

**Bournemouth
University**

Visualising the Voices of Nigerian Youths:

Motivations to Participate in Politics on
Twitter

A dissertation submitted by

Aisha Sambo

In partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of
BA (Hons) Marketing Communications

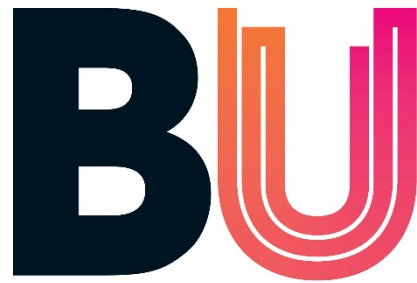
CMC Academic Group
Faculty of Media and Communication
Bournemouth University
2015/2016

Submission Date: 31st May 2016

AUTHOR DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is all my own work and the sources of information and the material I have used (including the internet) have been fully identified and properly acknowledged. I also declare that the hard copy and online submission of the dissertation are identical to one another.

Student signature



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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's 2015 presidential elections were revolutionary because for the first time in history an opposition party won the presidential elections. The electoral body, politicians and citizens used Twitter to discuss the major campaigns at the time and issues concerned with the nation. This study broadly looks at how social networking sites and young citizens in Nigeria are currently using social media in the political arena. More specifically, the study focuses on how the micro-blogging site, Twitter is being used and what motivates young Nigerians to use it to participate in politics.

Young peoples relationship with contemporary politics is often complex. Pervious literature examines young citizen's political participation falls into a disengaged paradigm – seeing youths as passive and devoid of political interests. The problem of youth participation is changing based on claims by recent academics that young people are not disengaged from politics but is conducted in a different way, through utilizing Internet technologies, such as Twitter. Young people frequently engage in Internet based political activities such as, blogging, signing petitions, electronic voting, posting and distributing campaign information and videos, which have a bearing on political participation. The aim of this research is to contribute to the growing literature on political participation on Twitter among young citizens.

This paper is divided into four sections; firstly, existing literature surrounding Nigeria's political history and the current situation will be reviewed, narrowing the focus on development and contributions of young Twitter users to political participation. This will form the basis of the literature review for this research. Secondly, methodological processes and issues are dealt with in the following section, which reviews the qualitative approach, outlining the target sample and sampling method. Discussion here details the qualitative techniques employed; semi-structured in-depth interviews are conducted with nine participants. The final section identifies and interprets findings of the research, and the

implications will be discussed in the concluding section.

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“Words, in my humble opinion, are the most inexhaustible source of magic we have.”

Albus Dumbledore

In the name of Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful, the source of true wisdom and knowledge, from whom I drawn faith, strength, courage and inspiration to complete this work, thank you.

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Finally, I would like to thank my parents; whose never-ending support, love, and encouragement is one of the main driving forces behind my passion for writing since childhood. Thank you for supporting and sponsoring my education I feel truly blessed and hope I continue to make you proud. Thank you all for the prayers, guidance, love, support, and encouragement. God only helps those who help themselves...

DEDICATION

I would like to show appreciation to all the women in my family, my grandmother, mother, cousins and aunts, those who are still with us and those who are not. I am truly grateful for them all, there is such great strength and beauty in the diversity of my family and I owe it to all the women who kept it together and instilled discipline and courage in me. Their support and love during tough times has been encouraging, you have inspired to always be the best version of myself and to put my trust and faith in God.

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Table 1: Motives identified for participating in politic on Twitter

GLOSSARY

Abbreviation	Explanation
APC	All Progressives Congress
INEC	Independent National Electoral Commission
PDP	Peoples Democratic Party
SNS	Social Networking Sites
U&G	Uses and Gratification

1. INTRODUCTION

Twitter, one of the most popular micro-blogging SNS, has grown in importance as a forum for deliberative democracy, providing new ways to participate in politics, especially among young citizens around the world. Twitter, is ranked amongst the most popular SNS in Nigeria. Twitter was created in 2006, and allows users to share up to 140 characters online including photos and videos (Neuhaus and Webmoor 2012). Before the rise of Twitter, studies have investigated the influence of the Internet on political communications (Hill and Hughes 1998; Jones 1998; Lilleker and Jackson 2010, 2011; Livingstone 1999; McChesney 2000; Norris 2001; Schweitzer 2008; Vaccari 2008). Other scholars have further explored the ability of the Internet to promote participation amongst young citizens, who have traditionally been characterised as having low levels of political engagement (Baber 2003; Dahlberg 2011; Gomes 2005; Henn et al. 2002; Hansson et al. 2014). With increased access to Internet in developing countries, such as Nigeria, young citizens and even politicians are using the Internet for political purposes: tweeting, participating in online polls, and writing blogs, among other things. Slowly, Nigeria's political processes are adapted to new communication cultures.

Participation in politics has been described as the way citizens express their desires, needs, and influence the distribution of information and important resources (Barber 1984; Dahl 1989; Fishkin 1995; Habermas 1996; Verba and Nie 1972). Citizens may express their political views through voting, volunteering, demonstrations, party membership or even discussing/reading about politics. These have been classified as traditional acts of political participation, which form a prerequisite for effective democracy (Barber 1984; Dahl 1989; Habermas 1984; Lazarsfeld et al. 1944; Milbrath 1965; Putnam 1995; 2000). Scholars have drawn attention to the declines in these forms of participation, particularly among the youth (Carpini 2000; Putnam 1995, 2000), and there has been growing concerns about young citizens generally losing interest in politics.

However, some scholars argued that political participation among the youth is not in decline; rather it is being expressed in different ways (Bang 2005). Through using the Internet, young citizens around the world are using SNS to express their political views. Studies have shown the potentials of using social networking sites (SNS), particularly Twitter for political engagement (Adi et al. 2014; Burgess and Bruns 2012; Castells 2007; Chadwick 2008; Larsson and Moe 2011; Storsul 2014; Veneti and Poulakidakos 2015). Harris (2008) suggests the way youths use online platforms for political discussions demonstrates their desire to be part of meaningful conversations. For example, Twitter posts by young citizens during the Arab revolution provided alternative information to the state media's censored and biased coverage of events, through sharing their personal testimonies, videos and photos online (Allagui and Kubler 2011). Twitter has also shaped broader political dynamics, for example during the Egyptian revolution, Meraz and Papacharissi's (2013, p.160) study introduced the term 'networked gatekeeping' to describe how non-elite citizens have become 'active participants in the realization of what is newsworthy'. Young audiences are challenging media professionals and political structures through participating in politics online.

Despite the positive influences of using Twitter by young citizens, it still remains unclear if the Internet harms or benefits the diversity of political opinion, which is considered a practice of deliberative democracy (Coleman and Blumler 2009; Habermas 1989). More recently, scholars have questioned how the rise of SNS can influence political participation amongst young people (Bakker and de Vreese 2011). The debates surrounding the influence of new technologies, such as Twitter, to enhance political participation amongst young citizens is a growing area of research in need of more theoretical and empirical examination. The literature for this research combines theories from political and communications scholars. Concepts of the public sphere will be explored to understand how Twitter may facilitate democratic deliberation, it would be valuable to understand how Nigerian youths political participation in an online space. In addition, previous scholars have adopted the uses and gratification (U&G) theory to understand the motivations and factors of media use. It would be useful to review the various studies explored in these areas to explore the value of Twitter to the youth.

Arguably, Nigeria, Africa's largest democracy and most populous country, also experienced a revolution similar to Egypt's and the rest of the Arab spring. PDP ruling Nigeria for over 17 years shows a democratic deficit in the country. However, for the first time since Nigeria's independence, the country witnessed an opposition party winning the presidential election. Twitter may have created a more transparent elections process, closely monitoring the elections in real time. These circumstances make it ideal to study online political participation amongst the youth. Twitter may have played a significant role, facilitating political engagement among Nigerians and even improved the election processes. By examining how young citizens use Twitter, it could provide deeper insight with regard to their participatory intentions and how they believe their participation is helping them to achieve what they want politically.

Few studies have examined the motivations of young people's use of SNS for political purposes (Gil De Zúñiga et al. 2014). Researchers have made little effort to investigate how young citizens define political participation and what it means to them in an online space. The use of SNS for political purposes may have revolutionized politics in Nigeria, and the motivations to use Twitter for political purposes are particularly strong among politically engaged youth. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to understand the motivations of young citizens to participate in politics on Twitter. The aim of this research is explore the factors that motivate young Nigerian citizens to participate in politics through Twitter.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

NIGERIAN POLITICS

This section focuses on the role the media has played and still plays in influencing politics, especially during heightened times of political activity, such as elections. Firstly, it is important to understand the political situation in Nigeria and how the media influences and affects participation in politics. Additionally, key challenges facing the country's democracy are discussed.

1. POLITICAL BACKGROUND

As early as 1944, political parties were being established, despite Nigeria being under colonial rule. In 1960, Nigeria became independent from British colonial rule, with 29 of its post-colonial years spent under military dictatorship. According to Kur and Nyekwere (2015), despite the impact of such rule, there was significant political rivalry amongst the three regional governments at the time, which contributed significantly to the expansion of television broadcasting. Arguably, the real emergence of broadcasting was as a result of political rivalry and a reaction against the suppression of freedom of expression. Military rule as a norm was never accepted and Nigerians have always manifested strong commitments to democracy (Charles 2013).

However, after emerging from military rule in 1999, the country began struggling with a poor election system. In 1999, wealthy retired generals, who inherited power from the military, formed PDP. Four general elections held between 1999 and 2011 have been won by the party (Pate and Yar'Adua 2015). This is because PDP established a zoning policy, which determines the rotation of presidential power between the elites of the north and south. Olowojolu (2015) explained how

“over the years, the Nigerian political system has been shaped by ethno-religious cleavages.”

Although the zoning policy was unwritten, PDP members acted according to the arrangement (Awopeju et al. 2012). However, the arrangement was broken when the incumbent Dr. Goodluck Jonathan, a southerner, contested for the Presidency in 2011 following the death of his predecessor, President Umaru Musa Ya'Adua, a northerner, in 2010 (Charles 2013). Jonathan's candidacy pitched the north against the south, due to the shift in presidential power from the predominantly Muslim north to the Christian south in the 2011 elections.

The north claimed their right to contest the nomination on the basis of zoning policy (Charles 2013), causing tension within the PDP. In addition, there were withdrawals of several senior political figures in the PDP after Johnathan's presidency. According to Orji (2014), the PDP defectors established an alliance with four opposition parties to create APC. The rise of APC was significant, because several attempts had been made in the past to create a strong opposition party, but failed (Egwemi 2009). Tension with PDP may have provided APC with more leverage. APC grew stronger with clear potentials to displace the ruling party ahead of the 2015 elections (Olowojolu 2015; Onapajo 2015). A major factor that may have contributed to APC's strength was their use of SNS ahead of the 2015 elections.

2. INTRODUCING SNS TO POLITICS

Historically, Nigerian politicians sought to engage the public through traditional forms of mass media, such as radio, television and newspapers. These forms of communication play a critical role in the electoral process by providing information about politics, reporting and advertising candidates despite it serving the interests of those in power (Pate and Yar'Adua 2015). However, traditional media slowly became a means to facilitate political propaganda (Kur and Nyekwere 2015). The government communicated bias information promoting PDP's political views, this may have contributed to a high level of distrust in politicians and the government. Wilkins (2000, p.572) found that 'political distrust appears to be among the stronger predictors of political participation'.

Media companies in Nigeria have been controlled by and are favourable towards the government. Interestingly, audiences in post authoritarian African democracies, such as Nigeria, trust government-owned broadcast media more than they trust private broadcasters, despite the lack of independence and history of state propaganda in the public media (Moehler and Singn 2011). However, young Nigerians tend not to trust the government and

the information they provide through television and newspapers. The information has neither encouraged them to participate in politics, or fully represent their views (Uzuegbunam 2015). Young Nigerians are finding alternative ways to access more reliable information, voice their political opinions and discuss with politics with others through the use of SNS.

Young citizens are using new media to address political and social concerns (Cohen et al. 2012; Valenzuela et al. 2012; Yang and DeHart 2016). Since the Internet fit well with young people's informal, peer-oriented, anti-authority approach to political activity (Livingstone 2009), the use of Twitter may be an effective way for young citizen to participate in politics, and even encourage them to vote. According to Dahlgreen (2009) and Habermas (2006) there is a lack of opportunity for citizens to engage in political dialogue. However, Larsson and Moe (2011) argue that Twitter has provided interesting opportunities for online campaigning and deliberation. SNS provide a platform for democratic participation where young citizens excluded from the bureaucracy permeated by traditional media have opportunities to make their contribution to governance (Uzochukwu and Ekwugha 2014). Political parties in Western democracies have slowly turned to new media in order to revive their relationship with citizens (Veneti and Poulakidakos 2015), this trend can also be seen in developing countries, such as Nigeria, where politicians are also using SNS to engage with younger citizens.

APC presidential contenders created Twitter accounts, such as @MBuhari, @ProfOsinbajo to communicate their manifestos and interact with the electorate prior to the 2015 elections (Johnson 2015). Other politicians also increased their efforts to appeal to the public during elections by using SNS (Uzochukwu and Ekwugha 2014). Since 2007, SNS have been in Nigeria for political participation, it has grown to become an important political communications tool (Ifukor 2010). However, Lilleker and Malagón (2010, p.26) suggest some politicians may use blogs as 'campaign gimmicks', thus it could be argued that Nigerian politicians followed the same suit by using Twitter. Additionally, Poulakidakos and Veneti (2015) argue that political parties, using Twitter, extensively questions their use of the SNS. Alternatively, politicians might view Twitter as a strategic communication tool to reach key audiences (Jackson and Lilleker 2011). The level of activism experienced during the 2011 general elections, opened unique platforms for political campaigning, debates and

discussions online in a way that mainstream media has not been able to facilitate in the past (Uzuegbunam 2015). In addition, Ifukor (2010) predicted that “voiceless citizens” would become electronically empowered as access to the Internet increases.

3. YOUTH REPRESENTATION AND INTERNET ACCESS

Nigeria is an extremely politically polarised country with the young population expanding rapidly and has witnessed an exponential growth in Internet and SNS use within just a few years. A youth in Nigeria is defined as a citizen between the ages of 18-35 years old (The National Youth Policy 2009). According to Awoegbenle and Iwuamadi (2013) the Nigerian youth population represents 60% of the total population (approximately 180 million). There are over 97,000,000 mobile users with Internet subscription (National Bureau of Statistics 2016), even with the optimism of increased Internet access and usage, penetration is still low with only 46% of Internet active users (Internet Live Stats 2016). In addition, King (2006) suggests people who participated in political issues online are likely to be highly educated and already politically engaged. Similarly, Oser and Marien (2016) highlight that online activists are likely to include young people who may be better educated and wealthier.

According to Storsul (2014), young people hesitated using SNS for political deliberation because they were concerned with how they presented themselves and were reluctant to stand out as highly political. Nevertheless, the use of Twitter during previous elections in Nigeria might have assisted to inform citizens more on political processes, and Blekesaune et al. (2012, p.113) notes ‘democracy functions best when citizens are politically informed’. New technologies such as Twitter are becoming widely adapted for political activities and participation in these online environments is becoming increasingly important as a means of communicating directly to the public, especially during elections (Storsul 2014).

4. ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA

Previous elections in Nigeria have been fraught with irregularities. INEC has been under scrutiny for poor election misconduct, prone to manipulation (Orji 2014). Norris (2014) established a link between the integrity of elections and outbreaks of electoral violence; this may suggest why elections are often accompanied with violence in Nigeria. A leading commentator on Nigerian politics, Pete Lewis (2011 cited by Charles 2013, p.111) described the 2007 elections as a ‘low point for electoral integrity’, following violent outbreaks. Similarly, the 2011 post-election also followed with violence, and was cited as

“the worst outbreak of post-electoral violence since the civil war” (Campbell 2013, p.15).

This was a major concern ahead of the 2015 polls (Orji 2014); nevertheless, SNS changed the political landscape for Nigerians, especially for election processes, political campaigning and engagement (Pate and Yar’Adua 2015). For example, it was difficult to change or manipulate results from the 2015 elections because SNS served as an effective avenue for policing results. Twitter facilitated the checking of election rigging, as voting citizens and INEC closely monitored the election process by posting results online. Similarly, Twitter was used in Iran to spur more media coverage to check voting irregularities during elections (Morozov 2009). According to Gil De Zúñiga et al. (2009) using blogs are important predictors of online political engagement. Additionally, Onapajo (2015) highlighted how new election reforms by INEC played a significant role in improving the quality of Nigerian elections, manifesting positive outcomes in the 2015 general elections.

Nigeria’s fifth general elections were postponed by six weeks to March 28th, INEC citing reasons mainly due to the Boko Haram insurgency curbed adequate participation in some north eastern states and poor distribution of permanent voter cards (Buchanan 2015). Analysts feared the APC challenging nearly two decades of PDP dominance might cause religious and tribal tensions (Orji 2014). Nevertheless, the 2015 elections have been cited the most peaceful, free and transparent elections in the country’s history (ECOWAS 2015; Muluzi 2015). Nigeria experienced the emergence of a strong new opposition party winning the 2015 Presidential elections (Onapajo 2015). The next chapter will highlight the relationship between political participation and new media, specifically Twitter and how the micro-blogging site has become an important tool for young citizen reshaping the way politics is practiced and covered.

5. THE POLITICAL POWER OF TWITTER

While a majority of studies have focused on how SNS is used in politics in Western democracies, there are opportunities to explore the same in developing countries, such as Nigeria. This section will explore how the Internet, particularly Twitter, may change accepted models and theories of political participation, fostering deliberative democracy. The section details why Twitter may be a logical space for an exploration of youth's everyday political participation and the contributions of the Twitterati to political discussions. Contextualizing, the idea of the public sphere will be drawn theoretically. Due to the complexity of the term, this research does not offer an extensive review of this theoretical construct, rather it aims to focus on the relevant debates related to this study as previous academics have done (Veneti and Poulakidakos 2015). The U&G theory will also form the theoretical bases for this section, as it has been used in the past to examine Twitter use for political purposes (Parmelee and Bichard 2012).

5. THE TWITTER-SPHERE

New Internet technologies, such as Twitter, introduce new ways for young citizens to discuss and deliberate about politics. Some scholars argue that political participation is not declining; rather it is being carried out in different ways. Scholars have debated the possibilities of new patterns of political engagement different from those of previous generations (Dalton 2008). When considering youth's political activities, the Internet is an important part of participation (Smith et al. 2009), and some scholars suggest SNS may be part of the public sphere (Boyd 2007).

According to Habermas's (1989) theory, the public sphere provides a space where citizens discuss political matters, argue their claims, and listen to each other's concerns (Chambers 2003; Dahlgren 2005; Fishkin 1995; Habermas 1989). Some theorists agree with Habermas on the importance of citizen debate as a precondition for strong democracy. However, there are also critics of his ideas on the grounds that the theory represents an imaginative perception of the public dialogue procedure. Kellner (2000) claims Habermas's theory deserves more scrutiny because the central focus of his views, on the public sphere, requires conditions for true democracy. To enable rational public opinion, political and social theorists

have argued that democracy requires a public sphere of informal citizen deliberation to guide a political system (Dryzek 2000; Flynn 2004; Graham 2015; Morris 2001; Young 2000). Twitter has become a space for conducting public discussions on common interests (Juris 2012), therefore has been considered as an extension of the public sphere.

6. DEMOCRATIC DELIBERATION

Recent findings suggest SNS provide youths with important access to public dialogue and discussions (Boyd 2007; 2010). The structure of Twitter encourages users to either act as audiences who follow, content producers, or distributors who are followers. It is considered as a platform for receiving news, entertainment, and advertising messages (Neuhaus and Webmoor 2012). Therefore, Twitter's environment encourages participation in the context of political discourse and suggests a two-way model of democratic deliberation (Van Dijck 2011). Deliberation occurs when individuals, with dissimilar points of view, exchange ideas with the intent of coming to an agreement. According to Gutmann and Thompson (2004), deliberative democracy allows free and equal citizens to justify decisions in a process where citizens give each other reasons that are mutually acceptable and generally accessible, aiming to reach conclusions.

Low election turnout and party membership is common among youth (Dahlgren 2009; Milner 2010), however the use of SNS has an effective way of attracting young voters and encouraging them to participate more offline. For example, President Obama's online campaign played an important role in mobilizing young voters to rallies (Castells 2009). Contrary to this optimism of Twitter driving deliberation and encouraging political participation, studies have shown that SNS had not seemed to revolutionize political participation for the large majority of young people (Bakardjieva 2010, Olsson and Dahlgren 2010; Storsul 2014). In addition, online discussions often turn into online feuds. For example, Lathrop and Ruma (2010) argue that when it came to online deliberation, many online discussions did not seem to arrive at resolutions; they often left users more frustrated than enlightened. Twitter has been identified with considerable hesitation to foster dialogue (Poulakidakos and Veneti 2015). Despite criticisms of the Arab spring, the mobilisation of students in Western countries, and the emergence of the occupy movement's online

participation have demonstrated that SNS provides a networking opportunity for young citizens to participate and deliberate in democratic life (Dahlgren 2009), and a society without deliberation cannot be considered a democracy (Schuler 2010).

Internet technologies are changing the nature of political communication, producing some remarkable results with regard to how previously disengaged young citizens are now communicating and interacting more with politics. The ability for Internet technologies in political campaigning to empower democracy through fostering participation and encouraging political conversation has been a contested subject. Therefore, there is a need to understand the motives behind online political participation among young citizens and examine how new media impacts and influences democracy. After all, active political participation in the democratic process is considered essential characteristic of democracy. To understand the motivations of young citizens to participate in politics online, the uses and gratification theory is a useful framework for examining Twitter use.

7. FRAMEWORK FOR EXAMINING TWITTER USE

The Uses and Gratification Theory

The U&G theory has been considered as a useful framework for studies that examine new technology (Kaye and Johnson 2002, Park et al. 2009). Blumler and Katz's (1974) U&G theory describes users having four needs they seek through the media; diversion, personal relationships; personal identity and surveillance. Their definition of U&G suggests media users contribute and have an active role in the media. Similarly, Parmelee and Bichard (2012, p. 36) suggest that unlike traditional forms of media such as television and radio, where viewers are generally passive, the U&G theory 'assumes that individuals are active users of the media and clearly Twitter is made for active use'. Since this research is concerned with motivations to use a particular type of medium (Twitter), the U&G theory is useful in forming the theatrical perspective for this research.

However, the theory has been criticized due to the individualistic nature of the model. According to Ruggiero (2000), the theory does not consider the societal implications of media use. The theory has also been criticized for being too vague as conceptual framework,

lacking precision in major concepts and failure to consider audience perceptions of media content (Elliot 1974; Swanson 1977). Parmelee and Bichard (2012) suggest individuals have different motives for using different types of media. For example, blog users tend to have more information-seeking motivations (Ancu and Cozma 2009; Kaye and Johnson 2006). However, in terms of seeking political information, some individuals may satisfy information-seeking needs and others may satisfy social-utility needs.

Twitter users can be actively engaged in information received by replying, using hashtags, tweeting about it or retweeting. According to Park (2013) previous studies suggest motivations for using Twitter include: social participation through information exchange, seeking and distributing information, everyday conversation, checking public opinion, entertainment, and private expression. Based on prior studies' findings and the nature of public-forum function of using SNS, this research anticipates the following three motivation categories for using Twitter to participate in politics: information seeking, mobilization, self-expression, and convenience.

8. SUMMARY

Nigerians have always shown high levels of commitment to improve democracy. However, religious and cultural tensions and generally flawed elections are still recurrent challenges. The formation of the APC may have been a result of tension with the ruling PDP party and their strong social media campaign. Despite logistical challenges and anticipations that the 2015 elections would follow with violence as it previously has, it was the most interesting elections in Nigerian history as an opposition party (APC) won for the first time in history (Olowojolu 2015). The increasing use of SNS, such as Twitter, for political campaigning and discussions may represent a growing culture that can help facilitate participation leading to a healthier democracy.

Different studies have yielded mixed results on how SNS influences political participation. Researchers from different fields (communication scholars, political scientists and computer scientists) have addressed questions related to the role of Twitter in politics including: (Gainous and Wagner 2014; Kim and Park 2012; Lee and Oh 2012, 2013; Parmelee and

Bichard 2012), who have approach the topic from different perspectives utilising diverse methods. Having explored political participation among the youth, in an online era, in the literature, this study proposes using the U&G theory with the aim of exploring and understanding what motivates Nigerian youth to use Twitter as a tool to participate in politics. While there is an abundance of literature surrounding the influence of SNS on political participation, little is known about how Twitter motivates young users to engage in politics in developing countries where Internet penetration is growing. The key factors critical to the study discussed in this chapter included Twitter as an extension of the public sphere and the U&G theory as a framework for exploring Twitter use.

3. METHODOLOGY

1. OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the research aims and objectives, outlining the methods and approaches involved in this research. The aim of this chapter is to present and discuss the chosen methodology. In addition, this chapter covers the research design, type of data collected and methods of data analysis. Ethical considerations and limitations to this study are also discussed.

2. RESEARCH AIM

An exploration of the youth's motivation to participate in politics on Twitter

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aim of this study, a combination of communications theories and political scholars will be used to:

- Explore how young Nigerian citizens understand participating in politics on Twitter
- Identify why they use Twitter to participate in politics
- Understand how they interpret the value of using Twitter for political participation.

4. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2002), knowledge from philosophy can help researchers clearly outline research design and rationalize the choice of design. An interpretivist approach was adopted for this study, as it is naturally suited to the aim of the research. This approach emphasises an understanding and acknowledgement of the differences between humans, with the likelihood to analyse social actors within their own cultural setting (Saunders et al. 2007;

Wilson 2010).

5. RESEARCH APPROACH

Figure 1: The Spiralling Research Approach (Berg 2007)

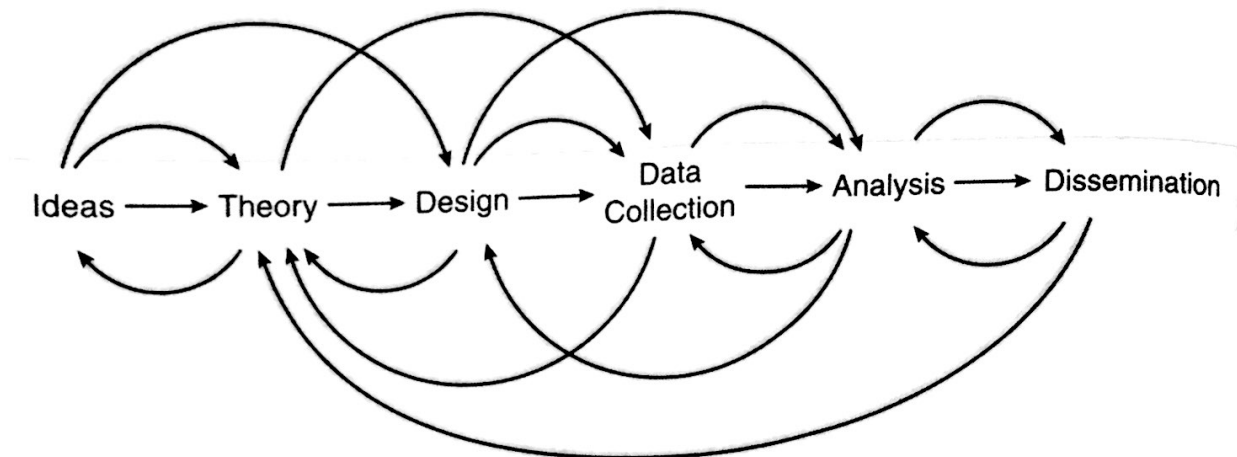


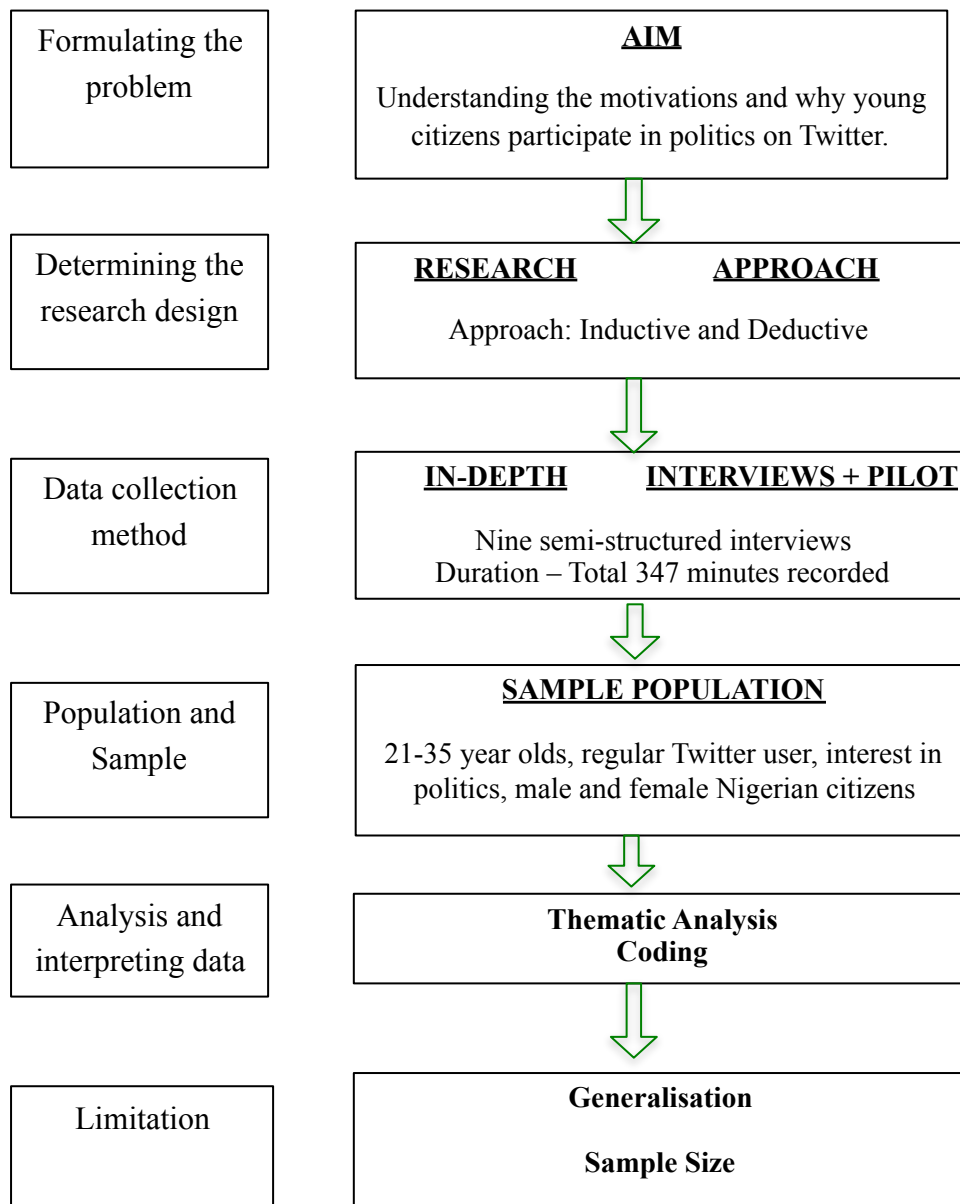
Figure 1 illustrates the process of and development of the research, as the research idea flowed into potential research questions, it continued to shift, change and take form as the research process unfolded. The research questions changed from the initial ideas, however importance was placed on establishing a focus for the research aims and objective (Berg 2007). This study demonstrated characteristics of both deductive and inductive research approaches; consequently, following an abductive approach. The approach allowed knowledge and understandings to emerge through a simultaneous interchange between three sources: established theory, actual practice, and the narratives (Given 2008). The method is intended to allow social researchers to make new discoveries logically and methodologically in an orderly way.

6. RESEARCH DESIGN

Depending on the level of experience a researcher may have with a type of methodology, research designs can be complicated (Turner 2010). Qualitative methods are relative unstructured, intuitive, and subjective, however they may be most appropriate where the researcher is attempting to understand the nature of individual experiences, feelings or motivations. The qualitative method offers the opportunity for the researcher to dig deeper by

conducting interviews. A visual diagram (see figure 2) provides a summary of the research design for this study.

Figure 2: Visual research flow diagram



Adapted: Churchill and Lacobucci (2005)

7. SEMI-STRUCTURED IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The core of all research is data collection, and research methods are instruments and strategies that are used to gather data. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2010) places emphasis on the importance of fit between the purpose of the research and the method selected when choosing a research method or methods for a project. Using qualitative methods fits well with the aims of the research, since the research is concerned with examining feelings and experiences. Therefore, conducting in-depth interviews is appropriate for the aims and objectives of this study, in this context, as the purpose of interviews is to probe participant's views and perspectives (Denscombe 2010). In preparation for the interviews, the researcher followed the following steps based on Turner's (2010) suggestions for conducting interviews:

❖ ***Selecting Participants – Sample and Sampling***

Both male and female participants were included in the sample, since individuals with different ideologies may use technology for different political purposes (Best and Krueger 2005). They were based-on sample criteria (see figure 2). A non-probability sampling strategy known as snowball sampling was used. Vogt (1999) defines snowball sampling as a technique for finding research participants, where one participant introduces another (with relevant characteristics). In this way participants were asked after the interview if they knew someone else interested in being interviewed who fit the sample. Snowball sampling has primarily been used to access deviant or vulnerable individuals (Atkinson and Flint 2001) however it can also be useful to gain access to difficult to-reach populations (Lee 1993). Primary concerns of snowballing sampling include the quality of data and section bias, which may limit the validity of the sample (Van Meter 1990). This is because elements are not drawn randomly and are dependent on the subjective choices of the participants first accessed.

❖ ***Pilot testing***

Two pilot tests were carried out for practice to assist the researcher in determining the existence of any flaws, weakness, or limitations within the interview design (Kvale 2007). Due to the limited experience of the researcher, the pilot test was valuable. The pilot tests lasted shorter than the desired length of between 30 - 60 minutes, indicating a lack of depth within the research. Therefore, questions were redrafted for the main interviews.

❖ *Preparation for interview*

An interview question guide was created (appendix 1) to provide a degree of structure for the researcher. Questions were worded so responses were open-ended, according to Turner (2010; p. 756) this type of interview guide is known as ‘standardized open-ended interview’. The open-endedness allowed participants to contribute more detail, allowing the researcher to ask probing questions as a means of following-up (Bryman 2012; Cohen et al. 2011; Parmelee and Bichard 2012; Turner 2010). Probing questions encouraged participants to provide as much responses needed.

In addition, an information sheet (appendix 2) was also created for the participants to understand the purpose of the research. It addressed confidentiality, the format and length of the interview, and researchers contact details. Participants were promised full confidentiality of their information hence to ensure anonymity they were given pseudonyms related to their participant number throughout the research. The researcher reassured participants of protecting their information by providing a consent form (appendix 3), which both participants and researcher had to sign before interviews were carried out. Participants were provided a personal copy of the signed consent form. Both documents were designed and reviewed in accordance to the Bournemouth University research ethics code of practice.

Participants were also reassured of confidentiality, use and deletion of their data on completion of the study. Participants were encouraged to ask questions at the end of the interviews. This assisted returning the participants back to a pre-interview emotional state (Malhorta and Birks 2007). According to Bryman (2012), when conducting semi-structured interviews, the researcher should list questions, or fairly specific topics to be covered, asking questions in similar wordings with each participant. Bryman (2012) suggests avoiding facing unexpected contingencies due to a lack of interview skills and experienced researchers should refrain from leading interviewees’ answers. The researcher took these precautions into consideration when asking questions.

8. LOCATION

Main interviews took place over a 15-day period (11th - 25th April), each lasting approximately 30-50 minutes. Two interviews were held face-to-face at the homes of the

participants and the other seven were held via Skype due to location constraints. In total the nine interviews conducted represented a considerable number to reach saturation levels. Alvesson and Skoldberg (2010) defines saturation during interviews as the point when no new data is revealed by further collection of data since all the questions asked have been exhausted by the initial qualitative interviews.

All interviews maintained the same level of comfort. There were no obvious differences between the face-to-face and Skype interviews, as interviews via Skype were also conducted from the house of the researcher in order to make the location free from any background noise or distractions (McNamara 2009).

9. DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews were recorded using a sound recording device. At the end of each interviews, they were transcribed to for coding. Having reviewed various qualitative methods (appendix 4), it was decided to employ thematic analysis, due its level of flexibility. Thematic analysis is a commonly used method of analysis for qualitative research (Thomas and Harden 2008), for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes within data. The six-step approach, as articulated by Braun and Clarke (2006) consists of eight phases to conduct thematic analysis (appendix 5), which was applied for analysing the interviews.

Nvivo 10 was also used as a document management system to give clarity to the coding. By using qualitative data analysis, the researcher used the software as a tool for efficiency and not as a tool for conducting analysis or drawing on conclusions. The advantage of using NVivo is that it is a well-recognised tool for organising data. Fielding and Lee (1998, p.167) supports using data analysis tools, such as Nvivo for qualitative research. All interviews were fully transcribed (appendix 6) then coded, allowing results to be compared and for themes and consistencies to be found across the interviews, increasing data credibility (Denscombe 2010). This was done before entering the data into a computer analysis program. Breg (2007) suggests understanding how data is organised and stored is important. In the analysis, relevant codes for the areas of this study were examined more thoroughly. Codes were either developed from the participant's answers, which can be described as a bottom down approach

(McGivern 2009), or created using questions from the interview guide, known as a top down approach. Open coding allowed categorisation of key themes that emerged for the findings (Saunders et al. 2009).

10. RESEARCH DESIGN EVALUATION

Validity and reliability are important to maintain the worth of research. Cohen et al. (2011) recognize the subjectivity of participants and their opinions that could potentially contribute to a degree of bias in the qualitative method, challenging claims of reliability and validity. This view is contested by Agar (as cited in Cohen et al. 2011), he asserts the in-depth responses and intensive personal involvement in the research secures a sufficient level of validity and reliability

Transcription is also a threat when it come reliability, Cohen et al. (2011) consider reliability as a fit between the researcher's records and what occurs, this issue is known as transcribe selectivity. Nevertheless, reliability can be assessed if another researcher follows the same procedures in order to measure the concept of research, which is called replication. This is however not common in social science research (Bryman 2012). The researcher was cautious of not delivering words during interviews, and avoided asking questions that would suggest desired or expected responses. According to Daymon and Holloway (2011), credibility is achieved through providing convincing evidence of any claims made in research. The researcher performed several procedures to maintain credibility (appendix 7), as Fisher (2004) notes that conducting such procedures can reduce the influence of the researcher's values on the research findings.

In addition, the researcher prepared appropriate research instruments, seeking advice and comments from the supervisor of this study to reinsure a degree of reliability. Extracting data from interviews strengthened the validity of the research, i.e. data is presented in terms of the respondents (quotes) rather than researchers (Cohen et al. 2011). Since qualitative data is subjective, interviews were constrained by the unavoidable bias of the researcher. However, the research also took further deliberate steps to reduce bias (appendix 8), directly increasing the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln and Guba 1984).

11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Prior to any data collection the ethics checklist was completed and approved. This ensured the study was below minimal risk and allowed data collection to begin. According to Bryman (2012), four significant ethical considerations for researchers to avoid are lack of informed consent; harm to participants, invasion of privacy and deception. This research study followed the core ethical issues of informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. Anonymity was ensured and sensitive personal information was not required (Saunders et al. 2009). Furthermore, data was stored securely in a password safe computer.

12. LIMITATIONS

To consolidate the validity and reliability in this research, methodological triangulation could have been used (Cohen et al. 2011). Using quantitative methods, such a survey could have strengthened the research further. In addition, participants could have reviewed the transcribed summary. This method of validation is called internal validity (Bryman 2012). However, given the time constraints, also a major limitation, the researcher, in an effort to use time wisely, focused on what could be achieved within the aims of the study.

Snowball sampling also had clear limitations, as selected participants may have suggested other participants with similar opinions. However, to reduce limitations each participant was asked for several recommendations and a spread of age ranges were used (appendix 9). Although the above limitations of this study are important considerations, Groucutt et al. (2004, p.183) states: “all marketing research has limitations, some more than others”. Therefore, there is no single right way to conduct research (Newing 2010; Roe 2004).

13. SUMMARY

This chapter outlined the research methodology, clarifying the position of the study, and the choice of conducting semi-structured interviews and the processes of conducting interviews were explained with reference to key scholars. Moreover, data analysis and process used were elucidated, followed by an evaluation of the research design. Finally, the ethical considerations and limitations in this research were explained. Data findings from the semi-structured interviews are presented and analysed in the following chapter.

4. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This research has endeavored to explore key motivations behind participating in politics on Twitter among young Nigerians. This section presents the findings from the nine in-depth interviews. Firstly, participants were asked about their views on political participation on Twitter and how they would define it. Subsequently, questions explored participants' motivations, and significance of using Twitter for politics. Finally, participants were asked about the value Twitter had to their participation in politics.

Participants were interviewed about their activities on Twitter. The structure of the interviews allowed the participants to talk about how they generally use Twitter. Using existing research, discussed in the literature review, this chapter will critically assess areas that have been developed. The findings from the in-depth interviews are presented and discussed against the research objectives, incorporating knowledge drawn from the literature review. To develop the findings, a small amount of new literature will be introduced.

1. PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW

The following consideration should be taken into account when findings are interpreted. The researcher acknowledges the small sample size is unlikely to represent the population, however, by using a spread of age range of participants (22-32 years old), this may have provided a more accurate representation of the population (Denscombe 2010). Interviews were conducted according to an assigned number (appendix 10). Therefore, the quality of extracted data may have improved the researcher's skills. The researcher selected participants based on convenience and also those who volunteered themselves to participate in the interview, via public posting on Twitter (appendix 11).

2. RESEARCH QUESTION 1

How do young Nigerian citizens understand participating in politics on Twitter?

The interviews began with questions regarding how participants use Twitter and the kind of activities they engaged in on the micro-blog. Most participants stated using Twitter for social and political purposes. When asked about political participation, participants frequently described it in line with many traditional definitions (Lazarsfeld et al. 1994; Milbrath; Verba and Nie 1972) at first. Participants further mentioned: hash-tagging, retweeting/sharing information, organizing rallies or protests, and starting or joining political campaigns online as ways to participate in politics via Twitter. Participants discussed online political participation in general and via Twitter. Some participants (except P1 and P6) suggested that offline participation activities, such as attending rallies, protests, meetings and voting were more important than participating in politics on Twitter. For example:

'It's not enough to just be on Twitter tweeting I think the most and best thing I can do is to rally...to take those interesting political discussions and trends from Twitter to the field' (P3)

'Tweeting...retweeting...it's just part of the entire process but being on Twitter is not everything' (P7)

'I think Twitter is just a stepping-stone for engagement, because it is one thing for me to talk about politics but at the end of the day what makes a democracy beautiful is the power in the vote, and we can't vote online in Nigeria anyway...expressing my opinion and voting are two different things, but they work hand in hand in some way' (P9)

This shows participants acknowledge and view online and offline participation as separate constructs that could work hand in hand. Participants had little to nothing to say about voting, signing petitions or making political donations via Twitter. Even so, some participants found Twitter made it easier for them to find information about offline activities. This thought played a role with regard to acknowledging the significance of Twitter on political participation offline:

'People online just makes it easier for people to protest peacefully and start movements' (P3)

'A lot of people start protests from Twitter' (P1)

Participants recognized the importance of traditional (offline) participatory activities that could contribute to strengthening their participation in politics and the political process. Even though, participants felt free to participate in politics both online and offline, violence during times of heightened political activities, such as elections, were key reasons why participants (P3, P4, P7) did not previously attend political rallies or protests.

'In certain places it can get dangerous for your political position offline, but it's safer online' (P7)

'Violence reduction can be better, but it is also much better than it used to be. Freedom fighters and journalist are not arrested in a massive scale in Nigeria compared to some other countries.....so I think in terms of political engagement Nigeria is quite lenient compared to other 3rd world countries.' (P4)

TWITTER, A SAFE SPACE FOR EXPRESSION

Freedom of expression is an important part of the political engagement process and participants mentioned that Twitter gave them the freedom and opportunity to share their political opinions.

'For the first time I felt younger people were more involved in politics and that had a lot to do with Twitter... Before people would put up stickers on cars...well I still do but now you can just post a picture of your favourite candidate or party you support' (P6)

'Twitter has opened our eyes to issues we would have normally ignored or simply did not have access to especially information which is a power tool in any democracy. Twitter has helped strengthen our democracy and enlightened policy makers on the views of the youth' (P5)

'We took advantage of the network we had to voice our opinions and we were heard...' (P2)

These findings are synonymous to Boyd (2007) and Harris (2008) who argue that youth have turned to the Internet as a place to express important topics. Subsequently, Gil de Zúñiga et al. (2014) also found a strong link between social media use for online political expression, suggesting that the use of SNS may be able to direct users on a pathway to political expression, which may in turn lead to participation.

All participants mentioned how the importance of politics in their lives and how Twitter was able to help them express their political views. However, most participants after praising Twitter for its potentials often also criticised it. For example, P7 mentioned that participation on Twitter does not fully represent the population, hence the need to participate more offline:

'Well there has to be an understanding that as much hype as Twitter has gotten it cannot replace certain things, for example in Africa, internet penetration in places like Eritrea is just 1% in places like Nigeria it's about 50% but then what happens to the other 50%.'

Other criticisms about Twitter included a lack of credibility with news content shared, and political arguments on Twitter. Although participants did not present ideas on what political participation on Twitter stands for, they did, however, view political participation on Twitter as an extension of offline political participation or sometimes as a kind of participation. This is illustrated by the comment P6 made on how people are currently using Twitter to replace traditional forms of participation.

3. RESEARCH QUESTION 2

Why do Nigerian Youths use Twitter to participate in politics?

Generally, the interviews consolidated the thoughts of the U&G theory identified from the surrounding literature, which were outlined in the initial conceptual framework. Grouping anticipated motivations by themes helped to simplify the process of identification. The study usefully draws from the U&G theory and other surrounding literature to support the motivations identified.

ANTICIPATED MOTIVATIONS

Twitter is not limited to the posting activity of users, the process of acquiring information or status posted by other users and autonomous production of contents and opinions can be considered as ways of political participation. Table 1 shows the four anticipated motivations for using Twitter to participate in politics.

Table 1: Motives identified for participating in politics on Twitter

Motives	Quote	Explanation (Parmelee and Bichard 2012)
Information-seeking	<i>'There was a constant urge to have information about what was going in different states across Nigeria, how votes were casted, who was winning or losing because you had people who were being connected all over the country providing first hand information' (P8)</i>	The intention of gathering information to keep people generally knowledgeable and up-to-date on different issues.

Self-expression	<i>'I use Twitter sometimes to express my personal opinions on politics, usually when something big is going on, so elections....or if there is a particular interview that is going on...if it's on the news we watch it on the news but the real conversation happens on Twitter' (P1)</i>	This motivation is concerned with an individual's ability to engage/express personal opinions and perspectives (communicating support or criticism).
Social utility	<i>I try to understand the news and share my opinions, with that I have an opportunity to influence how people think and for me that's important...especially if you are interested in society and changing society because ultimately you cannot change society if you cannot influence people. People are the ones who change society (P7)</i>	Obtaining information that assist people in their social interactions, such as discussions with friends or acquaintances. For example, citizens tended to mobilise around the notion of social utility.
Convenience	<i>'It's easier to find the information on Twitter....people hashtag and the search box shows what everyone is saying about what you are looking for' (P3)</i>	Obtaining information easily from the media.

The studies testing motivations for using Twitter to engage in politics -Park (2013) and Paremelee and Bichard (2012) - using quantitative methods were applied to the analysis of the findings. Therefore, this research offers triangulation of literature through paring the existing quantitative data (Cohen et al. 2011). This in turn strengthens and supports existing motivation, high motivations of information seeking, mobilization, expression and convenience. Although the study by Park (2013) was based on Twitter users in the United States and did not primarily focus on only young people, results show their study is primarily useful in understanding young adults' social media use and the impact on their political engagement. Paremelee and Bichard's (2012) study used a mixed methods approach for the aims of their research, which explored the influence of Twitter between political leaders and

the public. The range of motivations (see table 1) demonstrates that Twitter users seek different motivations for various reasons.

OTHER MOTIVATIONS DISCOVERED

Discussing politics is a form of participation. All participants mentioned changing political views as a key motivation to use Twitter to engage in politics. Phrases such as “discussion” and “argument” on politics were brought up frequently during interviews. For participants, these concepts implied a move beyond political expression to an exchange between each other. Although participants did not always use these exact terms, they generally differentiated between the two types of exchanges on Twitter. Political discussions, for example, participants described these exchanges as open and positive, or exchanges where participants provided unbiased evidence for their claims and an opportunity to listen to each other. For example P3 said:

‘If there is an issue and you contribute to the discussion openly then I feel that is a part of participation in politics.... having positive conversation, discussing issues about our government on Twitter is important thing to me especially with other people who are not necessarily in government.’ (P3)

‘I think politics is a very serious issue for Nigerians, we as a nation are so desperate to succeed that why everybody is discussing it....so very quickly we are thrown into the dynamic of having to discuss politics as a necessity. We as a society do not have the luxuries of tuning out of political discussions. (P9)

These descriptions fit closely with some of the standards for political deliberation as described by Dahlberg (2001) and Habermas (1989). However, most participants believed they lacked political knowledge when it came to discussing politics online.

‘I cannot be a driver of discussion of political discussion because I am not a political heavy weight’

(P8)

In contrast to political discussions, participants characterized political arguments as as bias and unconstructive. They suggest Twitter users would have strong opinions and would not considering others viewpoints, but rather they would focus on proving their own points. For example:

'I have observed a dangerous trend amongst some Nigerians online, they tend to things for show rather than for impact....Twitter is a mess, everybody want to be political analyst so you find situations when people really don't understand what is going on, they just want to join the conversation to be among' (P6)

'It's just people tweeting at you and when they do not agree with them, they probably even abuse you but you can just ignore or block them' (P7)

All participants argued they did not always confront arguments on Twitter publicly; rather they would address it privately by sending direct messages.

'The arguments are just repeated cycles, I rather send a person a DM (direct message) when things get to heated and I feel I need to address it' (P2)

'I found when I was engaging people in private I found that there was more room for understanding...' (P8)

These findings could potentially jeopardize the level of critical and rational debates online (Varnali and Gorgulu 2015). It also suggests the purpose of participating in SNS has more to do with socialising than deliberating (Storsul et al. 2008, Dahlgren 2009). Similar to Marwick and boyd's study (2010) individuals tended to post only things they believe most people in their network will find non-offensive. This tendency is confirmed in a more present study, as young people interviewed were generally careful about their appearance on social media. They experienced engagement in political debate online as risky; implying concerns about

self-representation limiting the impact social media has on political deliberation (Storsul 2014).

Participants' suggest there were more political arguments on Twitter than discussions. In many cases the participants argued that they assumed other people might not be that well informed about political issues or news. So a key motivation was to not only inform others about political concerns, but to inform other Twitter users on issues participants considered to be underexposed.

Participants suggest political activities on Twitter might not be the most effective way to participate in politics due to excessive political arguments and the lack of credibility amongst other young Twitter users spreading information on politics. Participants also stated that they sometimes shared content to entertain others. P4, stated that she liked to share funny pictures and funny videos:

'At first I used it for just entertainment but then it grew on me to be a source of not just entertainment but enlightenment, knowledge and information' (P9)

Another participant also stated they shared content they considered political with the specific aim to entertain. P4 shared how he was 'addicted to all those anti-PDP memes during the elections'. He argued that, because he knows others may find it funny, it was a way to get his message across in a way that would not be overtly serious. In summary, for participants, using Twitter is an important and convenient tool for gathering and sharing political information, engaging in discussions and entertaining others.

4. RESEARCH QUESTION 3

To understand how youth interpret the value of using Twitter to participate in politics

All participants view Twitter as valuable and had several interpretations of its value to politics and society in general. Many such as P3 considered Twitter as revolutionary:

‘I still think young people don’t take politics seriously enough but I feel like there was a bit of a political revolution with young people during the last elections because of Twitter and it is still going on’

All participants mentioned Twitter as a valuable tool because it gave them access to information they previously inaccessible. However, some participants explained how most Twitter users were too eager to share information on politics and often the information was untrue or shared in a bias way.

So called political experts on Twitter make very wild acquisitions that mostly encourage ‘tribalism.....very dangerous for the future because we will have people between the ages of 20-35 who are now engaged in politics and this is the kind of mind-set they are being exposed to’ (P8)

‘Twitter feels like a place where people complain a lot, but there are few who share valuable information’ (P6)

Nevertheless, participants also noted that Twitter has a way of debunking and correcting, apparently, false information. For example, P3 and P7 argued:

‘Social media makes propaganda spread more....but propaganda was cleared up through social media’ (P3)

‘People will always put out false news content but again that has a way by being found out by people who put out the right news content, and eventually those who put out the wrong news content eventually will lose relevance and credibility, so I feel Twitter is a space that can take care of itself through the process of spontaneous reaction.’ (P7)

‘Sometime it was even more reliable to get information from Twitter than the news channels’ (P5)

Others such as P2 and P6, emphasized the mobility and cost effectiveness of using Twitter as factors for making the micro blog valuable:

'I feel so many of us Nigerians appreciate Twitter.... easy to get our phones and doesn't take too much of your data as well (not expensive), unlike other SNS' (P6).

Still others, such as P3 said Twitter high values come from feeling empowered:

'There is so much hope for young people to do more in politics now.... especially women. It wasn't until a few years ago Nigerian politicians started appearing on Twitter...it's because Twitter is powerful for us, they heard us and they came to Twitter to hear more...I hope.'

Those who did not talk about Twitter in terms of empowerment still found it valuable. P2 said:

'I organized an occupy movement protest using Twitter and it was useful...the momentum was so low to participate but by tweeting about it encouraged people to come out to the streets' (P2).

Almost all participants suggested Twitter would be more valuable to them if politicians and government bodies interacted more with them more. For example;

'Ben Murray Bruce, who is also a senator is a very good users of Twitter and because of them you are generally well updated on activities on what happens in the national assembly, because it is directly coming from their Twitter feeds' (P8).

INEC says something about the elections and another person says it, it's not as powerful as INEC because INEC is the authority in charge of the elections.....So it was important to have direct access to the authorities during the elections' (P7).

On the other hand one of the many participants showed disappointment by the inconsistent level of engagement with political leaders:

'Like sometimes for politicians they just want to know the publics' opinion...they don't really talk back to us' (P3)

Despite concerns about low interaction levels between young Nigerians and political leaders, participants still found their use of Twitter, for politics, as highly valuable because it played several roles in their political participation.

5. CONCLUSION

1. CONTRIBUTION TO EXISTING LITERATURE

To the author's knowledge this study is the first in-depth qualitative research piece into online political participation with Nigerian citizens. It has made many valuable conclusions from its primary research.

2. SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Overall, the nine interviews with Nigerian youths demonstrate that political participation on Twitter is not merely a substitute for political action. Rather, the findings suggest that Twitter is an important space for gathering political information and political expression. The researcher has delivered its aim to understand motivations that drive young Nigerian youths to participate in politics on Twitter. The study identified four motivations supported by existing literature and presents two other motivations, which are to entertain other, and to discuss politics. Furthermore, the study concludes these motivations are not a substitute for other traditional acts of political participation, however, when combined they produce a more deliberative form of engagement and participation.

In the search to understand what drives these motives, this study identifies the role and value placed on using Twitter by Nigerian youths to discuss politics. In a country elections are usually followed by violence, Twitter had provided young Nigerians with opportunities to safely organise protests, voice their opinions on politics and even improve election processes. Nigeria is slowly moving to a more democratic political system. Notably, the potential of Twitter to facilitate productive discussions helping citizens deliberate on political issues is yet to fully reach its potential. In addition, the interviews revealed some unexpected ways that participants think about using Twitter for political purposes. As a result, the paper recommends that scholars rethink their current ideas about political participation via SNS and also expand approaches for studying such participation.

3. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

To ensure a more in-depth study and to reduce generalising the findings, this study could increase its sample size, as Marshall et al. (2013) suggest using between 20-30 interviews in their study. Too few may risk the satisfactory depth and breadth of the findings.

Young citizens interact with Twitter in different and often unique ways for political purposes, through tweeting posts or news links, retweeting, or joining hashtag conversations. Future studies focusing on such features may provide useful information about the importance of Twitter for political interaction. Moreover, more can be discovered from studies relating to Twitter and political participation. For example, comparing Twitter to traditional definitions of participation geared toward measuring traditional outcomes and with a focus on opinion leaders or drivers of political discussion online.

Future studies may also consider exploring Twitter as a space for political expression, which may lead to more theoretically interesting and useful definitions and measures. Subsequent studies should also consider examining the influence of social, psychological, and behavioural factors that motivate young citizens to participate in politics, such as political interest/affiliation, online news consumption and sharing. Additionally, more studies in the area of online political participation through other types of SNS services such as Facebook, may enhance our understanding of how to keep citizens engaged in political processes. Finally, future research should consider applying both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the relationships between SNS, politics and young citizens.

6.

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7.

APPENDICES

1. Appendix 1: Interview question guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Tell me about how you use Twitter....
 - PROBE: How often do you use Twitter?
 - PROBE: What kinds of things do you do?
 - PROBE: Why do you use Twitter in this way? What are your goals?
2. What about people you follow on Twitter? Do they post things about politics?
 - **PROBE:** Do they ever post things that you disagree with?
 - How does it make you feel?
3. What can Twitter give you that you cant get from other sources?
 - PROBE: What kinds of things?
 - PROBE: How had it changed the way you gather political information?
4. How would you define political participation?
 - **PROBE:** is there a different between any of these activities? Why?
5. Have you ever engaged in any other political activities (offline)? **PROBE:** Did you vote? Attend an event, rally or protest? Which one do you do most?
6. Do you feel that you have the time and political knowledge to be able to participate politically on Twitter?
7. Tell me about your interested in the 2015 presidential elections? If any -**PROBE**
 - Why were you interesting or not interesting?
 - Did you follow anyone who made you more aware of it?
 - What kinds of topics or issue seemed political to you at the time
8. Do you feel that you are free to participate in politics (does Nigerian political system allows you to participate)?
9. Is there anything that you object or embrace regarding using Twitter to talk about Nigerian politics?
10. Is participating in politics on Twitter valuable? If not, what would you like to change?
11. Do you believe these acts are an important way of political participation? Why? Why not?
12. Is there anything that you would like to ask or add before we finish this interview?

2. Appendix 2: Information sheet

INFORMATION SHEET

A research project investigating the motivations of youth political participation online.

Introduction

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

Aim

The aim of the study is to understand the motives behind youth political participation online, specifically Twitter. Taking part will involve talking to the researcher about your experiences using social media.

The researcher will conduct a face-to-face or online interview with you, which will last approximately 1½ hour, and will be conducted at a time and place of your convenience. The interview will be recorded and as soon the recording is transcribed, it will be deleted. For your confidentiality the researcher will use fictional names to protect your identity throughout the research, any information that might identify you or your social networks will be changed or made anonymous. The information you give will be used only for this study

If you withdraw from the study all the information and data collected from you, to date, will be destroyed and your name removed from all the study files. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reasons. Even after the interview, if you feel you are no longer comfortable with the study, you can withdraw and all the information collected from you will be destroyed.

There are no known risks or disadvantages of taking part, as the researcher strives to protect your confidentiality. You may find the project interesting and enjoy answering questions about your experiences and motivations of using social media. Once the study is finished it could provide information to improve and inform future studies.

All information collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, and any information about you that leaves the university, will have your name/address removed so that you cannot be recognised.

If you are interested in taking part in the study please complete and sign the consent form, which you will have a signed copy back with the researcher's signature.

3. Appendix 3: Consent Form

AGREEMENT/CONSENT FORM

Dissertation Title:

Visualising the Voices of the Youth: The role of Twitter during the 2015 Nigerian Presidential Election?

Researcher

Name: **Aisha Sambo**

Position: Student

Contact: i7735880@bournemouth.ac.uk

Supervisor

Name: **Dr Anastasia Veneti**

Position: Lecturer in Marketing/Political Communications

Contact: aveneti@bournemouth.ac.uk

Please Initial
or
Tick Here

I have read and understood the information sheet for the above research project.	
I confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary.	
I understand that I am free to withdraw up to the point where the data are processed and become anonymous, so my identity cannot be determined	
During the interview, I am free to withdraw without giving reason and without there being any negative consequences.	
Should I not wish to answer any questions, I am free to decline	
I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the outputs that result from the research.	
I agree to have the interview recorded.	
I agree to take part in the above research project.	

Name of Participant Date Signature

Name of Researcher Date Signature

4. Appendix 4: Research summary of other data analysis methods

Method	Description	Critique
Narrative Analysis (NA)	In early 20 th century, NA emerged as a discipline from within the broader field of qualitative research (Riessman, 1993). It uses field texts, such as stories, life experiences, conversations, interviews, autobiography, journals, field notes, letters, photographs and other artefacts as the units of analysis to research and understand the way people create meaning in their lives as narratives (Clandinin and Connelly 2000).	Critics argue although NA challenges the idea of quantitative objectivity, it is nonetheless lacking in theoretical insights of its own (Boje 2001).
Thematic Analysis (TA)	Used for identifying, analysing, and reporting themes within data (Braun and Clarke 2006). Method is driven by both theoretical assumptions and the research questions. Provides a flexible method of data analysis and allows for researchers with various methodological backgrounds to engage in this type of analysis.	Critics argue that reliability is a concern major concern with TA because of the wide variety of interpretations that could arise from the themes. Increasing reliability may occur if multiple researchers are coding simultaneously, which is possible with this form of analysis (Guest et al. 2011).
Discourse Analysis (DA)	Harris (1952) made this method prominent after his publication, it covers a number of approaches to analyse written, vocal, or any significant semiotic event.	DA takes many forms so choices must be directed by the research aims, which may lead to difficult decisions early in the research process (Brown and Yule 1983).

5. Appendix 5: Stages and process involved in Qualitative Analysis

Analytical process (Braun and Clarke 2006)	Practical application in NVivo	Iterative process throughout analysis	Results
1. Familiarising yourself with data	Phase 1 <u>Transcribing data</u> Reading and re-reading data paying attention to patterns that occur and noting initial idea/pattern. Data imported to NVivo.	Assigning data to refined concept to portray meaning	Preliminary codes and detailed notes <i>Open and hierarchal coding through NVivo</i>
2. Generating initial codes	Phase 2 <u>Open coding</u> Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic way across the entire data, collecting data relevant to each code.	Refining and distilling more abstract concepts	Comprehensive codes of how data answers research question
3. Searching for themes	Phase 3 <u>Categorisation of codes</u> Collating codes into potential themes and gathering all data relevant to each theme.		List of themes for further analysis
4. Reviewing themes	Phase 4 <u>Coding on</u> Checking if themes work in relation to coded extracts and the entire data set, generating a thematic map of the analysis.	Assigning data to themes to portray meaning	Coherent recognition of how themes are patterned
5. Defining and naming themes	Phase 5 <u>Data reduction</u> Refining specifics of each theme, and overall story the analysis tells, generating clear names and definitions for each theme.		

6. Appendix 6: Two Full Transcriptions

Participant 7

Date: 20th April 2016

Duration: 32 Minutes

Key:

R1 = Interviewer

P7 = Interviewee

R1: Hello, my name is Aisha. How are you today?

P7: Hi Aisha I am doing really well

R1: So how was your day today?

P7: My day was okay a little stressful but one of those days

R1: I hope you'll be feeling better after we talk, because I know you love using Twitter and very much interested in politics.

P7: hahahhah...Indeed, yes I am. I am feeling excited already.

R1: So can you confirm your age for me please?

P7: I am 30 years old

R1: Ok good you have read the interview guide and you have agreed to participate in this study. Thank you for that. The interview will take an hour long probably less depending on how quickly we go through all the question. Your opinion is important to me and to the development of this research. Do not worry if you do not have the answers to all the questions but I would appreciate if you try to answer all question to your best knowledge.

R1: Great so first obvious question... Do you use social media?

P7: Yes

R1: So tell me more about how you use Twitter?

P7: Ok so...I basically try to post news from my blog and other platforms that i manage, I also try to pass my opinion and influence other people's opinions, on politics, social political issues and the economy. I also use Twitter for my entertainment, for having fun and sharing funny post.

R1: Out of all these which one is the most important to you and why do you use it in this way?

Influencing people...voicing my opinion

R1: Can you tell me more about your goals in terms of influencing people? why is it important ?

I understand a lot of people with all due respect just do not have the energy to think through issues, they do not read a lot on what the issues are they just want to hear others people's opinions to have a decision so for me ehmm.... that's an opportunity. I do not just read issues, but I try to understand them and share my opinions, with that I have an opportunity to influence how people think and for me that's important in...especially if you are interested in society and changing society because ultimately you cannot change society if you can not influence people. People are the ones who change society.

So that is the most significant and that's what it is about for me. A lot of people are just naturally busy or lazy to dig deeper, to read or think through the news content, so when you able to do that and crystallise something and break them down in a way everyone will understand quickly...and you take your time to think them through you are most likely to be an influencer.

R1: What about your friends followers on Twitter? What kind of things to they post?

P7: They post stuff from news content, thing about their friends, events. Some political content, it is different things across but some of them post things that are specific, some post news content, their own opinion, the way people use it is really unlimited. Some post comedy content, some post just fashion content, some share posts from their blogs and websites. So different uses by different people.

R1: Ok so the things your followers post, are they similar or different from what you post?

P7: In lots of way it is different but there is similarity sometimes.

R1: Have any of your followers disagreed with something that you Tweeted ?

P7: YES definitely!

R1: Can you tell me or give me an example, and how did it make you feel?

P7: I mean take the 2015 presidential elections for instance, not all my friends were on the same side. Some were for APC others for PDP so we just agree to disagree and some people respected themselves enough to let others voice their own opinions too. But for some of them that felt like they were running the campaigns and elections, you know claiming to be

political analyst and such...I just simply muted them, they wouldn't know they have been muted.

R1: Interesting...this next section of the Internet is about political participation on Twitter; so my first question is how would you define what political participation is on Twitter?

P7: Political participation on Twitter for me meaning paying attention to political content and understand political content. So beyond the news I feel you need to have to try and have an understanding of what the news is about.... what has the news not said or mentioned. ehnm...Sharing your own opinions and engaging with other people, have conversations and in certain cases go out your way and meet people, protest grounds or meetings and all of that stuff.

R1: So actions seem political on Twitter?

P7: Hashtags - and regular organic tweets. The retweet of political content sharing links to news on politics and congregating around political Twitter is political

R1: What does Twitter give you that you can not get from other news or social networking platforms?

P7: Twitter is real time, it's engaging, the content is small so it forces your ability to be concise and direct and it has the ability to go viral. Its reach potential is big because of the power or retweet and the speed at which the amplification goes about. So basically amplification, reach, even the price, Twitter does not take too much of your data plan compared to Facebook. The style of content forces you to be creative and direct I think these are the things that stand out.

R1: Okay, and has being on Twitter changed how you gather information on politics?

P7: yh...in a way yes because for conventional reasons on you gather information on Facebook in chunks, because they are released in chunks, but on Twitter it is not as chunky and those other platforms. Say a blog for instance, Twitter is smaller and so you have to go out of your way to go out to find out what has not been said. You either find out on Twitter or click on links to follow them up.... so in a way it is different, it is unique.

R1: Tell me about your interests in the 2015 presidential elections

P7: It was interesting in the sense that it offered a chance for Nigerian's to change government. In the sense that a lot of them felt like the previous administration of Dr.Goodluck Jonathan could have done better. So it was interesting to see what was going to happen and by the time the elections came that was exactly what happened, the government was voted out and I was not an onlooker I was on the side of the Buhari campaign. I was not a party member but I chose a side and I stuck to it and it was very public. But it was

interesting in the sense that an I predicted it happening and it was good to see ehnn...that happen.

R1: Did you follow anyone on Twitter who made you more aware of the elections?

P7: The INEC handle was one that made me more aware, my followers and some people I follow are not always politically conscious so I try to follow official accounts and politicians directly.

R1: Can you tell me more about INEC and what sort of things they were posting?

P7: See, the thing is when INEC says something about the elections and another person says it, it's not as powerful as INEC because INEC is the authority in charge of the elections, so you can quote them. So it was important to have direct access to the authorities during the elections. That was the essence of INEC

R1: did you engage in any political activities offline? Such as rallies, or voting?

P7: Rallies no but I definitely had private meetings.

R1: and how did you find out about the meetings?

P7: Some of them were via e-mail some via whatsapp.....yh

R1: OK, do you feel free to participate in politics in Nigeria? What I mean is does the Nigerian political system allow you to freely participate in politics?

It does, I won't lie. Do you mean just online?

R1: you can tell me about both?

P7: Ok. It does it does, I mean there are dangers involved in certain situations and certain places. But definitely online does because the dangers are less, because it's just people tweeting at you and when they do not disagree with probably even abuse you but you can just ignore or block them.

But in certain places it can get dangerous for your political position offline, but its safer online.

R1: Is there anything you object or embrace towards regarding using Twitter talk about politics?

P7: i mean people will always put out false news content but again that has a way by being found out by people who put out the right news content, and eventually those who put out the wrong news content eventually will lose relevance and credibility, so i feel twitter is a space

that can take care of itself through the process of spontaneous reaction. It gets to form and you get to eventually discover the right places for that.

So the one thing I would have an issue with is people putting out wrong content intentionally.

R1: okay, so do you feel like you have the time and political knowledge to participate in politics on Twitter

P7: I mean I already do that...so yes

R1: Are you satisfied with the way you participate in politics?

P7: There is always room to do better, but so far it has created opportunities for youth people to be heard.

R1: Can you tell me more about the opportunities to do better? What do you mean?

P7: The ehmmm I have quite number of follower but they could be more so I have a bigger platform to reach people. Less confrontational...for instance I think I need to be less confrontational on Twitter and also be able to reach out to more African countries.. So I think I need to reach out to more African countries.

R1: OKAY and do you believe these acts on Twitter are important ways of political participation?

P7: They are but they are not everything. They are just part of the entire process but being on Twitter is not everything.

R1: Can you tell me more about this?

P7: Ultimately people have to go out to vote for it, they need to not be afraid to engage in political meetings and things like that so...

R1: Okay so...It is coming to the end of this interview is there anything you would like to ask or add before we finish?

P7: Well there has to be an understanding that as much hype as Twitter has gotten it can not replace certain things, for example in Africa, internet penetration in places like Eritrea is just 1% in places like Nigeria it's about 50% but then what happens to the other 50%. So in terms of influence and social media you must understand limitations that it does not reach everybody and if its about politics it should reach everybody.

Having said that it must also be understood that its limitations do not remove it as being an essential for politics and governance, so it is about the balance. Understanding it's limitation but also understanding that those limitations do not limit its influence and reach, and ability to impact politics and governance. I think those are two final words I would like to add.

Participant 8

Date: 24th April 2016

Duration: 32 Minutes

R1: Hello, my name is Aisha. Thank you so much for agreeing to be interviewed for this study. Please try and answer all the questions, but don't worry if you are not sure, there are no right or wrongs here. Your opinion is very important to me and the development of this study.

P8: Ok cool

R1: How are you today to start with?

P8: I am fine thank you

R1: Good, before we start can you confirm that you understand the the content of the forms I sent

P8: yes I signed and I understand....I have been interviewed for a dissertation before

R1: That's cool...alright and can you also please your age for me please?

R8: I'm 24

R1: Good so my first question is...hmm...Do you use any sort of social networking site?

P8: Yes I do several

R1: Ok so is Twitter one of those sites?

P8: Yes

R1: Ok can you tell me about how you use Twitter?

P8: I think I use Twitter mainly as a sort of information, so I follow a lot of people who are in the same interest of field as I am. I try to follow a lot of people that I think tend to get very good information in their fields...so for sports I follow someone like Piers Morgan, Hilary Clinton because they would have inside information and their analysis is also good. And I follow also other newspapers I read, because they tend to update pretty fast and they tend to Tweet news headlines as they happen, and then I follow as well colonist I am interested in from the papers I read so from there also I get direct access to some of the writings as they write them in other mediums that maybe I don't follow. By following them I get to access to information and they might not share in their columns. Locally, I also follow local champions basically in political areas of Nigeria to generally have a feel of what is happening the country and I tend to follow mostly people who are southern based to get a view of what is

happening, Instead of following northerners. I am from the North by the way.

R1: I was just about to ask why it you tend to follow southern-based leaders more...that are interesting. So how often do you use Twitter?

P8: I use Twitter daily, I have tried to go off Twitter but it didn't work out...

R1: O really! How come?

P8: Hmm at some point I felt the constant need to be in touch with information and sometimes the urge reply and join conversations

R1: Conversations...tell me more about these kinds of conversations?

P8: My followers on Twitter are of two categories, ones who talk about football and those who talk about...very interesting things. Usually debates around random things and I am not sure how they usually start up.

Sometimes they will talk about...and it's very cultural because most of my followers are northern based. They would have random discussions about...if you are a northern and your husband comes back in the middle of the night and he asks you for pounded yam, what are you going to do? Very silly debate and yeah.

R1: How do these types of debates make you feel?

P8: The ones about football are pretty nice, they are funny and can be interesting but the ones that tend to talk about deeper northern cultural issues, or maybe just issues I find them to be annoying. Especially...there is this constant debate that goes on my Twitter feed almost every month... about Feminism and I personally find the constant discussion and the whole concept of feminism to be annoying. And sometimes I am saddened that people will dabble into religious debates without serious knowledge on the subject you know. So it is basically, I am annoyed at the debates that go on because it can portray us Northerners in a bad way.

R1: And do you engage in these types of debates?

P8: No, sometimes what I do is I can reach into someone's direct message and just find out more.

R1: Why do you prefer to do that?

P8: Yeah.. I am not a fan of engaging with people in public; people can be very irrational when they are challenged in public. Sometimes what I do is when someone makes a wild acquisition I find a link to an article or something that addresses the issue and post it on the person's timeline and just leave the person to judge for himself without any future comment.

R1: So based on how you engage in debates.... how would you define political

participation on Twitter?

P8: ehmm..Political participation is really high on Twitter...and what's the word I am looking for it is a very emotional debate for people...high-charged emotional debate.

R1: what do you think about this?

I think it's a very dangerous trend....

R1: Can you elaborate more on why you think it is dangerous?

P8: For example, you know I am PDP supporter and a strong believer in the party, but they are people who I believe in my own party tend to screw the facts. Who tend to just because we are in the position to oppose different policies the current administration is holding and when they are doing that they tend to be divisive, they tend to bring tribal issues and allegations based on tribalism...you know.

So called political experts on Twitter make very wild acquisitions that are mostly encourage tribalism and it being divisive and it may be very dangerous for the future because we will have people between the ages of 20-35 who are now engaged in politics and this is the kind of mindset they are being exposed to

R1: I am interested to know how you see others participate in politics on Twitter ?

P8: Twitter is a pretty interesting place; it is one of the few places that you can just go make a statement. I can go on Twitter now for example and say...Buhair has just...for example someone made a wild excision that Buhair's chief of staff for example collect 50 million Naira to see somebody and that person is corrupt and this was a PDP spokesman. He had no facts he had no means of supporting his claim and for two weeks, what happened was that there we people on each divides. Some people were broadcasting it, spreading it more and then you had supports on the government who also did not have facts to disprove whether it happened or not. So the debates on politics are usually centered on people trying to paint a picture of objectivity but there isn't any objectivity because most of the debates and argument are based on rumors. People are very dug into their beliefs. You know, everybody is in their corner. So people will just defend whatever or say whatever to continue to prove their point.

I think on Twitter there's a code that says you can't ever be wrong, you can't ever loose a debate. So they go on and on and on and on and people will never hinderer. And I think within that believe a lot of false information is created just because you can't lose on Twitter, I don't know how they do it but they tend to make very detailed comments on very serious issues. I think we are all under the constant fear of not loosing a debate especially online, because it is so public, someone can bring something you might have said two years ago in contrast to what your vies are now, and they expect you to defend it and you also feel the need to defend yourself. A lot of people don't necessarily engage in politics on Twitter to enlighten themselves, they just do it to win that trending debate or issue

On the debates I have seen I see very little room for understanding in new knowledge I just see people who are out there to prove that the enemy is stupid or not knowledgeable or wrong you know.

R1: Interesting, so tell me were you invested in the 2015 presidential elections?

P8: Yes I was...

R1: Can you tell me why it was interesting to you?

P8: You know I...from the very beginning I always knew How I was going to vote and who I was going to support and as the elections got closer...

R1: Sorry to interrupt but so did you actually vote?

P8: Yes I did

R1: OK

P8: Prior to the elections I sought out a lot of polecat influences on Twitter I stated following them and I just wanted to have an idea of how the country was thinking.

R1: Can you give me some example of people you followed?

P8: For example, I followed @MrAyeDee I followed @Adeyanjudeji, who was eventually appointed as the social media director of PDP after the elections. But during the elections he was just somebody very close to the elections. There were a lot of insider influences, another guy called I think 70dimensions, but no now knows who he is, he seems to always have spot on information sometimes weeks before it becomes mass public knowledge, everyone seems to think he work somewhere in the villa due to the nature of information he has.

R1: Why was it important to you to be on Twitter during the elections?

It was majorly because I think my peers, people of my generation who are fairly educated were gathering to discuss this issue and I tried to go to table Din Mashayi (translation tea table), which is another social media platform and the debate there was very limiting for me due to the lack of knowledge and amount of ignorance played in the debate there. And so tried Twitter, with the belief that it is a more knowledge, fact-based driven social media site that helps to facilitate debates and discussions. And I just generally wanted to see what people thought about the elections, and I became angry because my fellow northerners and people of the same faith as I where branding anyone who did not believe in APC to be anti-north. So I wrote an article to debunk the rumors and false information against the party that was supporting and I got a lot of backlash.

I think a lot of people only read the first few paragraphs...they called me all sorts of names, and insulted me because of what I wrote. I remember this lady and I on Twitter had a disagreement about it during the elections...I asked her a few months how she was doing and

how she felt about the new government and she said felt disappointed. Some of the points she raised as to why she was disappointed were similar to what I wrote in my article. I wrote in that article how the now President Buhari was a god man with good intentions but had very little political knowledge, he is not an economic manger and has never had the knowledge. And for me the biggest issue we have going into the elections was having somebody who could develop the economy of the country, and his supporters never really asked these types of questions. Debates were driven by sentiments, and APC had a very emotional sentimental campaign, better than PDP's infact, I cant deny that and people didn't ask questions, it was driven by sentiment and a high degree of emotions. To be fair even people on my own side didn't ask gentian questions too of the candidate I was supporting...a lot of support from all ends were driven by emotion. So my conclusion at the end of the day is that debate on Twitter and Table Din Mashayi was basically of the same content, the only difference was that the people their was speaking in Hausa and people of Twitter were a bit more educated, using grammar to hide their ignorance.

R1: Fantastic, very interesting similarities between the two social networks, ok is are their certain features or things that Twitter give that you can not get from other sources of information?

P8: Ok Let me say...I look for...for example whenever I go on Twitter, especially after the elections, I followed a lot of people who I just felt, these people are going to say the same thing over and over again and their is nothing new I was going to really learn from them...so I centered my Twitter use around two kinds of people. People who tend to have very funny comments which tend to be about football and people that will for example follow who some people who are quite informative and there is this guy I follow and I do not agree with economic view. I read what he has to say and I follow him because he is very objective and while I do not agree with his economic philosophies, I think he presents very good facts, and helps me to have my own internal debate so that's how I use Twitter It is very hard for you to get that level of objectively an information from instagram or even television. I am looking for basically new knowledge that will improve fields I am interested in so it is very hard for you to get that on instagram and Facebook is a to type of medium you can get this information from but with how Facebook works I feel like i do not have control over my feed but on Twitter I feel like I have more control on the information I want to see.

R1: Ok and how has using Twitter changed the way you gather political information?

P8: It has grown substantially, I use to gather political information from newspaper that I read and conversations with people but Twitter, even with all it's flaws it is a nice place to get the lies debunked

You know, sometimes you have people who make wild allegations on newspapers, and very quickly, people who have facts will reach to Twitter to debunk those newspapers take time to apologize for the misinformation they give, but Twitter you can get it almost instantaneously. And because of how you get diverse sources of information you tend to have a bigger and clearer picture. Nigerian newspapers sometimes cam be funny...

R1: What do you mean funny?

For example sometimes you will see a headline that reads, "Buhari meets with the national assembly to address the budget". You open the column expecting to see an analysis of the meeting and what was reviewed but all you see is the president met with the national assembly at so so time at so so venue...details to follow.... You know, what's that right? So on Twitter it's more free people get good information, it is defiantly different from reading newspapers. On Twitter if yo see a story of interest it's just easy to search for more of what has been said on it in more detail, with newspapers you have to wait or that's just the end of the story. #0:26:35.4#

R1: Ok interesting, did you engage in any other offline political actives, you said you voted...what else did you do to participate in politics?

P8: Yes I attended a few meetings of young PDP people...we just sat and discussed the party and how we could use our Twitter feed to present more information. But it didn't really go far....But after the elections we tried with a group of friends to set up a platform to discuss political happenings...

R1: And how did you find out about these offline activities you went to?

A cousin recommended going for the meetings, he encouraged me to go out more rather than complain on Twitter, he said I should engage.

R1: Which one do you feel you so more? Participating on Twitter more or offline?

P8: I think I did more offline

R1:and why do you that is the case ?

You see I think even though you could unfollow and follow people as you wish on Twiiter, just the environment being so open was you could not really control the discussions, you could control what you see, who you follow but not what they think. You know you...it was hard to engage people or engage with people in a constructive way, but i found when I was engaging people in private I found that their was more room for understanding. For example, if I say something on Twitter and someone does not agree with me, he wouldn't really think of the substance of what I have sapid, he would just want to say something beck because he feels I have insulted his ideas or believe. People tend to say things back quickly to try to get a win back...as if their is a prize to be won by doing that

R1: Ok thank you...this all very insightful. Do you feel that you are free to participate in politics, what I mean is does the Nigerian political system allows you to participate freely in political discussions?

I think freedom of political expression in Nigeria online and even through the media, is very high. I think we have a furious media, there is no source of regulation in anyway.... and the

few regulations we have are very poor. But I think towards having more of a substance on events, especially offline is very difficult then it comes close, very secretive society, it is hard to break in. And even online while it is still free and a lot of discussions going on, it is hard to have access to for example Nigerian political holders a lot of the influence are not on Twitter and even if they have Twitter handles, they tend to not be very engaged in it, most....

R1: That's interesting

P8: So yh you have very little access and room to really engage with them on certain issues.

R1: Well...if that is the case then essentially, who and what drives you to even what to participate in politics in Twitter

Well for me it to get information really...especially during the elections because you know, things were happening very fast, and traditional media was very slow in reporting those things. There was a constant urge to have information about what was going in different states across Nigeria, how votes were casted, who was winning or losing because you had people who were being connected all over the country providing first hand information.

I have British friends, in the same age group as I am, and their use of Twitter tends to be more about their social interests, so they talk about and follow celebrities they like, sports they like, football and very little political debate goes on on Twitter from what I see it doesn't measure to the about of political engagement on Twitter in Nigeria.

I think no Nigerian can escape, and I think it is because our politics has so much emotional attachment, no Nigerian can escape having a high degree of political debate or exposure on Twitter.

R1: Why is that the case you think?

I think Politics is a very serious issue for Nigerians, we as a nation are so desperate to succeed that why everybody is discussing it you know....I think there is a no pressure to discuss politics in countries that a developed. They have basic things that work, they do not need to discuss as...it is not so much of a problem for them as it is for us. So it is a very emotional and very important topic, I think for example a 25 year old British citizen might not really care what is being discussed in parliament for months...he has security, the transportation system works, he has electricity in his house, affordable internet, things work to a high degree in his country. But a 24 or 25-year-old Nigeria who is coming into the job market quickly has the harsh realities of life hitting him. No jobs available, and maybe if he's from the southern part of Nigeria, where parents kick the guys out of the house early, very soon he would have to realize the cost of having 24 hour electricity is very high in Nigeria, the cost of a generator...so very quickly you are thrown into the dynamic of having to discuss politics as a necessity. It is a necessity to discuss politics in Nigeria because it is still a very important; it is the most important topic now. We as a society do not have the luxuries of tuning out of political discussions and focusing more on celebrities and sports as a young European may have.

R1: That was very interesting way to think about why young Nigerian's are so interested in politics! Is there anything then that you object or embrace regarding using Twitter to talk about politics?

P8: I think I object most to the content of the debate hmm....I think I embrace Twitter as a platform that helps young Nigerians meet across divides and provides a way to have common understanding but unfortunately that yet is not happening in the way I see the potentials of Twitter. Most people look at Twitter as a place where supremacy must be established so for example, in the Twittershere in Nigeria, there is something called Twitter-War Lords...these are people who are very active users who command a lot of respect from their followers and they have thousands of them. They are also called Twiiter-Overloads because they can be wrong so basically they can't loose a debate. So you find that these are people who are business people, they have business interests or who are close to government who should be helping to shape or drive massive debates, and for the fear of loosing face, which is I think a very cultural thing for Nigeria anyway, they feel they can't loose a debate, they will always find a way to win it somehow. And most times it may be wrong information, or involve religion or tribalism to maintain their level of influence and victory over the topic being discussed.

I think if we can have a situation where a lot of political are more activity engaged on Twitter, then I think the discussions may be improved. Someone like the Senate President and Ben Murray Bruce, who is also a senator are very good users of Twitter and because of them you are generally well updated on activities on what happens in the national assembly, because it is directly coming from their twitter feeds.

R1: Ok and do you feel that you have the time and political knowledge to being able to participate on Twitter?

P8: That's one of the response why I think I am more of a consumer of information on Twitter, because I feel like I do not yet have the political access to make...to be a participant in some of the discussions that are being had. But I tend to contribute to substance...so for example when policies are being discussed I would voice out my views. I do not think I can not be a driver of discussion of political discussion because I am not a political heavy weight.

R1: Ok and are you satisfied with how you participate in politics? If not, what would you like to change?

I think I would like to...you know when I started writing I really enjoyed it, I would get into debates with people and was learning new information, so I think I would like to do that more on Twitter...and I think even now when the elections are not happening it is the right time to write you may have more of an opportunity now to affect the thinking of people, because I think elections tend to be all over the world very high-charged. I personally think for people we feel when our candidate loose, it is a loss for us too...so people don't think at an election point what is best for my country, it's about my candidate winning and I winning.

R1: So that's the end of this interview, you gave away very interesting points, is there anything that you would like to ask or add before we finish this interview?

P8: No

R1: Alright then, thank you again and thank you for your time.

7. Appendix 7: Procedures to Maintain Credibility

Procedure	Researchers Action
Contacting research candidates prior to interview.	All participants were provided an interview guide prior to the interviews to inform them of the study and prepare for discussion.
Allowing research process to adapt as the thinking of researcher is challenged	As familiarity with the process increased, the researcher became more confident in conducting interviews. In addition, as new themes emerged from one interview, they were brought into remaining interviews for future exploration.

8. Appendix 8: Steps taken to reduce researcher bias

Adapted from: (Fisher 2004)

Consideration	Action Taken	Limitations
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Neutral Interview	The researcher was careful to avoid expressing own opinions during interviews through verbal and non-verbal communication. Respondents were not lead away from their own perspectives and opinions.	N/a
Establishing a relaxed atmosphere for participants	Outlining the purpose of the study at the start allows participants to understand what they are discussing, putting them at ease	Participant exposed to subject area may manipulate answers to meet research question.
Establishing rapport with participants	The researcher agreed to the time and place best suited for the participants and appeared informally dresses with a relaxed tone of voice. Respondents felt more open to share information.	In some instances participant had to be reminded of their line of thought, and interviews were interrupted by external surroundings (example poor internet connection and background noise).
Ensuring as much accuracy as possible when collecting qualitative data	To investigate data in detail, all interviews were recorded for transcription purposes. The researcher also took as much notes as possible during interviews to save time for later transcription.	Summary of interviews could have been sent to participants to ensure satisfaction of summary matched their thoughts.

Adapted from: Lincoln and Guba (1984)

9. Appendix 9: Age Range

Participant (P)	Age	Interview form
P 1	22	Face-to-Face
P 2	28	Online Via Skype
P 3	25	Online Via Skype
P 4	24	Face-to-Face
P 5	21	Online Via Skype
P 6	29	Online Via Skype

P 7	32	Online Via Skype
P 8	24	Online Via Skype
P 9	23	Online Via Skype

10. Appendix 10: Researchers Tweet

