

# The Role and Use of Social Media in Elections Campaigns and Voting Behavior in Nigeria: An Analysis of 2015 Presidential Election

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**Abstract:** Information Communication technology have change the way everything is done globally starting from communication, to way of life and interaction. Nigeria has witnessed explosive and broad growth in internet and social media use. Social media are offshoot of ICT in form of communication where interpersonal relationships are created, facilitated and maintained. Typical social media network services could be internet sharing, web communities/connections, and Internet forums all through a press of a button. Most the social media includes Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram are the most famous. Data for the paper were sourced from secondary sources which were descriptively analyzed which shows clearly that social media during the 2015 presidential election influenced voting patterns in Nigeria. The purpose of this paper is to key into the role social media played in the last general elections in Nigeria during voting and monitoring and communication in the 2015 Nigerian election, and draw out lessons and possibilities for the use of social media data in other elections and beyond. From the study it was observed that social media had significant influence Nigerian during the election campaigns and voting behavior. Finally the study recommend that social media can be a tool which can be used in a number of ways for election monitoring, reporting and education.

**Keywords:** Election, Social Media, Electronic Voting, Political Parties, Nigeria.

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## Introduction

In the last two decades, democracy has spread across the globe in unprecedented ways. Democracies increased from 48 in 1989 to 95 today (Monty and Benjamin, 2011). After the end of cold war democracy began to spread like wide fire which led to the end of dictorial rule in many African countries. Presently, Democratic activists and ordinary citizens throughout the world have over and over again proved that democracy is a universal value and make democracy become a global desire in the modern world. According to Global Commission Report on democracy and security (2012) the Arab Awakening confirmed that the popular demand for democracy is not bound by region, ethnicity, culture, or religion. Perhaps the most compelling evidence that democracy is a universal value comes from the many authoritarian governments that seek to wrap themselves in the veneer of democratic legitimacy. In the last 12 years, for instance, all but 11 countries in the world, democracies

and non-democratic regimes alike, held national elections (Hyde, 2011). Even China, where some leaders criticize democracy as a Western value, has experimented with elections at the local level.

With the advent of social media tools such as twitter, face book, instagram among others which have contributes largely to the success of electioneering process in the world over. The media helps in performing her surveillance function and mobilizing the electorates to taking informed decisions on parties and candidates with whom to support or cast their votes (Anderson *et al.*, 2017:69-70). In line with Moveh (2015:2) the process of election administration in many new democracies continues to generate a lot of controversy; particularly with regards to the level of independence of Election Management Bodies (EMB's), their professionalism and the acceptability of the elections they conduct.

However, election management bodies around the world have employed a number of innovative approaches, some of which are now considered best practice to improve the management and conduct of elections. Electoral reforms that have been instituted include the use of information and communication technology, adoption of more transparent and inclusive processes, professionalization of the organization, amendments to legal framework and improvement of relationships with external stakeholders. As a result of these efforts, the past several years have seen the varying successes of a number of election management bodies in recent times have recorded a great deal of success in the manner by which they prepare, organize, administer and conduct elections (Ayeni and Esan, 2018:1). Democracy and the process of democratic experiment in Nigeria has been faced with enormous challenges and prospects. The fate of democracy especially the Nigerian experience is one bedevilled with ethnicity, massive corruption, mismanagement of public funds, electoral fraud and malpractices, flagrant disregard for the rule of law, constitutionalism and abuse of fundamental human right being perpetuated by political office holders and politicians which are still prevalent in this current democratic era (1999- date) are clear examples of pseudo-democracy (Okuchukwu, 2015:13).

According to Anderson *et al.*, (2017:70) Information and communication technologies appear to resuscitate hope for social and political change in Africa and, indeed, ICTs have been at the centre of the democratic project in many countries. Conforming to Assibong and Oshanisi (2018:1) in recent times, Nigeria, as well as other nations across the globe, has included technology in their electoral processes. These reforms contributed largely to the success of the 2011 elections, yet the risk of flaws affecting Nigerian elections still remains. Part of the reforms lead to the introduction of card reading machine in the conduct of 2015 general election. The use of ICT in election management became imperative to the elimination of multiple registrations, which had remained one of the most vital political weapons for rigging elections by unscrupulous and savage elements. This unique technique was employed to capture mass involvement in governance and empowerment of the teeming electorates to participate in electoral processes.

### Conceptual Analysis Information

Information is the basic phenomenon of our world. We live in the world where information is everywhere and such information are processed to the smallest way for dissemination for either personal usage or society at large. All knowledge is possible only because we receive, collect and produce information after it has been proceed by individuals, organizations or groups which can either be nongovernmental or government bodies. People discovered

existence of information and now talk of information is every wherein our society. As Barwise and Seligman write, in recent years, information became all the rage. The reason is that people are immersed in information, they cannot live without information and they are information systems themselves. The whole life is based on information processes as Lowenstein convincingly demonstrates. Information has become a key concept in sociology, political science, and the economics of the so-called information society. Thus, to better understand life, society, technology and many other things, we need to know what information is and how it behaves (Burgin, 2011:347).

### Communication

Onah in Chukwuka (2015:64) argued that communication serves as a coordinating and controlling mechanism in the organisation through the effective and efficient combination of human and material resources. Obvious in Onah's assertion is that communication helps management to channel appropriately the use of its resources- material and non-material, in the best optimal manner to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

### Technology

The word "technology" is of Greek origin, based on "techne" that means art or skill and "-logy" that means "knowledge of" or "discipline of". The word was introduced into Latin as a loanword by Cicero (Steele 1900:389). Furthermore, Freeman (1988) maintained that "Technology is a gift of God. After the gift of Life, it is perhaps the greatest of God's gifts. It is the mother of civilization, of Arts and of Sciences. Technology continues to grow to liberate mankind from the constraints of the past. The most revolutionary aspect of technology is its mobility. Anybody can learn it, it jumps easily over barriers of race and language, and its mobility is still increasing.

### Information Communication Technology

The traditional electoral system essentially focused on the use of ballot papers, and this was the norm in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a large part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, revolutions in information and communication technologies (ICT) have shrunk the world and rendered national borders irrelevant and traditional legal and political sovereignties ineffectual. ICT has at once villagized the globe and globalized the village. The consumption patterns of one major country are now likely to affect the economies and political systems of other countries. ICT has transformed information and knowledge as the most critical factors in business transactions as well as in political decision making processes. The technologically advanced nations in west, majorly Europe and America, were the first to adopt ICT in their electoral system, and also in the process of governance (Assibong and Oshanisi, 2018:2).

The emergence of information and communication technologies (ICTs) which in turn gave birth to social networking sites had thus brought another paradigm shift in electioneering process. Since Barak Obama broke the world record in the history of ICTs use for political purpose during the 2008 US presidential elections, many nations and politicians across the globe have continued to embrace the platform to mobilize their citizens and candidates towards active participation in the political process (Anderson *et al.*, 2017:70). Therefore, this emergence of new ICTs has changed every aspect of human endeavors. Today, ICTs are characterised by boundless possibilities and opportunities. However, the idea of using surveillance for the purpose of information gathering and security management received a boost with the advent of computer and internet (Alhassan, 2017). Globally, the development of ICTs has moved across different and all spectrums. From the traditional media of radio and television to all other means of communication, the world has seen technological innovations

resulting in better means of getting tasks done. ICTs cover any product that receives, stores, retrieves, manipulates or transmits information electronically in a digital form such as personal computers, digital television, email, robots, etc. (Afriyie, 2012). Relatively, Okoro and Nwafor (2013) affirmed that web-based media are interactive in nature. They belong to the new genre of media that focus on social networking, allowing users to express themselves, interact with friends, share personal information as well as publish their own views on the internet. The ubiquitous access of these online devices no doubt, has democratizing effects as they offer citizens opportunities for more fully engagement in the political process. This means that voters have become more than just passive consumers of digital messages; they are now creators of the messages.

According to Kroeker and Yonck in Ayeni and Esan (2018:1), the uses of information and communication technologies in recent times have become inevitable and fundamental to operations and activities of organizations and societies. Statistics Canada, opines that information and communication technology is a field of work and study that includes technologies such as the desktop and laptop computers, software, peripherals, and connections to internet primarily for information processing and communications functions. This conceptualization points to the fact that ICT involves the use of computer software and hardware to process information for both private and public use. Research reveals that the usage of ICT in election has eliminated the incidents of multiple registrations, which had been one of the main political tools for rigging elections by unscrupulous and savage elements.

Wilson and Gapsiso (2014) opined that the history of ICT deployment in Nigeria dates back to the 1960s, but a more rigorous and policy based effort in respect of ICT deployment began with the introduction of the National Policy on information technology. The Federal Executive Council approved a National Information Technology policy in March 2001 and the implementation started in April with the establishment (through the Ministry of Science and Technology) of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA), charged with the implementation responsibility.

Prior to this period, modern electoral processes have not been imbibed, but 2011 political dispensation (and 2015 by extension), heralded the use of ICT's in electioneering processes. Various political parties, candidates, civil society organizations, INEC, security agencies and the electorates used it for enlightenment and to canvass for votes and support where necessary. The electorates have also become one of the major stakeholders on the ICT resulting from the access and contribution. INEC groups and civil society organizations are not left out of the business of using platforms provided by ICTs to educate and mobilize electorates to support their course. The place of ICT in the political system cannot be overstressed. It is significant in ensuring an effective and inclusive electoral system. However, its acquisition and applications are not without challenges especially that of low level telephone penetration and uneven access which appear to be insurmountable (Anderson *et al.*, 2017: 70-71).

### **Election**

Election is one of the key components in ensuring democracy because they “enhance citizens participation in governance, ensure governments accountability and encourage political participation. The free, fair and credible election is one of the basic and crucial prerequisites and elements of democratic government and governance. The election would be credible, when rules, regulations and laws governing the electoral process will be followed by and

ultimately, the credible candidate will be freely and fairly elected to represent the electorate (Mollah, 2016).

According to Dye (2001), election as a major instrument for the recruitment of political leadership in democratic societies; it is the key to effective participation in a democratic dispensation and the means through which people give their consent to government. Conforming to Abah and Nwokwu (2015:34) election, no doubt, is one of the defining features of representative democracy. It paves way for citizens who are within the voting age in a country to exercise their franchise in determining who govern them. Casting of votes during election is a powerful weapon to either select those contestants adjudged to have good tract records or vote out those leaders who fail to fulfill their campaign promises.

Political participation suggests a process through which individuals participate directly (conventionally) or indirectly (unconventionally) in the process of decision making and governance of the society. It is conventional when participation emanates through the formal organs or institutions of the state, while it is unconventional when individuals informally participate using the informal institutions to influence political decisions and activities of the government. Traditionally, majority of citizens ordinarily participate politically in the electoral process or communicate with their representatives or even criticize them. The last (minority) class of the population will remain apathetic, because their votes do not count, party programs not really translated in to action, lack of multiple parties or candidates or even public hatred against the available candidates (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2015:10).

However, election in Nigeria in terms of origin was introduced by the colonialists. Infact, election was unheard of in Africa until the advent of colonial rule. It was argued that electoral violence in the Nigerian body polity was traceable to the colonialists who resorted to the manipulation of elections on the basis of ethnic lines. For instance, in 1951 election in Kano, the colonial administration made frantic effort to frustrate northern allies of southerners opposed to the candidates of Emirs. These allies suffered various forms of discriminations as they were not given free hand to hold public meetings; intimidation and victimization of the highest order were meted out to them (Abah and Nwokwu, 2015:36).

### **Political Parties in 2015 Election**

Nigeria has been a country characterized by great history and great people of divergent culture and traditional values. These have initially been adopted to maintain unity in diversity and a strong federal constitution. But one major obstacle that has been in Nigerian federation is ethnicity, tribalism, regionalism and strong religious affiliations that embedded the political system, democratic processes, the civil service and even the economic sphere of the country (Ibrahim *et al.*, 2015:8).

Despite the fact that Nigeria is composed of over 450 ethnic groupings, there are three dominant ethnic groups, these are the Hausa/Fulani, Ibo and Yoruba with the Hausa Fulani dominating the Northern part of the country; the Ibo in the Eastern part and the Yoruba in the Western part of the country. The 1996 state creation and reorganization of the state structure in Nigeria saw these ethnic groupings being reorganized into six geo-political zones with the Hausa-Fulani comprising majorly the North-East, North-West and North-Central; the Ibo in the South-East; the Yoruba in the South-West; while the Niger Delta people comprise the South-South (Musasiru, 2015). Furthermore, Ibrahim *et al.*, (2015:8) were of the view it is pertinent to look at the nature of political orientation, parties and participation during the first republic. Political parties functioned along the lines of regional divide, having ethnic or

regional connotations. For instance- the Northern People's Congress (NPC) the Action Group (AG) and the National Council for Nigeria and the Cameroon (NCNC). The first was clearly for Northern Nigeria, the second for Western Nigeria and the third for Eastern Nigeria respectively. This regional political culture and orientation was fully given to all people of Nigeria as political participation and voting behavior was conditioned by regional politics.

Since the advent of the fourth republic in 1999, there have been four presidential elections with the 2015 election as the fifth. Though the multi-party system was adopted, three major political parties contested the election. These were the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the All Nigerian Peoples Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD). Apart from the AD that had its base in the South-West, the PDP and the APP were actually national parties (Egobueze and Ojirika, 2017:28).

In the build up to the elections which were rescheduled to hold on 28th March and 11th April, 2015, all the candidates of political parties contesting the presidential election signed a peace pact committing themselves, their followers and parties to a code of conduct contained in the Nigerian Electoral Act of 2010. It was the expectation of every Nigerian that they would remain peaceful in all their activities before, during and after the elections. In addition, a National Peace Committee was constituted headed by His Excellency, General Abdulsalami Abubakar (Rtd). It has been argued that the committee was critical in mediating differences between the political parties as well as building confidence in the electoral processes. The committee persuaded presidential candidates to sign two peace accords in the build up to the polls. The aspirants made pledges to shun violence and ethnic based campaigns and also promised to accept the results of the election (Abah and Nwokwu, 2015:38-39).

According to Moveh (2015:3), Presidential elections conducted by INEC was historic for two major reasons. First, the introduction of an electronic accreditation process in spite of challenges encountered, seemed to have remarkably increased the credibility of the country's election administration process. Secondly, it was the first time in the history of the country that an incumbent President will lose elections and conceded defeat to the opposition. Yet, the 2015 general election administration process as in the previous 4 general elections held from 1999 to 2011 was not without controversy. The INEC itself came under severe criticisms for the decision to introduce an electronic accreditation process which critics described as too premature, given the country's poor state of infrastructure particularly with regards to power supply.

On 28th March, 2015 the presidential election held, fourteen candidates and political parties contested the election. However, the three frontline parties were the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) which was also the ruling party, the All Progressives Congress (APC) the main opposition, and African People's Alliance (APA). At the end of the election, the candidate of the APC, Muhammadu Buhari was declared the winner of the election with 15,424,921 votes which represented 53.95% of the votes cast, while President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the candidate of PDP and the incumbent president had 12,853,162 votes, representing 44.96% of the votes cast while Adebaye Ayeni, the candidate of APA had only 53,537 votes (Egobueze and Ojirika, 2017:28-29).

Assibong and Oshanisi (2018:4) concludes that the use of the ICT, specifically card reader resulted to several debates before, during and after the 2015 general elections. However, the important impact of the device regardless of its various challenges during the election cannot be quantified. Although, the card reader deployment by INEC was to improve the electoral

process and deepen the democratic process, however, lack of trust, suspicion and altercations among the stakeholders with vested interest in the election created tension within the body polity. With the use of the card reader in the 2015 general elections and the gradual deployment of technology in subsequent general elections in Nigeria, the prospect of Nigeria belonging to one of the countries of the world where elections are driven largely by technology is quite close.

### Theoretical Framework

The Systems theory would be used to create a clear picture to the study. Since Aristotle's claim that knowledge is derived from the understanding of the whole and not that of the single parts (Aristotle's Holism), researchers have been struggling with systems and parts in terms of their contents and their relative dynamics. This historic effort evolved during the last century into so-called "systems theory". Systems theory is an interdisciplinary theory about every system in nature, in society and in many scientific domains as well as a framework with which we can investigate phenomena from a holistic approach. Systems thinking come from the shift in attention from the part to the whole, considering the observed reality as an integrated and interacting unicum of phenomena where the individual properties of the single parts become indistinct. In contrast, the relationships between the parts themselves and the events they produce through their interaction become much more important, with the result that "system elements are rationally connected" towards a shared purpose (Mele *et al.*, 2010:126).

System theory was proposed in the 1940's by the biologist Ludwig Von Bertalanffy and furthered by Ross Ashby. David Easton is usually credited with pioneering the application of the systems approach which he came out with on in 1953. He defines the political system as the system of interactions in any society through which binding or authoritative decisions are made and implemented. He considers the political system as existing within an environment or other systems, physical, biological, social, psychological etc which affect it and are in turn affected by the political system through continuous transactions and exchanges. According to Easton, the political system functions by getting inputs from its environment; inputs are event in the environment which envoke response from it. The inputs could be demand that values be allocated in a particular way or they could be supports. That is expression of approval for particular decisions. Inputs undergo a conversion process within the political system and come out as outputs which are authoritative e.g. government political and judicial decisions (Mbachu, 2013:23).

Chikere and Nwoka (2015:1) conclude that systems theory focuses on the relations between the parts. Rather than reducing an entity such as the human body into its parts or elements (e.g. organs or cells), systems theory focuses on the arrangement of and relations between the parts and how they work together as a whole. The way the parts are organized and how they interact with each other, determines the properties of that system. The behaviour of the system is independent of the properties of the elements. This often referred to as a holistic approach to understanding phenomena.

The theory fits into this study because electronic process are based on system function that encompasses all aspects of electronic engineering of political parties, electronic voting, data base of electorate, INEC officials, security personnel and so on. In relation to this study, since a system theory as explained above is a group of related part working together to form a whole in which a dysfunction in one will affect the whole system, it is assumed that, if the right resources are deployed during election and encourage freedom of interaction, speech

and expression during election. They will be free and fair election devoid of violence and halt of freedom of expression.

### Electronic Voting in Nigeria

A register of voters is an indispensable document for the conduct of elections; which should consist of only the eligible voters in a constituency. A reliable voter's register is one that contains no names of under aged, deceased persons and fictitious or fake names. In addition, the voters register should also consist of names of eligible voters resident in the area where they intend to vote; and in an ideal situation provisions should be available for making claims and observations about the details of the electorate contained in the register. Thus, the process of voter registration is a major test of the credibility of the election administration system; and the extent to which any election would be successful is determined largely by the credibility of the voters register (Moveh, 2015:16). Relatively, Diamond (2010) affirms that the Internets decentralised nature and capacity to reach large numbers of people instantaneously are well suited to grassroots organising. In contrast to television and radio, the new ICTs are two-way and even multiday forms of communication.

Relatively, the methods used in registration of voters and conducting elections in Nigeria from 1999 to 2017 ranges from the use of typewriters to Direct Data Capture Machine (DDCM), Electronic Voters' Register (EVR), Smart Card Reader (SCR) and e-collation. (Ayeni and Esan, 2018:2). In the same vein Moveh (2015:22-23) noted that unlike in the 1999-2011 general elections a fresh voter registration exercise was not conducted for the 2015 general elections. Instead a continuous voter registration exercise was conducted to give Nigerians who just turned 18years and those who did not register in 2011 the opportunity to register and vote in the 2015 general elections. The continuous voter registration exercise for the 2015 general elections therefore commenced in November 2014; and the major improvement over the previous registration exercises conducted by INEC for the 1999-2011 general elections, as earlier noted was the issuance of permanent voter cards to the electorate, which INEC insisted was going to be used in the 2015 general elections.

According to Assibong and Oshanisi (2018:2), the smart card reader which was used for the first time in Nigeria's electoral process was the most contentious issue and a critical component of the 2015 general elections in Nigeria but remains one of the greatest innovative technologies in the history of Nigerian elections. The smart card reader is a technological device setup to authenticate and verify on election day a Permanent Voter Card (PVC) issued by INEC. The device uses a cryptographic technology that has ultra-low power consumption, with a single core frequency of 1.2GHz and an Android 4.2.2. Operating System. In other words, the card reader is designed to read information contained in the embedded chip of the permanent voter's card issued by INEC to verify the authenticity of the Permanent Voter's Card (PVC) and also carry out a verification of the intending voter by matching the biometrics obtained from the voter on the spot with the ones stored on the PVC.

Anderson *et al.*, (2017:78) concludes that the 2011 general elections in Nigeria heralded the use of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the history of electioneering process, while 2015 elections experienced an explosive use of it. President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan and other contestants made extensive use of the platforms enabled by ICTs in the campaign process. Some key players who were active in the 2011 and 2015 general elections are political candidates, civil society organizations (C.S.O), INEC, volunteer groups, security agents and electorates. Conforming to Assibong and Oshanisi (2018:3) the use of the card reader for the 2015 general elections was also criticized on the premise that its timing was too



close for over a sixty eight million Nigerian voters. Considering the fact that the device was relatively a new technology that has not been tested or tried in Nigeria, it was therefore argued that INEC should step aside the card reader in the 2015 general elections.

### **The Role of Social Media during the 2015 Election in Nigeria**

Nigeria has witnessed an exponential growth in internet usage. From a modest 200,000 users in 2000, now an estimated 51 per cent of the population uses the internet (<http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm>). There are a total of 186,410,197 active mobile lines in Nigeria as of February 2015 according to the Nigerian Communications Commission,

([http://www.ncc.gov.ng/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=125:subscriberstatistics&catid=65:industry-information&Itemid=73](http://www.ncc.gov.ng/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=125:subscriberstatistics&catid=65:industry-information&Itemid=73)) a twofold increase from the 93 million reported in 2011 (Miniwatts, 2012). Much of this increase is driven by a growth in mobile web access. A Gallup poll from 2012 found that almost 73 per cent of Nigerians owned a mobile phone (<http://www.bbg.gov/blog/2012/08/20/new-bbg-gallup-data-shows-dramatic-rise-in-mobile-use-in-nigeria/>). That figure is now expected to be over 80 per cent. The Mobile Africa 2015 study, which surveyed 3,500 mobile users in five countries across Africa, reported that 47 per cent of Nigerians used their phone to access the internet (<http://www.itnewsafrika.com>).

The elevated position of social media in Nigerian society and public life can also be seen from the changing nature of news websites which have informed Nigerian about the 2015 election. Twitter and facebook was the major used media platform during the election. The last election was largely influenced by social media which actually led to the surprised victory of APC presidential election due to the huge investment of APC by employing strong media influencer. According to Jamie *et al.*, (2015) Nigeria has witnessed an exponential growth in internet and social media use. From a modest 200,000 users in 2000, by 2015 around 30 per cent of the population is online, increasingly on smart phones. Although, this began before the 2011 general election but during the 2015 election this received a huge boost because as earlier said there was a widespread media attention for its role in informing, engaging and empowering citizens in Nigeria and across Africa.

In the research conducted by Jamie and associates (2015) found that Twitter was ten times more active over the election period than at 'normal' times. In their diagnosis they argued that 12.4 million tweets were tweeted about the elections over the period; and these tweets tended to be divided into 'reportage' (i.e. people describing events) and 'comment' (i.e. people commenting on events). Furthermore, there were 1.38 million unique Twitter users posting content about the election on Twitter, 216,000 Facebook users interacting with content on popular public Facebook pages.

A practical examples was twitter which gave the APC a upper hand and influenced their voting pattern and behaviors to the fact that APC Buhari's campaigns, his use the twitter app to campaign their political agenda by laying emphasize on the major issues confronting the then administration such as corruption, the Immigration employment saga, the Boko Haram insurgency and crisis in the Niger Delta. Even before the elections polls were conducted in twitter which shows that would win the election which led to the change of the 2015 elections. Which means the social media gave a daily report regarding the analysis before the election based on happening situation across the country which Nigerians were posting on either facebook or twitter. The social media in Nigeria gave daily reports about election reports, monitor real situation across the country where Nigerian report situation from their

places and Tag other important bodies responsible for the election such as INEC, news channels, international organisations and matters like that.

The media was at the forefront of the agitation for electoral reforms, reporting irregularities and malpractices that characterized the 2003 and 2007 elections and called for immediate actions after elections (Omoera, 2010). There is sadness in every Nigerians eye regarding election due to the huge electoral mal practice. To Nigerians everything about the elections in remains bad because mandate are bought and sold without reflecting the Nigerians mandates. However, the media played a crucial role in the emergence of Buhari as the president of Nigeria and for the first time in 16th years PDP lost presidential election. Everything worked well for Buhari due to the media and Nigerians were able to report real voting situation to INEC handle to face book page. For Nigerian politician, they are aware that social media have changed the way Nigerians think, write and react to all the political process build up before and after elections. They all have political digital campaignist who strategically manage their social media platform either through face book, YouTube or twitter to sell their political agenda and party manifestos to the public to know their candidates and why they should vote for their party. Through the reading or watching this in return influence their voting decision. Therefore there is a strong relationship between social media and politics. The new digital media tools as earlier mentioned have not only changed political campaigning through the internet and news reporting but as well influence voting and vote casting. In developed countries like US votes are also cast online. As well electoral fraud are also reported online with this, in Nigeria social media can serve as means to reduces electoral violence and with hope that 2019 could be fair and better than 2015 general elections.

### Conclusion

The paper has analyzed the role of social media in the 2015 general election with specific references to the presidential election. PDP lost the presidential election due to the proper use of social media by APC in which they capitalized on security challenges confronting Nigeria before the election. APC came up with possible solutions by disseminating them through face book, twitter, newspaper, television and matters like that. Therefore, the mass media has been able to sustain Nigeria democracy through the use of internet technology in electioneering, public perception of political parties, political process campaign and voting in which the card reader where used in the country for the every first time. ICT and social media have changed election process because elections results are announced digitally and in Nigeria the whole process of election is managed by media personnel of each party and these operations are based on system function that encompasses all aspects social media platforms.

### Recommendations

As seen in the argument of the paper, Social media will serve as tool not only to combat electoral violence but ensure peace building during election and voting process. This attainable with the fear that act of violence could be recorded and posted on face book, twitter by tagging either the Nigerian police force, armed force of Nigeria or INEC. The fear of this will serve as deterrence for individuals or thugs who want to cause or disturb the election process. Secondly, Nigeria government should make sure that internet network provider improve on their internet service. Thirdly, data provision should be made cheap so that every Nigerians can have access to subscribe and report real situation during and after elections with this electoral fraud can be managed. Finally, INEC should provide online guide for all political parties.

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