

The Gender War in Nigerian Politics: An analysis of the causes and repercussions of women's marginalization in Nigerian Political Spaces

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LIBRARY RESEARCH PAPER.

I can vividly remember the first walk I took around the University of Notre Dame. The most remarkable sight to behold, aside from the Golden Dome, was touchdown Jesus. Barely anyone, including myself, was concerned with the fact that behind this mural was one of the most impressive Libraries that I had ever been to. Soon enough, my perspective on this building developed into a culture of late nights, hard work and most importantly an abyss of research and discovery in fields I had only dreamt I could delve into.

“Gender War on Politics- Analyzing the causes and repercussions of women’s involvement in Nigerian Politics” was the research topic I chose for my Writing and Rhetoric class. Even as I reiterated it to my professor I was anxious about the sources I would use and if I would find enough material to explore my topic in depth. All my questions were answered during my class's designated library visits. In this session, we were educated about the various resources available through the library, for seeking out information for research assignments. I was informed about the Librarians by Subjects feature that the Hesburgh Library offers. Within this feature, I was tasked with using resources that were mainly under the Africana Studies department. This meant that I would get the opportunity to work with Ms. Leslie Morgan, in order to gain a wider understanding of the resources the library could provide on my research topic. I was privileged, to have Ms. Leslie Morgan was the Librarian that presented to my class, which gave me the opportunity to have one on one conversations with her that assisted my navigation through the Hesburgh web page.

In my extremely helpful conversations with Ms. Morgan, she introduced me to the African Development Indicators, Ethnic news Watch and Encyclopedia of Africa that guided me through my collection of data and statistics concerning my research topic. This added a quantitative aspect to my research as I wasn’t limited to only theoretical ideologies on my research topic. Thus, I had various economic and social indicators that proved my thesis which stated that the marginalization of women in Nigeria led to socio economic regression in different industries within the country.

Along the lines of data collection, one of the workshops I attended was also very paramount when I analyzed large volumes of data. I was able to learn how to use text mining software to extract valuable information such as names, genders and so on, out of long pieces of text. This workshop titled “Extracting the who, what and when from a text” proved to be very valuable in my personal research assignments. During the session, I had the privilege of working with Dr. Eric Lease. While working with him, I learned various steps that enabled data to be extracted quickly and effectively. Before then, I was not familiar with such software that could cut my data extraction time in half. This was a much better alternative than having to sift through various pages of journals, papers and data sets. I intend to expand on my beginner-level knowledge to enable me to use this skill in collaborative works with Professors, as well as in my research projects in the future.

One of the most valuable resources that the Library presented was through its various databases. This gave me access to previous African Newspapers. This access was a positive turning point for my research, as one of my areas of arguments for my Research paper had been the media coverage of female political candidates versus their male counterparts. Through this database, I could actually track this data and present it in a table in my research paper, rather than presenting my argument off of my preconceived assumptions. This added to the credibility of my paper.

Additionally, I would say that the most crucial resource that the library provided for my paper was the access to the google scholar database. This gave me access to scholars and students that had done previous work concerning my research topic. It showed me that I wasn't the first to do this genre of research. As such, I took advantage of the opportunity to read through, analyze and critique previous scholarly papers in order to ensure that I brought an improved perspective to the table. From this database, I was able to find further readings that buttressed my findings, more perspectives that I could add to my paper, and most importantly, valuable counter arguments. These counters informed me of possible holes in my argument and I was able to refine my paper through tackling these drawbacks. As a summation tool, RefWorks helped me format and save my bibliographies; this way I did not have to go through the tumultuous task of organizing them when I submitted my paper.

Right now, it is unfathomable that I once was unaware of all the valuable resources that the Hesburgh Library offered towards young researchers like myself. It is even more interesting that the resources I mentioned in my essay are not even half of the vast resources that the Hesburgh Library has to offer. On different occasions, people have made use of the libraries' optical character machines, their Virtual Reality tools, their OneSearch platform or their numerous books that are available to be borrowed. I am confident that as the years pass, I will be honing these tools that the library offers to instrumental work in research.