

Men of Congress in Today's Brazil: Ethnographic Notes on Neoliberal Masculinities in Support of Bolsonaro

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Abstract : In the context of a democratic crisis, a new wave of authoritarianism prompts domineering male figures to leadership posts worldwide. Although the gendered aspect of this phenomenon has been reasonably documented, recent studies have focused on high-level commanding posts, such as those of president and prime-minister, leaving other positions of political power with limited attention. This natural focus of investigation, however powerful, seems to have restricted our understanding of the phenomenon by precluding a more thorough inquiry of its gendered aspects and its consequences for political representation as a whole. Trying to fill this gap, in recent research, we examined the election results of Jair Bolsonaro's party for the Legislative Branch in 2018. We found that the party's proportion of non-male representatives was on average, showing it provided reasonable access of women to the legislature in a comparative perspective. However, and perhaps more intuitively, we also found that the elected members of Bolsonaro's party performed very gendered roles, which allowed us to draw the first lines of the representative profiles gathered around the new-right in Brazil. These results unveiled new horizons for further research, addressing topics that range from the role of women for the new-right on Brazilian institutional politics to the relations between these profiles of representatives, their agendas, and political and electoral strategies. This article aims to deepen the understanding of some of these profiles in order to lay the groundwork for the development of the second research agenda mentioned above. More specifically, it focuses on two out of the three profiles that were grasped predominantly, if not entirely, from masculine subjects during our last research, with the objective of portraying the masculinity standards mobilized and promoted by them. These profiles -the entrepreneur and the army man - were chosen to be developed due to their proximity to both liberal and authoritarian views, and, moreover, because they can possibly represent two facets of the new-right that were integrated in a certain way around Bolsonaro in 2018, but that can be reworked in the future. After a brief introduction of the literature on masculinity and politics in times of democratic crisis, we succinctly present the relevant results of our previous research and then describe these two profiles and their masculinities in detail. We adopt a combination of ethnography and discourse analysis, methods that allow us to make sense of the data we collected on our previous research as well as of the data gathered for this article: social media posts and interactions between the elected members that inspired these profiles and their supporters. Finally, we discuss our results, presenting our main argument on how these descriptions provide a further understanding of the gendered aspect of liberal authoritarianism, from where to better apprehend its political implications in Brazil.

Keywords : Brazilian politics, gendered politics, masculinities, new-right

Conference Title : ICGPPB 2021 : International Conference on Gender Politics and Political Behavior

Conference Location : Rome, Italy

Conference Dates : January 18-19, 2021