

THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND VOTER BEHAVIOUR

BY

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Abstract

This study explores the multifaceted role of social media in shaping political engagement and voter behaviour in Nigeria, focusing on the general elections of 2015, 2019 and 2023. Employing a mixed-methods approach that combines quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews across diverse demographic and geographic segments, the research investigates how platforms such as Twitter, Facebook and WhatsApp have influenced political participation, information dissemination, and electoral decision-making. The findings reveal that social media serves as a double-edged sword: while it enhances political polarization. The study highlights the emergence of digital influencers and online communities as significant actors in the political landscape, contributing to both increased civic engagement and the propagation of partisan narratives. These dynamics underscore the complexity of digital political communication and its consequences for democratic processes in emerging democracies. By situating the Nigerian experience within the broader discourse on digital democracy, this research contributes to understanding the intricate interplay between technology and political behaviour. The study offers insights into the challenges and opportunities presented by social media in fostering participatory governance, with implications for policymakers, civil society, and electoral bodies.

Keywords: Social Media, Political Engagement, Voter Behaviour, Digital Democracy, Electoral Participation, Nigeria.