.

Reference: Pilling, D. (2017). How corruption became ‘state capture’ in South Africa Corporate reputations are shredded by over-mighty private interests. *Financial Times*, October 5, 2017 <https://www.ft.com/content/36895cd6-a907-11e7-93c5-648314d2c72c>

