

**Citizen Media and the 2015 General Elections in South-South Region of Nigeria:
Implications for the Nations Democratic Growth**

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Abstract

New media technology has liberalized the practice of journalism by putting in the hands of ordinary citizens, rather than the so-called professionals, the tools for processing and disseminating news and information. This study was carried out to investigate the ways in which politicians and other Nigerian citizens used citizen media before, during and after the elections. A survey was carried out in three states of the South-South region of Nigeria. A focus group discussion was also used for detailed analysis of the issues raised. The outcome of the exercise showed that indeed citizen media featured prominently from the period leading to the elections, through the electioneering campaign period, as well as during the collation of election results. It was further noted that citizen media were

used to disseminate false information and abuses by followers of leading political actors. The media were also used to declare unverifiable result figures, leading in some cases, to confusion and election violence. As a result, it is recommended that Nigerians should be educated on appropriate use of citizen media and that digital literacy should form part of the general education of the public.

Keywords: Citizen Media, Elections, Democracy, New media, Digital Literacy