The Role of Social Media in Shaping the Not Too Young to Run Bill of Nigeria, 2015–2018

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Abstract

This study examines the critical role of social media as a catalyst for political change in Nigeria's contemporary democracy, using the passage of the landmark "Not Too Young To Run" Bill (2018) as a case study. The bill, which successfully lowered the age requirements for elective offices in Nigeria, signifies a major shift in the country's political landscape. Before its passage, youth inclusion in formal politics was heavily restricted by constitutional age barriers. This research argues that while traditional activism and political lobbying existed, social media platforms, particularly Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, acted as the central nerve system for the movement. It investigates how these digital tools were strategically utilised by a coalition of youth-led groups, civil society organisations (CSOs), and key influencers to accomplish one of the main objectives, that is, to exert direct, real-time pressure on lawmakers and the executive branch to sponsor, pass, and endorse the constitutional amendment. The methodology combines a qualitative analysis of social media content (hashtags, campaigns, influencer engagement) with a review of policy documents, news reports, and interviews with key activists. The findings reveal that social media was more than just a communication tool; it was a fundamental driver of the bill's success. It democratised advocacy, amplified youth voices, and fostered an unprecedented level of transparency and public participation in the legislative process. The study concludes that the #NotTooYoungToRun campaign exemplifies how digital activism can effectively influence

policymaking in Africa, providing a blueprint for future social and political movements in Nigeria and beyond.

Keywords: Digital Activism, Hashtags, Influencer, Instagram, Facebook

Introduction



The "Not Too Young To Run" Bill marked a significant milestone in Nigeria's constitutional framework, representing a pivotal shift toward increasing the accessibility of political office for younger citizens. Before this amendment, age restrictions imposed by the Nigerian constitution limited the capacity of young individuals to contest for various political positions, thereby underscoring a notable gap in youth representation within the governance system.[1] This legislative effort stemmed from a broader aspiration to bolster youth participation in national conversations and decision-making processes, ensuring that the voices, concerns, and innovative perspectives of the younger generation were adequately acknowledged and integrated into the political discourse of the country.[2]

The bill was formally signed into law in May 2018. Still, its inception was the result of years of sustained and coordinated advocacy by a diverse coalition of stakeholders, including young activists, civil society organisations (CSOs), and

concerned citizens who recognised the urgent need for reform. The journey toward this legislative victory was marked by numerous campaigns, protests, and strategic dialogues aimed at raising awareness about the importance of youth involvement in governance.

A particularly vital element of this advocacy movement was the utilisation of social media, which emerged as a powerful tool for mobilising public support and influencing policymakers. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram served as crucial venues for young Nigerians, activists, and CSOs to express their sentiments, disseminate information, and galvanise collective action around the cause. The unique attributes of these platforms facilitated rapid communication and engagement, allowing advocates to reach wide audiences and bypass traditional media gatekeepers, who often overlooked youth-centric issues.[3] The digital campaign surrounding the "Not Too Young To Run" initiative was especially remarkable for its strategic use of impactful hashtags, such as #NotTooYoungToRun. These hashtags functioned not merely as rallying cries but also as devices for mobilising and galvanising support across various demographics. They sparked widespread discussions among lawmakers, attracted media coverage, and drew in the general public, thereby cultivating an inclusive dialogue around the significant topic of youth inclusion in political processes. Furthermore, social media campaigns enabled activists to coordinate their efforts more effectively, share success stories, and sustain the momentum necessary to compel legislators to prioritise and ultimately adopt the bill.[4]

Despite Nigeria's youthful population, young people have historically been marginalised in political leadership due to restrictive age requirements.[5] While the Not Too Young To Run movement successfully challenged these barriers, there is limited scholarly research on how social media contributed to its success. Existing studies focus on the bill's legislative process or youth political participation, but neglect the role of digital activism.[6] This study addresses this gap by analysing social media's influence on the bill's advocacy and passage.

Origins and Advocacy for the Bill

The Not Too Young To Run Bill originated from a growing wave of youth activism in Nigeria, highlighting a significant and troubling disparity between the nation's

youthful population and their underrepresentation in political governance. As of recent demographic data, it was evident that a large portion of Nigeria's population was comprised of young individuals, yet their involvement and participation in politics remained alarmingly low.

Advocacy for this pivotal legislative reform began in earnest around 2016, driven by a coalition of youth-led organisations, most notably the Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement (YIAGA) and the #NotTooYoungToRun Movement. These groups passionately argued that the existing age restrictions for political offices, which were inherited from the 1979 Nigerian Constitution, were not only outdated but also fundamentally at odds with the principles of democracy. They emphasised that such limitations disenfranchised countless young people who were eager and capable of contributing to the governance of their country.[7]

Inspired by successful global movements advocating for youth representation and participation, the campaign drew parallels to various international initiatives, including the United Nations' Youth Delegate Programme, which seeks to empower youth voices in global governance.[8] The movement's founders and supporters sought to mobilise young people, raise awareness about their potential roles as future leaders, and challenge the systemic barriers that kept them from being active participants in shaping their nation's future. The Not Too Young To Run Bill thus became a critical platform for promoting the rights of young Nigerians and ensuring their rightful place in the political landscape.

Key Stakeholders and Their Roles

The successful passage of the bill was profoundly influenced by the active collaboration among a diverse array of stakeholders, each contributing distinct strengths and resources. Civil society organisations (CSOs) played a vital role in this effort, with prominent groups such as YIAGA and Ready To Lead Africa at the forefront. These organisations played a crucial role in mobilising grassroots support for the bill. They organised rallies that drew significant crowds, conducted extensive community outreach initiatives to educate the public about the bill's implications, and employed innovative social media campaigns to amplify their message. By effectively mobilising public opinion, they helped create

a groundswell of enthusiasm that made the bill a focal point of community discussions.[9]

Within the legislative landscape, the National Assembly's Youth and Sports Committees were pivotal in the drafting and refinement of the bill. This committee not only provided essential oversight throughout the process but also fostered in-depth discussions around critical provisions of the bill to ensure that it reflected the needs and aspirations of the youth. Their engagement was crucial in aligning the legislative goals with the interests of younger demographics, ensuring their voices were heard and prioritised.

Key legislative figures played a significant role in championing the cause of the bill. Hon. Tony Nwulu, a dedicated representative in the House of Representatives, took on the mantle of sponsorship, tirelessly advocating for the bill and pushing it through various legislative hurdles. Similarly, Senator Abdul-Aziz Nyako emerged as a passionate advocate in the Senate, lending his support and influence to ensure the bill received the attention it deserved.[10] Both legislators exemplified unwavering commitment and persuasive advocacy, utilising their political acumen to navigate the complex legislative process. Their efforts were essential in marshalling the necessary support and overcoming opposition, ultimately contributing to the successful passage of the bill.

Moreover, international partners, including the National Democratic Institute (NDI), played an instrumental role in the legislative process by offering not only technical expertise but also vital financial resources.[11] Their involvement proved crucial in enhancing the capabilities of local advocates, equipping them with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively champion the bill. Through workshops, training sessions, and strategic guidance, NDI ensured that the bill's provisions aligned with international standards concerning youth engagement and democratic participation. This support fostered a more robust advocacy network that could effectively articulate the importance of the bill to various stakeholders.

On the opposing side, resistance arose primarily from a faction of older legislators who viewed the bill as a direct threat to their long-standing political power and

influence.[12] This group was deeply concerned that the bill would disrupt the existing political landscape, undermining their control over decision-making processes and diminishing their authority in governance. These apprehensions fuelled intense debates and significant pushback during the legislative discussions, as opponents voiced their fears of a shifting power dynamic. The clash between the supporters, backed by international expertise and advocacy efforts, and the resistance from established political figures ultimately played a pivotal role in shaping the narrative and trajectory surrounding the bill's passage through the legislative framework.

Legislative Process and Challenges

The legislative journey of the bill, commonly referred to as the #AgeReductionBill, has been characterised by thorough examination and vigorous debate at multiple stages of the legislative process. Originally introduced in 2016, the bill aimed to amend specific sections of the 1999 Constitution, particularly Sections 65, 106, 131, and 177. Its primary objective was to lower the age limits for candidates aspiring to hold key political positions within the country. The proposed amendments sought to reduce the minimum age requirement for presidential candidates from 40 years to 30 years, for gubernatorial candidates from 35 years to 30 years, and for candidates running for legislative offices from 30 years to 25 years. This shift was intended to encourage youth participation in governance and to bring fresh perspectives to political leadership.[13]

As the bill advanced through the legislative machinery, it faced numerous challenges, especially during its scrutiny by the Constitutional Review Committee. This committee, tasked with evaluating the bill's implications, encountered significant delays, which were largely attributed to competing legislative priorities and the intricate dynamics of addressing the diverse viewpoints of various stakeholders involved in the process. During deliberations, discussions often revealed deep ideological divides among legislators regarding the capabilities and readiness of younger candidates for such high-stakes roles. Some legislators voiced strong concerns about whether young individuals possess the necessary experience and maturity to navigate the complexities and responsibilities associated with government leadership. These debates underscored a broader societal apprehension about entrusting critical political responsibilities to a

younger demographic, igniting a discourse that was as much about age as it was about competency and representation.[14]

The ongoing scrutiny and mixed perspectives surrounding the #AgeReductionBill have made it a focal point in contemporary political discourse, illustrating the challenges of reforming institutional norms to enhance youth engagement in governance while addressing the anxieties of more seasoned political actors. As the bill continues to navigate the legislative landscape, it remains to be seen how these tensions will unfold and ultimately impact the future of political participation within the country.

As the committee confronted various challenges during their discussions, a pivotal compromise began to take shape. After extensive deliberations, it was agreed that while the proposal to lower age limits for gubernatorial and legislative positions would be implemented, the committee chose to uphold the current age requirement of 35 years for those seeking the presidency. This decision was not made lightly; it was a calculated strategy aimed at balancing the need for innovation and inclusivity in politics with the desire to maintain certain traditional standards for the highest office in the nation. By retaining the existing age threshold for presidential candidates, the committee hoped to cultivate a broader base of support among various stakeholders while simultaneously making substantial progress in encouraging the participation of younger individuals in the political arena. This dual approach reflects a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in electoral reform and the need to engage new generations in governance.[15]

Passage and Presidential Assent (2018)

In 2018, Nigeria witnessed a pivotal moment in its legislative history when the National Assembly successfully transmitted a landmark bill to President Muhammadu Buhari. This significant step came after the bill received widespread endorsement from the state assemblies across 26 of Nigeria's 36 states, successfully meeting the constitutional prerequisites necessary for consideration at the national level. On May 31, 2018, President Buhari lent his support by granting assent to the bill, a decision that was met with widespread celebration among youth advocacy

groups and supporters of increased representation for young people in the Nigerian political landscape.[16]

The enactment of this legislation held deep symbolic meaning as it coincided with Nigeria's Democracy Day festivities. This alignment not only underscored the importance of the legislation in the ongoing narrative of Nigeria's democratic evolution but also connected the significance of youth involvement in governance to the broader theme of democratic progress. Advocates hailed the bill as a historic victory, believing it would pave the way for greater inclusivity in political processes and empower a new generation of leaders.[17]

However, despite the celebratory mood surrounding the bill's passage, critiques emerged highlighting several notable limitations that could inhibit its effectiveness. A central concern among critics was the law's inadequate provision for addressing the prohibitively high costs associated with campaigning in Nigeria. The substantial financial burden linked to running for office could continue to deter aspiring candidates from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, thereby perpetuating a political landscape that remains accessible only to those with significant financial resources. This gap in the legislation posed serious questions about the government's commitment to fostering an inclusive political environment, raising anxieties that the very essence of the bill, designed to promote youth participation, might ultimately be undermined by these ongoing challenges within the political framework. Critics emphasised the need for comprehensive reforms that would genuinely lower the barriers to entry for all potential candidates, ensuring that Nigeria's democratic process could truly reflect the voices and aspirations of its diverse population.

The Role of Social Media Platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)

Social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have played a crucial role in promoting the Not Too Young To Run movement, which seeks to enhance political representation for young people in Nigeria. These digital spaces have provided young Nigerians with accessible and interactive environments that facilitate organisation, expression, and active campaigning for greater political inclusion.

Among these platforms, Twitter stands out as a particularly vibrant and effective venue for engagement. Its real-time capabilities enable users to partake in live discussions, share immediate updates, and swiftly mobilise supporters, making it ideal for grassroots movements that require rapid dissemination of information. The use of specific hashtags related to the Not Too Young To Run movement has been instrumental in unifying conversations surrounding youth representation, making it easier for activists to rally support and connect with a larger audience.[18] On the other hand, Facebook and Instagram served distinct yet complementary roles in the outreach efforts tied to the social movements among young Nigerians. Facebook's platform was particularly effective in fostering a sense of community through the creation of groups and events that invited young individuals to connect and collaborate. These spaces allowed for the organisation of gatherings and discussions that promoted collective action, bridging gaps between activists and creating a unified front. The platform's infrastructure supported longer-form discussions, enabling participants to delve deeply into various issues, share detailed narratives, and engage in meaningful conversations that enriched the overall dialogue surrounding the movement.

Meanwhile, Instagram harnessed the power of visual storytelling to engage audiences on a different level. With its emphasis on images and short videos, Instagram became a vital tool for young activists to document their experiences and aspirations in compelling ways. Activists used the platform to share powerful visuals that conveyed their messages, ranging from protest scenes to personal stories of hope and resilience. This visually driven content not only captured attention but also resonated emotionally, reaching a broader audience and fostering greater empathy and understanding of the issues at hand.

Together, these social media platforms played an indispensable role in amplifying the voices of young Nigerians participating in political activism. They not only provided a space for expression but also significantly influenced public discourse regarding youth engagement in political processes. This dynamic interplay between text and visuals showcases the transformative power of digital communication in contemporary activism, demonstrating how social media can mobilise communities and challenge existing narratives.

Hashtag Activism (#NotTooYoungToRun)

Research shows that hashtags such as #NotTooYoungToRun play a vital role in increasing the visibility of social movements in mainstream media. These hashtags serve as powerful digital tools that effectively connect online activities with offline actions, creating a seamless dialogue between virtual engagement and real-world initiatives.[19]

By utilising these hashtags, activists can mobilise support more efficiently, transforming online excitement and awareness into tangible actions, such as protests, community events, or policy changes. This digital engagement not only nurtures a sense of community among supporters but also attracts the attention of traditional media outlets, which can amplify the movement's message and reach a broader audience.

Influencers, Celebrities, and Online Campaigns

In recent years, celebrities and social media influencers have increasingly become key players in amplifying social movements around the world, harnessing their extensive platforms to engage and mobilise large audiences effectively. One notable example of this phenomenon is the campaign aimed at increasing voter registration and promoting youth candidacy in Nigeria. During this crucial initiative, a remarkable array of prominent musicians, actors, and influential public figures utilised their social media channels to disseminate relevant hashtags and powerful messages that resonated with their followers.

These celebrities, who often boast followings in the millions, leveraged their popularity to bring significant attention to the movement, thereby broadening its visibility and enhancing its overall impact. For instance, well-known Nigerian artists crafted and shared poignant posts that underscored the critical importance of civic engagement and the necessity for young people to take an active role in the electoral process. Their supportive endorsements not only lent substantial credibility to the campaign but also instilled a sense of urgency among their fans, compelling many to consider the importance of their votes.[20]

Public Mobilisation and Awareness

Social media has emerged as an indispensable platform for raising awareness and educating the public about the movement's objectives. This development is particularly significant for demographics that often encounter barriers when trying to access traditional news sources, such as rural communities, younger audiences, and individuals who may lack access to reliable local media outlets. By leveraging various features of social media, such as live videos, engaging infographics, and a diverse range of user-generated content, the movement successfully transformed complex legislative processes into information that is both accessible and engaging.

The use of live videos allowed for real-time engagement, enabling followers to witness events and deliberations as they unfolded, which helped demystify the legislative process. Infographics provided a visual representation of intricate data and statistics, making it easier for individuals to grasp the significance of constitutional reforms and their eventual impact on society. Meanwhile, user-generated content fostered a sense of community and ownership over the movement, with individuals sharing their perspectives and experiences, thus enriching the narrative.[21]

Social Media as a Tool for Legislative Pressure

The effectiveness of this digital advocacy was further enhanced by its role as a complementary strategy to traditional offline lobbying efforts. Activists engaged in face-to-face meetings with lawmakers, organised grassroots events, and facilitated public discussions to bolster their campaign. This two-pronged approach, combining the immediacy and reach of social media with personal interactions and community organising, proved essential in rallying public support.[22]

The combined efforts of various strategies were instrumental in mobilising enthusiastic support for the movement that culminated in the successful passage of the Not Too Young To Run bill in 2018. This ground-breaking legislation aimed to lower the age thresholds for political candidacy, thereby creating increased opportunities for young individuals to actively participate in governance and play a significant role in shaping the future of their communities.

Effects of Social Media on the Bill's Passage

Social media platforms, notably Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, have played an indispensable role in mobilising and galvanising public support for the Not Too Young To Run campaign, an initiative aimed at lowering the age requirements for individuals aspiring to run for political office. Through the strategic use of targeted hashtags like #NotTooYoungToRun and #YouthPower, the campaign garnered substantial attention, trending nationally and compelling lawmakers to consider the urgent demands for legislative reform.

The digital space facilitated real-time engagement and grassroots mobilisation, enabling activists and supporters to disseminate critical information quickly, rally community support, and amplify their messages across vast networks. This dynamic environment not only allowed for the rapid spread of awareness but also fostered collaboration and solidarity among young people who were passionate about making their voices heard.[23]

Prominent advocates within the movement, such as Samson Itodo[24], co-convener of the Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement (YIAGA), effectively leveraged technology to increase the campaign's visibility. Itodo and his peers utilised live video broadcasts, which allowed them to engage directly with audiences and provide updates about the campaign's progress.[25] Additionally, they initiated online petitions that rallied thousands of signatures, showcasing the overwhelming support for youth political participation.

These strategies did not merely serve to inform the public about the objectives of the campaign; they actively invited participation, fostering a sense of community and shared purpose among young activists. Participants felt connected to a larger movement, equipping them with a sense of agency as they sought to effect real change in the political landscape. Overall, the innovative use of social media was pivotal in transforming the Not Too Young To Run campaign into a formidable force for political reform.[26]

Research has demonstrated that the viral characteristics of the Not Too Young To Run campaign played a pivotal role in undermining the traditional gatekeeping function of mainstream media. This transformation enabled a more direct and

unmediated interaction between citizens and lawmakers, with social media platforms serving as essential venues for individuals to voice their opinions, share personal stories, and advocate passionately for their rights without the constraints often imposed by professional journalism. The immediacy and accessibility of social media fostered a culture where marginalised voices could gain visibility and influence the political discourse in real-time.[27]

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that some detractors argue that the effectiveness of social media in this context was significantly enhanced by concurrent offline lobbying efforts and grassroots organising initiatives. This critical perspective emphasises the complexity of modern advocacy by suggesting that the triumphs of the Not Too Young To Run campaign cannot be attributed solely to the prowess of digital mobilisation. Rather, it reflects a more integrated approach to activism, a hybrid model that melds online engagement with traditional methods of organising, such as face-to-face meetings, community gatherings, and strategic partnerships with established advocacy groups.[28] This multifaceted strategy collectively aimed to foster greater political awareness and action among young people, ultimately contributing to the campaign's overarching success in promoting youth participation in governance.

Youth Political Engagement After 2018

Following the passage of the landmark bill in 2018 aimed at enhancing youthful participation in governance, Nigeria witnessed a remarkable surge in political engagement among its younger population. A comprehensive report from the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) highlighted a striking 34% increase in the number of electoral candidates aged 30 and under who participated in the 2019 general elections compared to the statistics from the previous 2015 elections. This notable rise in youth representation not only underscores the evolving political landscape of Nigeria but also reflects the growing ambitions and aspirations of the younger generation to influence the country's future.

Moreover, organisations dedicated to promoting civic engagement, such as "Yiaga Africa", have reported a significant uptick in voter registration within the demographic of individuals aged 29 and below. This increase can largely be attributed to consistent and targeted efforts in online civic education initiatives.

These campaigns have played an essential role in informing and motivating young potential voters about the critical importance of their participation in the electoral process, thereby fostering a sense of civic duty and encouraging them to take an active role in shaping their political environment. Such trends indicate not only a shift in political dynamics but also the potential for a more vibrant and representative democracy in Nigeria as younger voices increasingly seek to be heard.[29]

Despite the encouraging trends observed in youth engagement within political processes, several structural barriers persisted, hindering the full realisation of these efforts. One significant obstacle was the high nomination fees required for candidacy, which imposed a considerable financial burden on many young individuals aspiring to enter politics. This requirement often excluded talented candidates who could not afford the fees, thereby restricting the diversity of voices and perspectives in political representation.

In addition to the financial constraints, party gatekeeping practices further complicated the landscape for young political entrants. Established political parties frequently employed methods that effectively marginalised newcomers, particularly younger individuals eager to contribute to the political discourse. These practices included stringent vetting procedures, a lack of mentorship opportunities, and an overall resistance to change, creating a challenging environment for fresh ideas and perspectives to gain traction within the political system.[30]

As a result of these compounded challenges, the transformative potential that the legislation aimed to achieve was significantly limited. The barriers not only restricted the participation of youth in politics but also impeded the overall dynamism and innovation that young leaders could bring to governance. Without addressing these structural issues, the goal of fostering a more inclusive and representative political environment remained unfulfilled.

Challenges and Criticisms of Online Activism

While digital platforms have significantly democratised the landscape of advocacy, allowing voices from diverse backgrounds to be heard, they have not

been without their challenges and areas of scrutiny. Key criticisms of online activism include:

Critics argue that many supporters engage superficially (e.g., sharing hashtags without taking offline action). Critics argue that this behaviour often lacks genuine commitment, as many supporters participate in these actions without taking any further steps to effect real change in the world.[31] This superficial engagement can give a false sense of accomplishment while detracting from more impactful forms of activism that require time, energy, and dedication.

The issue of digital divides is particularly pronounced among rural youth, who often face significant barriers due to limited access to the internet. This lack of connectivity not only hinders their ability to participate fully in various movements and initiatives but also restricts their access to educational resources, job opportunities, and social networks. As a result, these young individuals find themselves marginalised and isolated from the broader conversations and actions that are shaping their communities and the world at large. The consequences of this exclusion are profound, as it perpetuates inequalities and limits the potential for rural youth to engage meaningfully in societal progress.

Critics of the bill have exploited misleading information and fabricated headlines to misrepresent its true intentions and objectives. By spreading fake news, they have sought to create confusion and sway public opinion against the legislation, undermining informed discourse on its merits.[32]

Following the successful passage of the proposed measures, the initial online excitement and engagement began to diminish significantly. This decline highlighted the difficulties faced in shifting from a phase of active protest and advocacy to one of effective governance and implementation. The momentum that had initially galvanised supporters seemed to lose its vigour, showcasing the complexities involved in translating public enthusiasm into actionable policies and sustained community involvement.

Comparative Analysis with Other Youth-Led Movements

The Not Too Young To Run movement aligns with various global youth campaigns, showcasing a shared commitment to empowering young individuals in political spheres. This initiative, which advocates for the lowering of the age requirement for political office, is part of a broader trend seen in youth-led movements around the world.

Similar to initiatives like March for Our Lives in the United States, which calls for gun control and addresses school safety, Not Too Young To Run emphasises the role that youth can play in shaping societal issues. Both movements highlight the passion and determination of younger generations to influence policy and advocate for their rights. Moreover, movements such as Fridays for Future, led by climate activist Greta Thunberg, underscore the urgency with which youth tackle pressing global problems, demonstrating that young voices can lead significant change.[33]

EndSARS (Nigeria, 2020):

The #EndSARS movement in Nigeria, which gained significant momentum in 2020, utilised social media platforms as a powerful tool to advocate for systemic reforms in response to widespread police brutality and human rights abuses. Activists and citizens shared their experiences and organised protests, calling for the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). Despite the peaceful nature of the demonstrations, participants faced severe and violent repression from state authorities, including instances of police violence and military intervention, which aimed to suppress the calls for justice and accountability. This clash highlighted the urgent need for reform within the Nigerian police force and broader societal changes.[34]

Nigeria has made significant strides in institutional reform, highlighting a key distinction in its approach compared to movements like #EndSARS. While #EndSARS was successful in galvanising widespread online outrage regarding police brutality and government accountability, it faced challenges in transforming that digital activism into concrete policy changes. In contrast, Nigeria's efforts in institutional reform have involved systematic changes aimed at improving governance, enhancing accountability, and addressing public

concerns through established channels. This difference underscores the complexities involved in moving from social media activism to effective policymaking and institutional change.

Conclusion

The Not Too Young To Run movement serves as a compelling illustration of the transformative impact of social media on contemporary democratic processes. In Nigeria, social media platforms played a pivotal role in facilitating real-time communication among citizens, enabling grassroots mobilisation, and fostering transnational solidarity. This digital landscape significantly disrupted the traditional political gatekeeping mechanisms that have long impeded youth participation in politics.

The successful passage of the bill, which aimed to lower the age limit for political candidacy, underscored the immense potential of digital platforms to empower marginalised groups, particularly the youth, and to reshape the landscape of political participation. Through strategic use of social media, young activists were able to organise campaigns, share information widely, and galvanise public support in a previously difficult way, effectively challenging the status quo of political exclusion.

However, this study also emphasises that while social media is an essential catalyst for change, its influence should be seen as part of a broader framework. For the efforts of the Not Too Young To Run movement to translate into lasting democratic change, there must also be concurrent institutional reforms and active engagement in offline spaces. These elements are crucial in creating an environment where the rights of marginalised groups are not only recognised but also upheld within formal political structures. Only through this comprehensive approach can we hope to achieve enduring democratic transformation and ensure that the voices of young people are adequately represented in the political arena.

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