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Normalizing misogyny: hate speech and verbal abuse of female politicians on Japanese Twitter

TAMARA FUCHS and FABIAN SCHÄFER

Abstract: Social media platforms such as Twitter have gained tremendous political importance in recent years. Moreover, being considered as platforms for organizing grass root political movements or political participation in general, this positive view has given way to more critical perspectives on the negative sides of social media, such as attempts of algorithmically manipulating public opinion or the outcome of elections and racist or sexist hate speech. For the case of Japan, despite particularly xenophobic hate speech on bulletin boards such as “2channel” (*ni-channeru*) or Twitter has been extensively studied from various angles, misogynic forms of verbal abuse towards females on social media, female politicians in particular, have received much lesser attention in existing research. In this article we present results from an explorative analysis of instances of misogynist or sexist hate speech and abusive language against female politicians on Twitter, applying computational corpus-linguistic tools and methods, supplemented by a qualitative in-depth study of verbal abuse of four prominent female politicians, namely Renhō, Tsujimoto Kiyomi, Yamao Shiori, and Koike Yuriko, thereby fruitfully combining quantitative-statistical and qualitative-hermeneutic approaches.

Keywords: Twitter, misogyny, hate speech, corpus linguistics, social media, Japanese politics

Introduction and research question

The rapid development of social media has produced a second realm of reality. Users of social networking sites (SNS), such as Twitter and Facebook, possess a social network in addition to their real-life contacts. However, social media has become much more than just a secondary virtual personal network, since it has gained tremendous political importance over the years. Twitter is no longer

simply a private micro-blog used by people to share details of their daily lives with their friends. Newspapers are frequently citing tweets, thus accepting their news value, and politicians actively use Twitter as a political tool. It has even been argued that Twitter and Facebook incited movements such as the Arab Spring in 2011. However, due to rising concerns regarding recent waves of hate against ethnic minorities, sexual orientation, or gender on Twitter, this positive image is fading. Today, Twitter has turned into a massive enterprise that emphasizes the value of uncensored democratic speech but has also become a platform for hate speech and abusive verbal attacks (Burnap and Williams 2015; Hardaker and McGlashan 2016; Miro-Llinares and Rodriguez-Sala 2016; Tanaka and Yamaguchi 2016).

In Japan, Twitter has gained immense popularity in the past years and has become the third most popular social network service in 2016, right after Line and Facebook, according to the Japanese Internal Ministry of Affairs (cf. Sōmushō 2018, 68). Today, Twitter is considered a seismograph as well as an influencer of political public opinion and has attracted scholarly attention respectively (Uesugi 2010; Kinoshita, Kosugi, and Takayama 2011; Schäfer, Evert, and Heinrich 2017; Yoshimi 2016, 2017). Potentially protected by anonymity, Twitter users feel free to express any (even an extremist) opinion without fear of being criticized or even excluded from the online community. In Japan, where the social bonds in society are still overwhelmingly strong and many people yield to social pressure, this platform is also understood as a kind of vent to escape from such pressure. Before Twitter, it was the bulletin board “2channel” (*ni-channeru*) that provided such a platform, particularly for extensive xenophobic hate speech (cf. Kitada 2005; Sunyoung 2017). However, this article does not want to add to the already existing research on xenophobic hate speech, being a rather well-researched form of verbal abuse and discrimination online, but will provide important insights into the misogynic and sexist attitude expressed towards female politicians on Twitter and its peculiar linguistic structure.

Barak (2005) argues that even in the early beginnings of social media a greater deal of cyber harassment was, in fact, gendered forms of harassment, anticipating the weakness of executive legislation to prevent online harassment. Studies on misogyny on social media often discuss the difficulty of (automatically) detecting misogynic or hateful tweets (Hewitt, Tiropanis, and Bokhove 2016; Ahluwalia et al. 2018; Buntain 2018). Machine learning approaches, which are in this case technical approaches able to detect hate speech automatically in large text data through algorithms, are developing but still face difficulties, stemming from the ambiguity of various forms of verbal abuse. Moreover, manual analyses are hindered by the lack of a clear definition and typology of hate speech or abusive language.

In her path-breaking study, Megarry (2014) provided valuable insights regarding sexual online harassment against women. She analyzed tweets

including the prominent hashtag #mencallmethings, which was used by women to share their everyday experiences of sexual harassment against them. In her findings, she explains that women are more likely to be targeted by a highly gendered vocabulary (instead of gender-neutral slurs) (Megarry 2014, 50). Moreover, she found out that online harassment of women often refers to physical appearance, thus focussing on a female's attractiveness as the alleged core value of being a woman. Based on her findings, Megarry argues that verbal abuse of women on the Internet should be considered as online *sexual harassment*, as its main goal lies in silencing women in a predominantly patriarchal online community (Megarry 2014, 53).

The political landscape of Japan is still a very male-dominated area by and large, and numerous factors make it difficult for women to become, and remain successful in politics (Miura 2017). Furthermore, Dalton (2015, 2017), who has conducted intensive research on sexual harassment of Japanese female politicians based on interviews of female Liberal Democrat Party (LDP) and Democrat Party of Japan (DPJ) members as well as members of the *Alliance of Feminist Representatives* (Femiren), argues that despite sexual harassment is a continuing problem in contemporary Japanese politics, it is only rarely openly addressed:

The violence that women in Japanese politics encounter is wide and varied, ranging from sexist heckling to silencing to unwanted physical touching. Yet this harassment of women is rarely discussed as an issue, much less named as violence—in this sense it remains hidden. I suggest that one of the reasons for this is that it is difficult for people to clearly articulate what constitutes sexual harassment in a culture where the sexual exploitation of women and girls is so widespread. (Dalton 2017, 216)

Recent studies have revealed that female politicians are also a predominant target of online abuse in countries such as the US and the UK (Hunt, Evershed, and Liu 2016; Dhrodia 2017). Given the lack of comparable studies on Japan, our study investigates abusive language against female politicians on Twitter in Japan. Although it would have provided an important comparative perspective, we had to exclude male politicians from our study due to their over-representation and the unmanageable size of data for our manual qualitative approach. Instead, we hope to provide important first explorative insights regarding the triads of hate and verbal abuse that female politicians are facing online on an almost daily basis.

Our large-data analysis of Twitter employs computational corpus-linguistic methods to detect and analyze the use of abusive language in what could be described as the “latent” “semi-public sphere” having emerged from social media platforms like Twitter (Schäfer 2016; Schäfer and Kitada 2017). By the terms latency and semi-public we refer to the fact that Twitter is a space of semi-privacy and semi-publicness, also for both the person being attacked by

hate speech (who is making oneself vulnerable by one's online appearance) and the one's expressing their hate (who can publicly voice a slur without revealing their identity). One could argue that it also stems from the collapse of a clear distinction between what is private and what is public on social media that online hate speech has gained such momentum in the past decade.

Defining abusive language and hate speech

Waseem et al. (2017) distinguish between explicit and implicit forms of *abusive language*, with the explicit abusive language being obviously derogatory whereas implicit forms usually hide behind sarcasm or irony (cf. also Schmidt and Wiegand 2017). Hate speech and overt insults clearly belong to forms of explicit abusive language. Whereas insults (such as calling somebody an “idiot”) directly target an individual without inferring to its ethnic or gender identity (Sponholz 2018), *hate speech* can be defined as a discriminatory form of verbal abuse based on group identity (such as gender or ethnicity) (Unger 2013; Sponholz 2018). Davidson et al. (2017) define hate speech “as language that is used to express (sic) hatred towards a targeted group or is intended to be derogatory, to humiliate, or to insult the members of the group.” All forms of explicit abusive language are hurtful and derogatory to the individual attacked, are always colloquial and emotional, and are not aiming at entering a dialogue with the person addressed.

Particularly implicit forms of verbal abuse pose difficulties for research. Ironic usages of language (functioning as a polarity reverser, since what is written literally is not actually meant), which can also be meant to be abusive, are not only particularly difficult to detect for machine-learning approaches or sentiment analysis¹ (Davidov, Tsur, and Rappoport 2010; Waseem et al. 2017), but are also often even hard to grasp for the human researcher.² In our analysis, irony or parodistic variations of certain (abusive) terms, take up a relatively large share of the instances of implicit abusive and offensive language detected and analyzed by us. In the case of Japanese Twitter, we are dealing with a particular ironic communicational style, which is hard to understand for researchers not being acquainted with the habits of the online community. This style originally developed at the message board *2channel*, which is notoriously famous for the extreme misogyny and racism of some of its discussion threads (Kitada 2005). With the growing popularity of Twitter or Facebook, this style has spilled over from the anonymity of *2channel* into social media. It was clear from the onset of our research that it would be inevitable to conduct qualitative analyses particularly of these forms of irony and parody to understand not only the content of the tweets themselves but also to explain how abusive language often works linguistically or structurally on Japanese Twitter on the level of irony.

According to Akihiro Kitada (2005), this abusive ironic or parodistic style is particularly employed by Japanese Internet right-wingers (*netto uyoku*) in their attempts to attack ideological opponents. As with all other forms of hate speech or abusive language, this style is not aiming at communicating or entering into a dialogue with somebody. It is “autotelic,” and thus non-dialogic because its predominant aim does not lie in conveying a message or meaning, but rather at suppressing dialogic communication through excessive and mutual posting of comments (also called flaming, or *enjō* in Japanese), tweets, or blog posts. Accordingly, its aim does lie in maintaining a superficial phatic “connective sociality” (*tsunagari no shakai-sei*) amongst the members of a certain (right-wing) online community sharing this idea of offensive “humor” (Schäfer 2016; Schäfer, Evert, and Heinrich 2017).

Kitada (2005) describes this style also as “cynical,” since behaving politically incorrect is often justified by arguing that the use of a certain abusive phrase was only meant as a joke. In fact, it is even considered as “uncool” amongst the *netto uyoku* to take the expressions of others seriously who are not familiar with this particular style of non-dialogic and cynical communication, and instead want to engage in a serious debate. Moreover, this style of Internet right-wingers is also cynical on an ideological level, because their peculiar connective and autotelic communication engender a cynical stance towards what *netto uyo* consider as “anti-Japanese” (*han'nichi*), namely the accusation that one is acting against its own people, “the Japanese.” Certain media outlets, such as the *Asahi shinbun*, left-leaning politicians, or progressive educators often become the aim of this kind of anti-elitist and anti-intellectual cynical criticism. This, however, is not a development that is unique for Japan. Rather, this either “political” or “funny” cynical attitude has become an important aspect of today’s Internet culture on the one hand (Nagle 2017; Whitney and Milner 2017), and new-right movements or right-wing populists alike globally on the other (Müller 2016).

Methodological approach and Twitter corpus data

Our approach is particularly informed by research that has been conducted by proponents of corpus-based discourse analysis (CDA). The quantitative-qualitative approach of CDA has been successfully applied to a broad range of related phenomena of misogyny or xenophobia, such as the media representation of refugees (Baker and McEnery 2005) or gender identity, particularly that of LGBT (Love and Baker 2015). The aim of CDA is to extend the qualitative method of critical discourse analysis, which aims to critically uncover relationships between language and the social, with the quantitative tools of corpus linguistics, in particular, keyword and collocation analysis based on

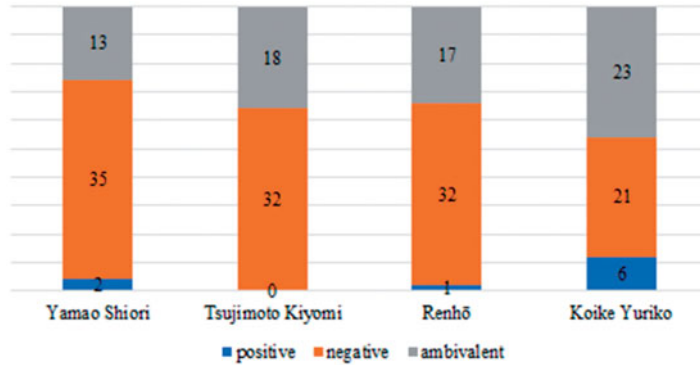
corpus frequencies and co-occurrence patterns. The results are qualitatively interpreted by the researcher in selected samples or in-depth studies of the text.

Based on CDA's approach, we provide qualitative insights into insulting or abusive tweets concerning specific Japanese female politicians within a distinct time frame by applying corpus-linguistic methods such as manual sentiment analysis and context-based inference. Qualitative studies of this kind are necessary to move beyond mere statistical results and in order to take linguistic variations into consideration, such as the use of irony or the invention and variations of insulting neologisms. As our study shows, irony and puns play a peculiar role in abusive verbal attacks on women in Japanese Twitter.

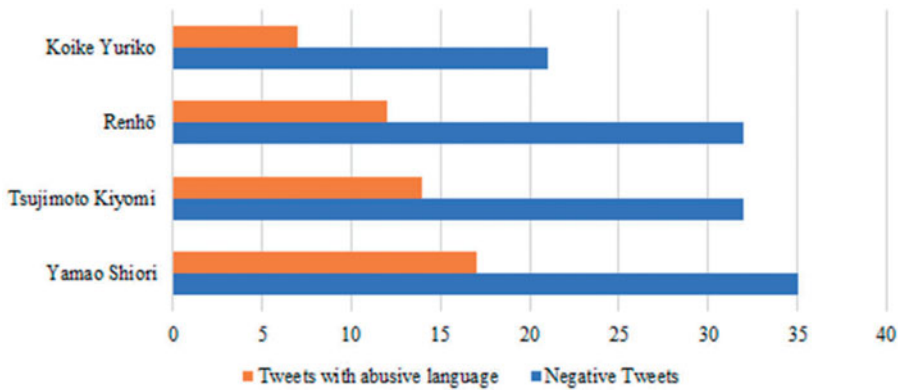
Our text corpus³—the Twitter data set used in our study—was collected between the beginning of January of 2018 and mid-April of 2018, using Twitter's streaming Application Programming Interface (API).⁴ To gain insights into the everyday discrimination and hate speech against female politicians, we intentionally chose a time period in which no elections were held in Japan for collecting our data to investigate the general attitude towards female politicians on Twitter. The data was collected based on a filter of nineteen pre-selected female politician's names as well as certain keywords (i.e., derogatory nicknames) that are associated with their names in the mass media or on the Internet.⁵ With this method, a Twitter corpus consisting of 9,449,645 words was created. Due to a lack of manpower and significance, it was not achievable to analyze all nineteen politicians appearing in our corpus.

Using CQPweb,⁶ the initial step of our analysis was to run a keyword-search for candidates' names in our corpus. Four female politicians were particularly salient in our query result: Tsujimoto Kiyomi, Yamao Shiori, Renhō,⁷ and Koike Yuriko. Due to a large amount of data, we decided to conduct a qualitative analysis of a randomized sample of fifty of incidents of abusive language for each politician. Before drawing the sample, we filtered out duplicate tweets in our corpus (i.e., retweets or tweets copied manually by users or automatically by bots) in order to create an equal chance for each tweet to become part of our sample and manual analysis for each politician. To ensure a balanced analysis, we started by conducting a sentiment analysis of all fifty randomly sampled tweets by scanning for sentiments and insults, based on the sentiment analysis proposed by Liu (2015). The results of the manual sentiment analysis of the randomly selected tweets⁸ for each politician can be summarized in [Graph 1](#).

Our analysis shows that tweets with negative sentiment are in the majority in the case of all four female politicians. It is important to note, however, that a negative sentiment in a tweet does not necessarily mean that it classifies as hate speech or verbally abusive. For instance, a tweet being critical of a political



Graph 1 Sentiment analysis of fifty randomized tweets.



Graph 2 Abusive language in the negative tweets.

decision would be classified as negative with regard to its basic sentiment, but not as abusive. However, to interpret these results, it would be necessary to study male politicians as well to evaluate if negative enunciations against politicians can be considered a general trend on Twitter. Therefore, we manually classified tweets with negative sentiments into abusive language (including hate speech), insults, and hostile irony. Instances of abusive language can be summarized as shown in [Graph 2](#).

The graph shows that in all four cases one third to almost half of the negative tweets contain abusive language. In Yamao’s case, the percentage of abusive language in negative Tweets amounts to even 48.6 per cent. 43.8 per cent of the negative tweets referring to Tsujimoto were classified as abusive,

37.5 per cent regarding Renhō and 33.33 per cent in the case of Koike (with the latter having significantly less negative tweets altogether). In the following subsections, we will individually discuss the findings of our qualitative content analysis of the fifty randomly sampled tweets for the four politicians Yamao Shori, Tsujimoto Kiyomi, Renhō, and Koike Yuriko.

Qualitative analysis

Yamao Shiori

With over 11,000 non-duplicate matches, politician Yamao Shiori is the most salient in the corpus. This is particularly interesting since media reports about her drastically decreased in frequency since around September and October of 2017. Yamao was a former member of the Democratic Party (DP) and was a member of the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) at the time we collected our Twitter data. She is known for being a strong opponent of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, whom she openly criticized for mishandling the problem of nursery school waiting lists. During a parliamentary debate in February 2016, Yamao cited a letter addressed to PM Abe Shinzō by a mother who had experienced difficulties registering her child in nursery school. Through this event, Yamao became publicly known, especially for citing the passage “Die, Japan!” (*nihon shine*) from the letter. In addition to the publicity caused by this event, the yellow-press magazine *Shūkan bunshun* in September 2017 published an article accusing Yamao of engaging in an extramarital affair with the lawyer Kuramochi Rintarō, leading to even more unwanted publicity regarding her private life.

Of the fifty tweets, thirty-five have clearly negative sentiment, only two are positive, and the rest is marked ambivalent due to contextual obscurity or lack of decisive sentiment words (see Kobayashi, Inui, and Inui (2001) for the classification used by us). Of the thirty-five negative comments, seventeen include insults. Hence, our sample clearly presents an intensely negative emotional and insulting attitude towards Yamao on Twitter.

Of the two positive tweets, one envisions Yamao as future prime minister, including a link to another tweet that praises Yamao’s way of arguing and resistance to the allegations against her. The second tweet, although marked as positive, is still somewhat ambivalent. Being a reader of the right-leaning magazine SAPIO, the author of this tweet states that “We shouldn’t lose a skilled politician due to a personal scandal” (*Nōryoku no aru giin wo shiteki na sukyandaru de ushinatte wa naranai*), the user also criticizes Yamao for assuming a critical stance against another LDP-politician who was wrapped up in a scandal herself (*Sono Yamao Shiori jishin ga jimintō no giin no sukyandaru no toki ni hihan shitetan da yo ne*). Nevertheless, we counted this tweet as positive, since it

refrains from attacking Yamao based on her personal life and is still positive in its overall tone. In detail, the predominantly sexist and misogynistic instances of abusive language and insults included in the tweets we analyzed can be summarized as follows:

Japanese	English translation
#ガソリーヌ 男は子供ほかに作れるけど女は年齢的にも微妙なのにかわいそうだよね 悪い性悪女だな～	#Gasoline Men can create other things than kids, but for women this is delicate with regard to their age She's a bad woman with a bad character ...
#バコリーヌ, #反日 #反日政治家の女達あまり美しいとは言えませ んなあ	#Sexoline, #AntiJapanese One cannot really say that #antiJapanese female politicians are pretty, right?
ゲス不倫 (3) 汚ねえ奴 だこの野郎, #裏切り者	Despicable adultery (3) This asshole is a dirty thing, #Traitor
#バコリーヌ こいつ	#Sexoline <i>That woman ...</i> (neg. connotation)
#性獣, #淫獣 顔を見ると気持 悪くなる	#Sex-maniac, #Licentiousbeast I feel sick when I see her face
#ゲス リーヌ	#Despicoline
#テカリーヌ	#Gleamoline
女性の敵	Women's enemy
#山尾バコ様	#MrsSex Yamao

The numbers in brackets indicate the total number of appearances of a phrase or word in different tweets of our sample of fifty tweets. Some of the terms clearly fall into the category of sexist hate speech against women, such as #Sex-maniac or #MrsSex Yamao. Moreover, it is striking that in the case of Yamao, a number of insults specifically created to derogate her, and decisively abusive terms appear on this list, such as #gasoline (*gasorīnu*), #sexoline (*pak-orīnu*), #despicoline (*gesurīnu*), and #gleamoline (*tekarīnu*). These terms are exemplary for the ironic communication style described by Kitada (2005). Being idiosyncratic portmanteau words and neologisms derived from the English-Japanese loanword *gasorin* (“gasoline”), these terms are extremely difficult to translate into English. In Yamao’s case, the word “gasoline”—altered into *gasorīnu* to unambiguously refer to her—is used to refer to a fraudulent financial scandal regarding the handling of gasoline bills. Related to this inventive pattern, three further neologisms relate to Yamao’s public accusation of adultery. Mimicking the Japanese pronunciation of the word gasoline, *gesurīnu* combines the word “despicable” (*gesu*⁹) and the suffix *rīnu*, which is commonly added by Japanese youngsters to make a word sound cute.

The term *tekarīnu* is a combination of the aforementioned suffix *rīnu* and the Japanese onomatopoeic word *tekateka* (“gleaming”). This term has its origins in a

discussion thread on the aforementioned bulletin board *2channel* that was started in 2018, in which a user commented on Yamao's face to be always "too shiny" (*teka-teka sugiru*) when appearing on television. In one of the subsequent comments, another user came up with the clearly offensive term *tekarīnu* (2channel 2018). The migration of this variation is exemplary for the intermedia connectivity between *2channel* and social media. Semantically, *tekarīnu* does not refer to the adultery or gasoline scandals despite its homonymity with the aforementioned permutations of gasoline, instead targeting her allegedly "odd" appearance on TV.

It has become obvious that the majority of the instances of abusive language targeting Yamao are referencing her private life or her outward appearance, as it was exemplified by the discussion of the clearly abusive term *tekarīnu*. Particularly the tweets commenting on her private life are very typical for forms of verbal abuse against women. "Misogyny," writes Kate Manne (2018, 80), "will typically differentiate between good women and bad ones, and punishes the latter." One must note, however, that male politicians have to face consequences when committing adultery as well, but only in very rare cases, such as the one of Miyazaki Kensuke¹⁰ in 2016.

Besides being verbally attacked for her extramarital affair, Yamao is also accused of being "anti-Japanese" (*han'nichi*) in one of the tweets in our sample. In this tweet, Yamao's name is appearing along with other female politicians, which are all accused of not only being "anti-Japanese" but are also described as "not pretty":

20180323_055341, @****: #反日政治家 #蓮舫 #辻元清美 #福島瑞穂 #山尾志桜里
反日政治家の女達あまり美しいとは言えませんなあ。やはり内面が外に出るのですね。 <https://t.co/bXyIDulQ00>

20180323_055341, @****: #Anti-Japanese Politician #Renhō #TsujiyamaKiyomi
#FukushimaMizuho #YamaoShiori One cannot really say that #antiJapanese female politicians are pretty, right? As one might expect, the inside turns outside, doesn't it? <https://t.co/bXyIDulQ00>

The word "anti-Japanese" is a central term of the jargon of Japanese Internet right-wingers (*netto uyo*) which is used to attack the political enemy by accusing him or her of acting "against" its own people, "the Japanese." This is a very common rhetorical strategy of nativists and right-wing populists, whereby they can position themselves as the only ones to exclusively represent and speak for "the people." Put differently, Yamao, along with the other female politicians hashtagged in this tweet, is publicly expelled from the ethnic-national community of "the Japanese." Moreover, the link in the tweet relates to another tweet featuring very unflattering pictures of the four politicians. Hence, these female politicians are not only attacked for their allegedly "anti-Japanese" attitude but are also being pilloried for what a Japanese female is

frequently being commented on and criticized for, namely her outward appearance.

The second tweet to be discussed here, in which she is also mentioned together with three other females, refers to Yamao's appearance as well:

20180224_070218, @****: 顔を見ると気持悪くなる 室井佑月 福島瑞穂 蓮舫 山尾志桜里 <https://t.co/7spfPW6tl0>.

20180224_070218, @****: I feel disgusted when looking at their faces Muroi Yuzuki Fukushima Mizuho Renhō Yamao Shiori <https://t.co/7spfPW6tl0>.

The link in this tweet relates to another tweet referring to novelist Muroi Yuzuki's statement that she aspires after a world in which a dialogue with North Korea exists. Thereby, Yamao is not only grouped and singled out together with other females, namely Fukushima Mizuho and Renhō, but is also depicted as belonging to a group of people that are acting too weak against North Korea, thus acting against one's own people by being "anti-Japanese."

One can conclude this section by stating that the sentiments expressed in the tweets regarding Yamao Shiori in our sample are overwhelmingly negative. Furthermore, most of the tweets refer to her personal life, publicly punishing her for her extramarital affair. Moreover, her name is often grouped with the names of other female politicians belonging to the Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP), garnished by racist and misogynist comments. Conservative female LDP politician Koike Yuriko, to be discussed below, is never addressed in this way. This substantiates our assumption that the attacks against Yamao are coming from a certain spectrum of users, namely the right-wing spectrum of the Twitter-sphere.

Tsujimoto Kiyomi

At the time of our tweet collection, Tsujimoto Kiyomi was acting as policy chief of the CDP. She looks back on a long history in politics, also being known for a scandal that took place in 2003, known as the "Affair regarding Tsujimoto Kiyomi's misappropriation of secretary salary" (*Tsujimoto Kiyomi hisho kyūyo ryūyō jiken*). At that time, she still belonged to the SDP (Social Democratic Party) and was accused of misusing a major part of 18,740,000 Yen of government funds designated for the salary of her secretaries. In February of 2004, Tsujimoto was sentenced to a suspended term (cf. Tsujimoto Moto Giin No Yūzai ga Kakutei, Hisho Kyūyo Mondai de Tōkyō Chisai 2004). Nevertheless, her political return was a rather quick one, running for the House of Councilors as an independent candidate in the very same year of her conviction. Although she did not win a seat at the election, she

continued to be active in politics and switched to the DPJ, and subsequently the DP after the DPJ dissolved, eventually becoming the head of the newly founded CDP. Tsujimoto is known for having been a harsh critic of Prime Minister Abe at the time the Moritomo Gakuen scandal (*Moritomo Gakuen jiken*) surfaced.

Of the fifty tweets referring to Tsujimoto, thirty-two tweets contain words with a negative sentiment, with the remaining tweets tagged as ambivalent. Accordingly, no tweets with positive connotations existed in our random sample in Tsujimoto’s case. Fifteen terms of abusive language have been found in fourteen tweets. The following instances of abusive language and insults were found in our random sample:

Japanese	English translation
#辻元清美をセメントいて 変な女でしょ ブーメラン 不愉快になる こいつ	#Don’tcriticizeTsujimotoKiyomi [irony] (5) Weird woman Boomerang It’s getting unpleasant [for her] <i>That</i> woman... [neg. connotation]
#ネズミ男 この女まじで嫌い アホ 生コンババア 売国奴	#MouseMan I really hate that woman Idiot [Kansai dialect] Namakon hag Traitor (2)

The hashtag #Don’tcriticizeTsujimotoKiyomi (*#Tsujimoto-sanwosementoite*) is another example of the kind of ironic wordplay that is very typical for the abovementioned cynical communication style described by Kitada (2005), being a pun on the homonymy of the Japanese loanword *semento* (“cement”) and the verb *semeru* (to criticize or to pester).¹¹ The word “cement” refers to the Kansai Cement Branch of the Solidarity Trade Union, of which Tsujimoto was accused to collaborate with, as well as receiving donations from them (*Moritomo gakuen ni karamu sayoku seiryoku wa, han-kichi toso ya han-nichi puropaganda to ippon no sen de tsunagaru no desu* 2017). Although the phrase would be literally translated as “Don’t criticize Tsujimoto Kiyomi,” this tweet is in fact ironically mocking Tsujimoto for being one of the most outspoken critics in the Moritomo Gakuen scandal, while at the same time remaining silent with regard to any of the accusations against herself. Although this phrase qualifies as an insult and is most frequent in our sample, it obviously does not fall into the category of hate speech, but rather aims at ridiculing her based on certain political actions and her attitude. The term “boomerang” in our list is semantically similar to the hashtag #Don’tcriticizeTsujimotoKiyomi, since it refers to the fact

that her harsh criticism of Abe’s handling of the Moritomo issue has backfired when she became the object of criticism incited by a scandal as well.

The phrase “*hen na onna*” (weird woman)—followed by the hashtag #TsujiomotoKiyomi and a URL relating to a tweet published at the official CDP account—is a variation of a phrase that appeared in a statement on Tsujimoto’s official blog. In this statement, one of her staff members complained about the allegations against her, stating that if “your impression (on others) is manipulated into being a weird person (*hen na hito*), is there no other option for a politician than giving up silently?” (Tsujiomoto Kiyomi Official Website 2017). By altering the gender-neutral term “weird person” into the gendered expression “weird woman” in the tweet quoted above, Tsujimoto is singled out as a woman and cynically mocked by an alteration of the wording of a statement that originally criticized defaming news against her.

Two of the remaining abusive tweets in our sample refer to Tsujimoto’s gender and appearance. In the first tweet she is called *babā*,¹² which could be translated as “hag” or “old hag,” a term of abuse which is not only ageist but also abusive because it refers to her outward appearance. The second tweet shall be quoted in full length as follows:

20180308_001919, @****: < 森友 文書 > 立憲民主党 ・ 前科 一 犯 の 辻元清美 さん
「 捜査 される ほう が 悪い の と 違う のん ? 」 ~ ネット の 反応 「 クィーン オブ
説得力 ゼロ 」 「 ネズミ 男 に 似 て 来 た なあ ~ 」 <https://t.co/SL6nQswmCG>.
.. #ネズミ男 #辻元清美 <https://t.co/DWpfD91Gm2>.

20180308_001919, @****: <Moritomo document> Previously convicted Mrs. Tsujimoto
Kiyomi of the Constitutional Democratic Party “Isn’t it worse to be under investigation
[yourself]?” ~ Internet reaction “queen of zero persuasion power” “Doesn’t she look like
mouse man?~” <https://t.co/SL6nQswmCG>. #MouseMan #TsujiomotoKiyomi
<https://t.co/DWpfD91Gm2>.

Besides the reference to Tsujimoto’s statement regarding her investigation, which was obviously broadcasted on television, she is verbally abused by being compared with “mouse man” in this tweet, a famous Japanese cartoon character with particularly unflattering looks. Further analysis indicates that tweets that refer to her appearance are not necessarily semantically related to the remaining text of tweets. Accordingly, one might argue that the only function of this phrase is to offend her by repeating the same abusive phrases over and over again.

Renhō

Renhō, children of a Japanese mother and a Taiwanese father, once described herself as a “symbol of diversity” (Ōsaki 2017). Renhō was a member of the

Upper House for the CDP when we collected our Twitter data. Upon it was revealed that Renhō had maintained her dual citizenship until 2016, conservative politicians instrumentalized this as an angle to launch an attack on the lack of a law preventing holders of dual citizenship from becoming lawmakers, ministers, or members of the Self Defense Force of Japan (cf. Ōsaki 2017). This issue had been taken up by the mass media under the banner of the “problem of dual citizenship” (*nijūkokuseki mondai*), which can be considered as a proof of the various discriminatory restrictions put on ethnic minorities in Japan.

Renhō’s name commonly appears in combination with those of Yamao and Tsujimoto in numerous tweets of our corpus, however, not along with the name of Koike Yuriko, indicating a tendency to aim insults against groups of female politicians from a certain political spectrum. Unsurprisingly, the hashtag #DualCitizenship appears frequently adjacent to her name. A brief analysis of the fifty tweets referring to Renhō in our sample reveal a particularly rude verbal style. Of the fifty tweets, only a single tweet conveys a positive sentiment, praising one of her public speeches. The respective tweet contains a link to pictures of a speech by Renhō, supplemented by the supportive hashtag #OretachiNoRenhō (Our Renhō). Twelve of the remaining tweets analyzed by us contain abusive language and/or insults, whereas as many as thirty-two tweets were categorized as having a clearly negative tone. The remaining seventeen tweets were characterized as ambivalent, as they did not contain words implicating a certain sentiment. The following thirteen abusive phrases were found in twelve different tweets:

Japanese	English translation
嫌われ者の嘘つき蓮舫	Renhō, the outcast and liar
#スパイ容疑者	#SuspectedSpy
めっちゃ迷惑	A real nuisance
中国人らしく	A typical Chinese
アホ	Idiot
日本人殺の蓮舫	Japanese-killing Renhō
短髪鬼ババア	Short-haired old hag
酷い	Awful
ババア	Old hag
残念な女	Wretched woman
お前がダメなんだよ	You are useless!
嘘つき	Liar (2)

In Renhō’s case, no offensive neologisms specifically created to refer to her or a specific incident involving her could be found, comparable to the notorious term *gasorīnu* in Yamao’s case. Instead, the verbal abuse directed towards her is more general and vulgar, often showing an outspoken racist attitude.

Similar to Yamao’s case, Renhō is also addressed as “old hag” in the following tweet:

20180130_105221, ****: 久々に #蓮舫 の事「短髪鬼 ババア」って、有吉さんが言ってるの見て、笑った。これからは立憲民主党の短髪鬼 ババア と呼ぼう。立民にはあと短髪セメントババアと不倫ババアがいるな。

20180130_105221, ****: For the first time in a long time, it made me laugh when I saw that Aritsuchi calls #Renhō a “short-haired old hag.” So let’s call her Constitutional Democratic Party’s short-haired old hag from now on! In the CDP, they also have short-haired cement [*semento*] and cheating old hags, right?

Based on the results of our previous analysis, it becomes clear that the terms “cement” and “cheating old hag” in this tweet refer to Tsujimoto Kiyomi and Yamao Shiori. Moreover, by referring to only female members of the CDP, and not for instance to their male colleagues, it could be argued that particularly the female fraction of the more controversial politicians of the CDP is more likely to become subject to gendered forms of verbal assaults on Twitter.

The following tweet to be further analyzed consists almost exclusively of hashtags:

20180319_064445, @****: #玉木雄一郎 #森裕子 #辻元清美 #望月依塑子 #蓮舫 【残念な女】 #安倍昭恵 #望月依塑子 #安藤優子 #室井佑月 #池坊保子 #田中真紀子 <https://t.co/U0VOmidr4V>.

20180319_064445, @****: #TamakiYuichiro #MoriYūko #TsujimotoKiyomi #MochizukiIsoko #Renhō 【Wretched woman】 #AbeAkie #MochizukiIsoko #AndōYūko #MuroiYuzuki #IkenobōYasuko #TanakaMakiko <https://t.co/U0VOmidr4V>.

Except for the first name in this list of names, who is a male politician, the remaining names are those of female politicians or writers. The term “wretched women” in brackets in the text of the tweet is the only verbal abuse in this tweet, obviously uniquely referring to Renhō. Moreover, what is puzzling about this tweet is the fact that Tamaki Yuichiro is the only person mentioned in this tweet who is not female. The link in this tweet relates to another tweet which includes the video of a parliamentary session in which the LDP politician Aoyama Shigeharu and the finance bureau director issued a statement regarding the alleged altering of the contract in the Moritomo Gakuen scandal, in which they claim that the contract was actually not changed. In the tweet, the user laments that the media did not cover these statements. Since this tweet does not mention any of the names in the hashtags of the tweet analyzed by us, it is difficult to decide whether there is a direct semantic connection between

the two tweets beyond the fact that it was Tsujimoto who also criticized Prime Minister Abe's role in the Moritomo Gakuen scandal.

As for Renhō, we would like to eventually discuss our findings with regard to a tweet describing her as “outcast and liar,” including a particularly harsh form of verbal abuse.

20180125_194102, @****: #週刊文春が「女性が嫌いな女」ワースト50を詳しく紹介！▼#立憲民主党の嘘つき#蓮舫は3位！▼嫌われ者の嘘つき蓮舫は3位！▼女性の敵、嘘つき蓮舫は3位！→蓮舫よ！お前は嫌われすぎだろっ [www https://t.co/b4wyyU49Jn](https://t.co/b4wyyU49Jn).

20180125_194102, @****: #Shūkan bunshun introduces the worst 50 “women hated by women” ! ▼ Liar Renhō of the #ConstitutionalDemocraticParty is on the third place ! ▼ The outcast and liar Renhō is on the third place! ▼ Enemy of women and liar Renhō is on the third place! □ Renhō! You are hated way too much [www https://t.co/b4wyyU49Jn](https://t.co/b4wyyU49Jn).

With a total of 7732 followers,¹³ the user who posted this tweet is potentially having a rather large influence. In the self-description of this account it is stated that the user “strongly disagree[s] with a lax reception of immigrants!” and “hate[s] the impolite, blackmailing, lying, lawless people of Korea and North Korea!” (*Imin no anyō na ukeire dankohantai! Hirei, takari, usohaki, muhō no kankoku chōsenjin wa daikirai!*), which is why the user can be clearly identified as an Internet right-winger (*netto uyo*).

Besides calling Renhō an outcast and liar, the reference to a very questionable top-fifty list of women allegedly hated by the majority of women who took part in their survey (“Onna ga kiraina onna” wasuto 50 2016), this tweet is of particular interest from our view. In this tweet, the fact that Renhō takes up the third place of this highly misogynistic list put together by the conservative to right-leaning magazine *Shūkan bunshun* is iterated three times in this tweet to emphasize this information. The emoticon-like letter string “www” at the end of the tweet is a common way of expressing laughter, expressing the user’s amusement over Renhō’s role as a target of public hatred, even in the right-leaning legacy media. The link at the end relates to a post by the same user pointing to a picture of an article published in the evening edition of the right-leaning *Sankei Shinbun* on the dual citizenship issue and a tabloid reproducing *Shūkan Bunshun*’s ranking of the fifty “women hated by women.”

In summary, one can say that the majority of the tweets referring to Renhō deal with the dual citizenship issue, thus with her ethnic background. Hence, these attacks are most likely coming from the right-wing spectrum of the Twitter-sphere, intersectionally combing insults based on her ethnic and gender identity, offering not one but two angles from which she is insulted by the misogynist and racist community of right-wing trolls. This also explains why

the language of the tweets referring to her is so extremely vulgar compared to the cases of Yamao and Tsujimoto.

Koike Yuriko

Koike Yuriko, a former member of the LDP from 2003 to 2017, is known for being a neoconservative political hardliner, also being the most well-known female politicians in our sample. Currently serving as governor of Tōkyō, she has particularly stirred up the political landscape by forming a new party on the occasion of the snap election of the Lower House in 2017, called the Party of Hope (*kibō no tō*). In this regard, she differs from the other three female politicians, whom all belong to center-left parties. Moreover, Koike was not involved in any noteworthy political scandals shortly before or during the period of our data collection. Based on the categorizing of the fifty tweets in our sample, we can state that out of the twenty-one negative tweets, eight include insults as follows:

Japanese	English translation
緑狸 (2)	Green tanuki (2)
やばすぎる	Really terrible
酷い奴	Terrible person
無能	Useless
ヤバい	Awful
女性の輝く社会グロ吐きたくなる	A society in which women shine makes me puke

The term “green tanuki” refers to a type of cup-ramen noodle soup, having bits of deep-fried tempura as topping. The Japanese word *tanuki* refers to an actually existing animal (namely the raccoon dog) as well as a trickster-like mythological figure, namely a rascal and shape shifter who likes to play pranks on people, mostly by altering the environment. Calling Koike “green tanuki” started when a user created a meme with Koike’s face inserted into an image of the lid of a green tanuki cup noodle (Figure 1).

On social media, it became very common to compare Koike to the tanuki or green tanuki (with the color green being the signature color of her electoral campaign), thereby addressing her allegedly “trickster-like” political slipperiness, as it was even reported in an article published in the *New York Times* (Rich 2017) as follows:

On social media, critics poked fun at Ms. Koike’s reputation for political slipperiness. Twitter users posted doctored images of a popular brand of instant noodles, known as Green Tanuki Soba, with a picture of Ms. Koike. The tanuki—or raccoon dog—is considered a master of shape-shifting in Japanese folklore. “Increasingly dubious, lip service, irresponsible, blatant lies,” read one of the fake labels.



Figure 1 Meme featuring Koike (@monotonescene 2017).¹⁴

If compared with the forms of “ironic” verbal attacks against other female politicians included in our study, calling Koike a tanuki is also a form of satirical criticism, much alike to the phrase “sementoite” used against Tsujimoto Kiyomi. Therefore it does not fall into the category of hate speech as well, as it targets Koike based on her political actions.

The phrase, “A society in which women shine makes me puke” in one of our sample of tweets referring to Koike, warrants further explanation as well:

20180320_230627, @****: 安倍昭恵 小池百合子 豊田真由子 上西小百合 辻元清美 安倍政権の掲げた女性の輝く社会グロ吐きたくなる見苦しく薄汚い国になった森友学園の名誉校長が関与していないなどとわかりやすい嘘を惨めな話し証人喚問に出てこい

20180320_230627, @****: Abe Akie Koike Yuriko Toyota Mayuko Uenishi Sayuri Tsujimoto Kiyomi [The phrase] A society in which women can shine[,] touted by the Abe Regime[,] makes me want to puke[,] this country has become dirty and hard to look at[.] Miserable talk like the easy-to-look-through lie that the famous principal of Moritomo Gakuen was not involved[,] get out and come back with sworn witnesses

The rather confusing syntax of this tweet, lacking interpunction, clearly expresses a negative attitude. Interestingly, Tsujimoto Kiyomi—a member of the oppositional party CDP—is mentioned along with Prime Minister Abe’s wife, Koike Yuriko, and Toyota Mayuko (both members of the LDP) as well as Uenishi Sayuri, who is a former member of the right-wing political party *Ishin no kai* (Japan Innovation Party), in this tweet. However, it becomes obvious that the connection between these persons can be found in their relation to the *Moritomo Gakuen scandal*, with Tsujimoto having taken up a major role in criticizing Abe. The general frustration with politics of this user is also expressed by describing PM Abe’s motto “A society in which women can shine” as the cause of his or her nausea. However, due to the lack of context the political motivation of the user cannot be determined. It cannot be clearly stated whether the user criticizes a society where “women can shine” from a misogynistic-conservative standpoint or rather the poor implementation of the concept by the Abe administration from a liberal standpoint. This is a clear example of the limits in the analysis of tweets. Although context-based analysis does provide a clearer grasp of the tweets, some of them, while containing strong negative language, still leave too much room for unsupported speculation.

One might conclude that the negative tweets in our sample of tweets referring to Koike Yuriko more frequently criticize her for her political stance or attitude, and not for being a woman per se or for her behavior in her private life. The overall attitude expressed towards her is thus far more ambiguous since the share of positive, ambivalent, and negative (or abusive) tweets seem more balanced than in the case of the other three female politicians.

Conclusions

Our analysis has shown that negative sentiments and attitudes expressed towards female politicians seem to have become a common trend on Twitter, especially towards controversial or more prominent female politicians. Naturally, not all of the negative comments qualify as abusive hate speech. In general, the language of abusive or insulting tweets was not as harsh as assumed on Twitter, if compared to what can be observed on *2channel*. This difference most likely stems from the fear of users of not complying with Twitter’s regulations, thus not wanting to risk the suspension of their accounts. Hence, users express their feelings in an ironic or a more subtle, and less vulgar way on social media.

Nevertheless, as the sentiment analysis of our sample tweets has revealed, negative comments referring to female politicians make up one-third of the total number of tweets. To put it the other way around and to phrase it more drastically, only twelve per cent of the tweets analyzed by us had a positive

connotation, with ultra-conservative former LDP-politician Koike being the person almost solely receiving these positive comments. Hence, our analysis shows that female politicians belonging to oppositional parties such as the CDP receive significantly more tweets conveying verbal abuse and hate speech than members of the LDP, such as Koike. Moreover, as our study of Renhō has shown, misogyny is often intersectionally linked to racist hate speech. All this allows for the assumption that the harshest forms of hate speech and verbal abuses are coming from nativist and misogynist Internet right-wingers, with some of them being supportive of LDP-members as long as they are conservative hardliners such as Koike (cf. Schäfer, Evert, and Heinrich 2017 for similar conclusions regarding the pro-Abe fraction of Internet right-wingers).

It is important to remind the reader that we purposively collected our Twitter data in a time period when there was no major election ahead or ongoing, in order to get an impression of the magnitude of everyday verbal abuse against female politicians on social media. Based on our results, one might conclude that many female politicians face verbal abuse on a daily basis on Twitter. We argue that more prevalent and widely reported incidents of instances of sexist verbal abuse, such as Shiomura Ayaka's harassment by two male municipal assembly members of the LDP during a debate on Tokyo's childbearing policy—whom had heckled her with interjections such as “You are the one that should get married soon” (*jibun ga hayaku kekkon sureba ii*) or “Can't you give birth?” (*umenai no ka?*) (‘Jibun ga hayaku kekkon sureba’ ‘Umenai no ka’ joseitogi no shitsumon ni giba kara yaji 2014)—represent only the tip of the iceberg. Our explorative study shows that abusive language against female politicians is overwhelmingly present in what we have called the latent semi-public sphere of Twitter, taking place persistently without being publicly discussed in the mass media or being revealed by the victims of online hate speech or abusive language themselves. The reason for this, according to Emma Dalton (2015, 2017), also lies in the fact that women in politics often do not dare to talk about sexist attacks against them publicly, since they are afraid of being accused of playing the “gender card.” We hope that we were able to show with our study that hate speech and verbal abuse of female politicians are even more prevalent in the semi-public latency of social media, thus often going publicly unnoticed if not reported as the incident of Shiomura.

Hate speech and abusive language can have personal, social and political effects. On the personal level, female politicians in Japan are under constant verbal attacks on Twitter. The psychological effects on the individual are drastic. The fact that hate speech can cause physical violence and hate crimes notwithstanding, the constant negative and abusive noise floor on social media to be endured by female politicians can lead one to quit one's career in politics as well. VAWP, that is physical or psychological violence against women in

politics, must be considered an important hindering factor for women to go into politics (Krook and Restrepo 2016; Krook 2017).

Moreover, on the social and political level, the verbal barbarization of language in social media can have a normalizing effect on misogyny and racism by shifting the normative borders of what one is allowed to publicly say and what not. The normalization of discrimination and intolerance can contribute to the creation of a climate of polarisation not only in politics but in society in general. Despite not belonging to the more severe forms of hate speech and abusive language, particularly the cynical humor prevalent on the Internet today contributes to the normalization of sexism and misogyny by framing verbal attacks on women as “only” jokes.

Given that research in the field of Corpus Linguistics and sentiment analysis of hate speech has mainly targeted racist issues, it seems appropriate to direct attention towards misogynist verbal abuse against female politicians. Having encountered several methodological and practical difficulties (such as the lack of user statistics to estimate the effect of certain tweets and accounts), our explorative study could be seen as just a first step in studying misogyny and sexism on Japanese Twitter. Most importantly, and this is something that our text-based study cannot cover, is the necessity to study the effect of the constant exposure to verbal abuse on the individual. Moreover, more ethnographic or sociological research is necessary to thoroughly understand the impetuses and reasons of sexist or racist hecklers and *netto uyo* for participating in their cynical “game” (cf. Higuchi et al. 2019 for an insightful study in this regard). From a psychological point of view, studying the impact of hate speech on “hate-speakers” themselves is of great importance as well, since it can be argued that unethical behavior consciously or unconsciously contributes to destroying one’s own (positive) self-image.

Nevertheless, we argue that it is important to make use of the possibilities of Twitter research in the fields of CDA and corpus linguistics more broadly in order to deepen our understanding of misogyny and hate speech on social media. As already stated, the results from our analysis suggest that negative attitudes toward female politicians are omnipresent on social media. However, with our study only being a snapshot of the actual situation (the problem that we are using, as most current Twitter studies, only a one per cent-sample of the whole Twitter stream notwithstanding), it would be necessary to create a corpus of tweets that were collected for a much longer time period, including tweets referring to both, male and female politicians, in order to gain a more substantiated and comparative insight into this phenomenon.

Moreover, it would also be necessary to include data collected from blogs or bulletin boards, such as *2channel*, to explain the multimedia interconnectivity and convergence across various types of media to estimate the consequences of the ongoing digital transformation of the political public sphere or even liberal

democracy at large. In our case, the analysis has shown that certain abusive terms were often first created and circulated on the bulletin board *2channel*, and only subsequently spilled over into social media. Furthermore, a multi-media approach might show that racist or misogynic jargon appears to be more aggressive and abusive in the anonymous sphere of bulletin boards and is tuned down only when migrating into social media. Finally, studying the longitudinal shifts in the language used by the legacy media or blogs might be considered a method to study the aforementioned barbarization of language in general. Comparing datasets from Twitter, *2channel*, and the legacy media outlets such as newspapers must be considered a promising future research approach, enabling an understanding of how attitudes and opinions emerge and disseminate across and between these different types of media (cf. Heinrich et al. 2018 for an example of such a multimedia research framework).

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Notes

1. Sentiment analysis thrives to detect and analyse emotions as well as opinions and attitudes towards entities in written texts (Liu 2015).
2. A common computational approach to detect and analyze hate speech by using word lists of offensive and contemptuous slurs used for a group of people who are systematically subjected to discrimination. However, keyword-based approaches face the problem that ironical or self-referential uses of these words are commonly marked as hate speech as well.
3. Due to personal rights, we are unable to publicize our full dataset for the reproduction of our results. However, we are more than willing to provide other researchers with as much data and information as we can upon request.
4. The result is a sample of about 1 per cent of the full Twitter stream.
5. **Keyword list:** やまお しおり 山尾志桜里 山尾しおり ガソリーヌ パコリーヌ 鬼奴 不倫 おぶち ゆうこ 小淵優子 ドリル優子 のだ せいこ 野田聖子 こいけ ゆりこ 小池百合子 緑の狸 緑のためき たぬき れんほう 蓮舫 二重国籍 つじもと きよみ 辻元清美 生コン ふくしま みずほ 福島瑞穂 いまい えりこ 今井絵理子 一線 いなだ ともみ 稲田朋美 隠蔽 きら よしこ 吉良よし子 かねこ めぐみ 金子恵美 ゲス不倫 やまたに えりこ 山谷えり子 おつじ かなこ 尾辻かな子 かみかわ あや 上川 あや しおむら あやか 塩村文夏 いけうち さおり 池内沙織 もり ゆうこ 森裕子 にしむら ちなみ 西村智奈美 たなか まきこ

田中真紀子 まるかわ たまよ 丸川珠代 鈴木貴子 片山 さつき 佐藤ゆかり. We are aware of the fact that by including derogatory nicknames and only one conservative politician, we might have created a bias in our dataset. However, the aim of our first analysis was of an explorative nature. In a currently ongoing data collection and analysis, we hope that we can provide a more encompassing analysis of hate speech verbal abuse on Japanese Twitter.

6. CQPweb is a web-based graphical user interface created by Andrew Hardie (Lancaster University), which allows for extracting frequency and collocations lists on an uploaded corpus, as well as many other commands cf. Hardie (2012).
7. Her full name is 謝蓮舫 (Japanese pronunciation: Sha Renhō) and her Japanese name 村田蓮舫 (Murata Renhō), but she chose to appear in public only by her first name Renhō.
8. It became clear that in the case of Yamao Shiori a possibly semi-automated bot was creating a stream of harassment tweets that were all similar in syntax and meaning, but always differed in one small aspect. That is why they weren't eliminated in the duplicate elimination. As the tweets all came from one user, having only 61 followers at the time, they were extracted before the creation of the randomized sample to prevent distortion of analysis.
9. *Gesu* is defined in the “Nihon Hōgen Daijiten” in various meanings. The ones matching adultery being “A person of a low social status” (*mibun no iyashii hito*), “a person with a crude heart” (*kokoro no iyashii hito*), or even “excrements” (*daiben*) (Shogakukan Jiten Henshūbu 1995, 810). The term is a solely negative word with a humiliating association.
10. The LDP politician Miyazaki Kensuke resigned as a member of the National Diet after he publicly confirmed the adultery accusations laid on him. He was an advocate of paternal leave, whose public image of the perfect father and husband got destroyed due to his adultery conduct (Ōsaki 2016).
11. The *Gokan no Jiten* defines *semeru* as follows: “A Japanese term which is used in colloquial speech as well as written form, meaning to criticize the flaws and the like of one's partner. [...]” (*Aite no ochido nado wo hinan suru imi de, kaikwa demo bunshō demo tsukawareru wago.*) (Nakamura 2011).
12. The *Gokan no Jiten* defines *babā* as follows: “Rude colloquial Japanese word to describe an old woman.” (*josei no rōjin wo sasu zonzai na wago no kōtōgo* (Nakamura 2011, 853)).
13. Status: 17.09.2018
14. Since the tweet was cited by the *New York times* on 08.10.2017 (Rich 2017), the Tweet wasn't anonymized here.

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