



Alexander von Humboldt
Stiftung/Foundation

**Project Title: [Re]constructing Female Political Discourse in Nigeria
Democracy: A Computer-mediated Corpus-Based Study**

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This project, generously funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, offers a systematic description and analysis of data-driven evidence on how the new media shape and reshape the political cultures and representation of female Nigerian political actors. It also seeks to provide a scholarly discussion on how the new media discursive practices can enable gender-sensitive/balanced conversations within the Nigerian political space, and how this is expected to contribute to the perception about female politicians and their political output/outlook which previous studies have ignored.

This study will combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches. It will encompass a comparative analysis of the speeches of female and male politicians- aspirants and elected officials- with the aim of identifying areas of convergence and divergence in their political rhetoric. The dataset selected for this study would come from a corpus of online materials published during the 1999, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2023 general elections in Nigeria. The corpus will be sourced from the websites of selected political candidates; Civil Society groups; Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC); Campaign organisations; private and public institutions; individual as well as public websites such as Nairaland, Naijapals, and Nigerian Village Square; and On-line editions of news platforms (print and electronic media). The data will also include archival materials and postings on the walls of the Facebook pages, and the official Twitter handles of the Campaign Organisations of the selected politicians. The purposive sampling method is deployed in selecting notable political actors (twelve females and twelve males) from each of the major geographical zones (basically from the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba ethnic divisions), and from various political parties in Nigeria. Importantly too, the library research at the host institution, i.e. the University of Bonn, will supply additional literature and on-line resources to strengthen the theoretical and methodological frameworks and provide resources for a systematic analysis of the data. Corpus analytical tools such as Antconc, LanCSBox, MAXQDA, and Sketch Engine will be used to analyse, among others: concordances, collocations, frequency of lexical units and relatedness of grammatical patterns. Data will also be subjected to descriptive analysis, particularly within the purview of Susan Herring's (2004) insights on Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) and Computer Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) which provide the tool kits required to study and explain how the new media technologies influence the strategies deployed by language users within a given virtual sphere. CMC/CMDA would be used to analyse the structure and meaning of the web-based resources constituting the data for this research. In addition, van Dijk's (2001) Critical Discourse Analysis theory will be used to explain the ideological issues extended in the speeches of the selected, especially the female, politicians. These theories would be

complemented with descriptive statistics which would be deployed in explaining the frequency of linguistic categories in the data. Data constructed in the English language only would be considered in this study

This project will involve the construction of a corpus of the discourses of female politicians in Nigeria. Part of this repository would be made available to the public upon the conclusion of this research. The study will have great implications for the Nigerian political system, where women are believed to be largely marginalised. The corpus would also be of immense help in future research on the manifestations of gender in [Nigerian] politics.