

**SOCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTIONEERING: A STUDY OF NIGERIA 2015
AND UNITED STATES 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POST
GRADUATE STUDIES, COVENANT UNIVERSITY, OTA, OGUN STATE, IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.Sc.) DEGREE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

JUNE, 2017

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that, this research was carried out and written by Ekwueme Marylin Chijioke under my supervision and submitted to the Department of Political Science and International Relations, School of Social Sciences, College of Leadership Developmental Studies.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Almighty God for seeing me through this work successfully.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the almighty and never failing God of heaven for engracing me to start and finish this work even when at times when it looked unrealistic. To him and him alone be all the glory, honor, and praise.

I also acknowledge the Chancellor of Covenant University Dr. David Oyedepo for giving me this great platform to excel in my academics. I also appreciate the Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, and the Registrar Covenant University for favorable Policies to ensure the smooth running of the Post Graduate school.

To the Dean School of Post Graduate Studies and the entire team, thank you very much for making the Master's program a smooth one. Words cannot express my gratitude to the College of Leadership and Developmental Studies for structuring and restructuring the Department of Political Science and International Relations.

I appreciate the effort of the incumbent Head of Department, Dr. Oluyemi Fayomi, God bless you ma.

To my supervisor Dr. Sheriff Folarin, thank you for being a father, a friend and a mentor indeed, God bless you and your entire family real good, men and women will work so hard to favour you and your children. God bless you so much Sir. I also appreciate all my lecturers Prof. Daniel Gbereuvie, Dr. Assibong, Dr. Moses Duruji, Dr. Felix Chidozie, Dr. Dele Seteolu, Dr. Bankole, and Mr Abasilim. Thank you so much Sirs for you time, effort, and energy all through, God bless you.

To my parents Mr and Mrs Ekwueme for their support both financially and morally, I say God bless and replenish you. I appreciate all my siblings for their love, support and care, I Love you all. I deeply appreciate Mr and Mrs Ifijieh for their love and support.

I also want to say a very big thank you to my dear friend Attih Asuquo for being a friend in need and indeed, may God bless and increase you and your entire family more than you expect in Jesus Name, Amen.

Thanks to all my friends Oshanisi Tunmise, Adekunle Oludele, Richard-Ojo Olayemi, Agboola Wale, Delano Olayide, Folorunsho Ogo, Olowofela Anuoluwapo, Afolabi Folafunmi, Oloriola Tobi, and Daniel Esude thank you all for your words of encouragement and support. Thank you so much Rachael you came towards the end but your support, prayers and care was just beyond comprehension, God will raise helpers for you in time of need. God bless you

Finally thank you once again to God almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, the owner of my life and my all in all for making me so wonderful, meeting all my needs connecting me to wonderful people connecting me to great personalities and blessing me more than I could have ever imagined. Lord my thank you is not enough to show my appreciation but I am very grateful for your goodness, mercy, and never-ending love towards me. Thank you Jesus.

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century can be described as the age of information technology. Technology runs almost all human endeavours, including politics. In recent times, politicians have swerved from the use of traditional media (broadcast and print) to the use of social media to carry out their political and electoral campaigns in order to realize their political ambition. One of the major challenges of electioneering in the 21st century is that, due to the faceless nature of the internet, social media spreads propaganda, false information, and hate speeches about an electoral candidate. These go viral and are used to manipulate the electorate. This paper examines the role of social media in the awareness, participation, and possible influence on the Nigerian electorate in their decision or choice of leadership during the Nigeria 2015 and United States 2016 presidential election. The method of analysis is both quantitative and descriptive and the data are drawn from secondary sources as well as the use of questionnaire. Findings show that the social media played a major role in mobilizing people, creating awareness, as well as participation and circulation of information about candidates. It therefore recommends, among other things, that practical regulatory methods on what should and should not be posted on social media should be put in place by the governing bodies of various social media platforms. This will help to censor and check information that spread on social media platforms. This way, campaigns that use and encourage hate speeches or instill violence will not be posted or published.