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Gender Bias and the Far-right Populism in Argentina

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in

Latin American Studies

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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This thesis investigates how far-right ideology influences gender attitudes and political behavior in Argentina, with focus on the 2023 election. Using a survey experiment with AI-generated images of politicians and data from the Latinobarómetro, the study explores whether far-right voters have distinct views on gender and democracy. The results show that far-right supporters show negative attitudes towards LGBT and women's rights, especially reproductive rights, social welfare policies for elderly women, and low agreement with democracy. These patterns are similar to the support bases of Trump in the United States and Bolsonaro in Brazil, illustrating global trends within far-right movements. Furthering the literature on gender and the far-right, this research provides a detailed look at Argentina's political scenario. Illustrating how ideological, demographic, and social factors shape voter behavior. By revealing the deeply anti-democratic and misogynistic tendencies among far-right supporters, this research contributes to the ongoing discussion of threats posed by reactionary ideologies and the potential for fostering a more inclusive and equitable political environment. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for addressing threats to democracy and promoting a future rooted in equality and human rights.

KEYWORDS: Gender, Democracy, Far-right, Sexism, Performance, Populism, Political Communication.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rise of far-right movements globally has sparked considerable debate. These movements often promote a mix of nationalism, populism, and authoritarianism, challenging established democratic norms and values. A key component of the far-right agenda is an entrenched sexism that reinforces traditional gender roles and undermines efforts toward gender equality. Argentina's 2023 election vividly illustrates this, with Javier Milei's candidacy summarizing the blend of political extremism and sexism.

Far-right leaders like Milei in Argentina, Bolsonaro in Brazil, and Trump in the United States are not merely political outliers but represent a reactionary response to rapid social and economic changes. These leaders capitalize on societal insecurities, economic instability, and cultural shifts, advocating for a return to a nostalgic past characterized by rigid gender norms (Norris, 2019; Mudde, 2019). Their backlash against progressive social policies is evident in their rhetoric and policy proposals aimed at curbing advancements in gender equality (Kimmel, 2017).

Argentina's political landscape, marked by polarization and economic challenges, creates an environment where such reactionary ideologies can thrive. The 2023 election shows not only the persistence of sexism in political behavior but also an anti-democratic sentiment among far-right supporters. Understanding the motivations, beliefs, and socio-political context of this voter base is essential for addressing the threats posed by the far-right (Inglehart & Norris, 2016).

This study investigates how far-right ideology perpetuates and mobilizes sexism. It aims to contribute to the broader discussion on how reactionary politics undermine democratic institutions and social progress (Mudde & Kaltwasser, 2012). Emphasizing the importance of confronting far-right ideologies to promote a more inclusive and equitable political environment.

I explore the role of sexism within far-right movements, demonstrated by Argentina's 2023 election. To do so, Chapter 1 begins with an examination of gender inequality in politics, exploring

the historical roots of this disparity in both public and private spheres. It then discusses key concepts relevant to this research, including feminism and the gender gap in politics, with a focus on the case of Cristina Kirchner as a populist leader. This framework sets the stage for understanding how sexism is used by far-right ideologies and influences voter behavior in contemporary Argentina. Chapter 2 presents the intersection between politics and gender by, in the first section, explaining more about the modern history of politics in Argentina.

The following section, Gender, and Far-right, confronts the central topic of this study - how sexism might be one decisive element of the far-right political group. I make this analysis by identifying how political attitudes regarding gender are one of many elements of the *machismo* culture reflected in politics and daily life. The section shows how the far-right movement consolidated and used different elements of each culture (the American, Brazilian, and Argentine) to materialize. It also discusses the importance of understanding this phenomenon and the possibilities for democracy improvement with female participation. This study draws attention to the contrast Argentina faces by electing a far-right candidate with notes of fascism while being a country of reference on issues regarding gender struggle in Latin America. This contradiction is central to this study and motivated the research questions:

1. Is sexism a component of the far-right movement? (*Chapter 2*)
2. How do we measure sexism? (*Section 3.1*)
3. Are Milei voters more sexist? (*Chapter 3*)
4. How different is sexism across political groups? (*Chapter 4*)

With these questions in mind, Chapter 3 describes the methodologies used in this research, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods appropriated to the Social Sciences. Section 3.1 describes the survey experiment and the intricate logistics of this survey, demographics from the survey and Argentina's population from Latinobarómetro. The next section explores how to measure sexism by bringing literature discussions on the issue and next, I explain the survey experiment designed specifically for this study to capture nuances of sexism in

evaluating AI-generated pictures of politicians. With this experiment, it is possible to show how Milei voters evaluate politicians regarding gender and political identification. Lastly, Chapter 4 summarizes the results found in the survey experiment and Latinobarómetro explorations, considering the discussions made in the prior chapters and the hypotheses formulated.

CHAPTER 1: GENDER

It has been less than a century since women began participating legally in democracies, initially as voters and more recently as candidates and politicians. Currently, only 22 countries have had a woman as head of the state or government, according to the United Nations. At this rate, gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be achieved for another 130 years. According to recent UNDP reports, women continue to be vastly underrepresented in political decision-making processes worldwide. Shockingly, less than 27% of parliamentary seats globally are occupied by women. Moreover, executive positions such as mayors or governors remain disproportionately dominated by men, failing to reflect the true diversity of our societies. This striking gender imbalance not only stifles women's ability to shape policies that directly impact their lives but also reinforces the prevailing notion of an exclusive public sphere predominantly controlled by men.

The burden of unpaid management and domestic work, known anecdotally and as highlighted in UN reports, disproportionately falls on women's shoulders. Astonishingly, women spend nearly three times more hours per day on unpaid care work compared to men, leaving them with limited time and opportunities for meaningful political participation.

In addition, the United Nations consistently draws attention to the persistence of gender-based violence and discrimination against women within both public and private contexts. Reports from the UN Human Rights Council chillingly reveal that women face numerous barriers and threats when exercising their political rights, ranging from harassment and intimidation to outright

physical violence. These distressing incidents further underscore the urgency to challenge the rigid division between public and private spaces, as women often navigate blurred boundaries that profoundly impact their everyday experiences.

The roots of this inequality can be partially explained by the model of public/private spheres ((Rosaldo, 1974), (Ortner, 1972), (Okin, 2008), (Pateman, 1988)). According to this understanding, the mastery of nature has been created in Western history as a male role, from the fabrication of weapons to hunting. The dichotomy of female-natural vs. male-cultural (social/public) built social values regarding men and women. It shows how the domestic sphere, organized by mother-child units, detains women inside their homes, making it impossible to participate meaningfully in the public sphere: barring significant gains of social status achieved by participating in the social public hierarchy. In this scenario (Pateman, 1988), men exempt themselves from participating in the management of their own homes and children. In this unfair sexual division of labor, women's rights are jeopardized to maximize men's experiences in the world. This unfair sexual division of work is aligned with capitalist needs and exempts men from activities needed for their own subsistence, such as laundry and making food.

The sexual division of labor works on two ends: It gives men the allowance and time to participate in the public sphere while penalizing women and forcing them to execute productive unpaid labor. This onus repels even more women from being active members in the political sphere and deepens gender divisions.

1.1 Origins of Inequality

Since the beginning of Western political thought, politics has been associated with common actions and activities related to the public sphere. However, the discussion about public and private spaces in the field of Feminist Political Theory arises precisely from a gap ignored by political theory scholars in conceptualizing what is relative to each of these spaces (Pateman, 1988). The private sphere, always characterized as the opposite of what occurred in the public

sphere, had never received proper analysis and conceptualization, at least not in traditional political thought. From this perspective, social life was never thought of in the intrinsic constructions of domestic life, the first institution of socialization of human beings.

In a historical context, we observe a contrast to Rousseau during the French Revolution, with the thinker Mary Wollstonecraft (Floresta, 1832) and one of her main criticisms of contractualism relating to the sharing of the shared space: after all, how could the political-intellectual masses of the time aspire to freedom and equality among their brothers and not even discuss points such as women's suffrage? The non-participation of women in political discussions bothered Wollstonecraft, with good reason, to the point of questioning how liberating such ideologies would be.

Pre-socialist thinkers like Charles Fourier also predicted how miserable and unwealthy heteronormative society would be, even when using divine providence to justify their bold propositions for a 18th-century society encountering rapid changes due to the Industrial Revolution. Fourier argued that civilization had inverted human life's priorities to the point of sacrificing lives for philosophical theses. The specific problem concerning the atomization of the family unit is in preserving a pseudo-Christian morality that goes against the ways of providence and the creator, condemning humanity to sub-optimal functioning.

The first critique against the atomization of domestic life is the association of love with the industrial instrumentalization of family formation, composed solely of a man, a woman, and their children. These children, upon growing up, are expected to create another mediocre and atomized family. This critique echoes analysis of marital conditions (Biroli, 2018), where industrial and patriarchal systems have relegated women to the unpaid productive labor of domestic care. Indeed, this macabre arrangement not only reduces individuals to their gender roles but also proves to be an unproductive form of human bond for the community, as Fourier pointed out.

For Fourier, human completeness is achieved, at a minimum, through a couple, which he saw as the smallest possible part of a community. However, communities that operate on this

minimum necessary basis are enemies of wealth and harmony because they multiply costs and deprive themselves of collective benefits. This mirrors Marshal Sahlins' idea of the original affluent society. These atomized and dysfunctional matrimonial arrangements lead to supreme productive dispersion. Wealth and liberation, in this sense, go hand in hand. Thus, the civilized domestic order is nothing more than the bare minimum, the absence of association.

Carole Pateman, in her book "*The Sexual Contract*" (1988) makes it explicitly clear how traditional politics used women in a macabre way, only as domestic beings, tied to the home and family, and consequently unable to participate in political decisions. By basing themselves on the perspective that a social contract governs the world of men, it sometimes escapes us that such a contract manages only men, always linked and inclined toward public life. In the private sphere, however, women are subject to a sexual contract, as the author describes, since naturalized social constructions are imposed upon them under the pretense of being gifts or natural abilities.

Thus, because the sexual contract is already established in society, no social contract could be superimposed since its guiding principle of equality among people would not be implemented.

Just as we know from the fallacious Greek democracy, in which the *whole* participating population of the *polis* did not correspond to the actual population, the stifling of the plurality of opinions in the political sphere is strongly and convincingly enforced through the construction and binary division of two areas of human activity: the public and the private. Those who participate in one are unable to participate in the other.

In the present world, however, we realize there are no such clear divisions between these spheres of action, nor are they as distinct as thinkers made them appear. The public and the private blend precisely due to the dialectical nature of our reality, and this has not only occurred now with the advent of Feminist Political Theory studies—it has always happened; it has always been a mixed reality since these spheres of action have always been interconnected and dependent on each other.

Throughout years of naturalization of concepts, unfortunately, we still perceive that the division of public and private realms of human reality has not been abolished, especially when we analyze the daily lives of women who, as domestic beings, hardly venture into political constructions and spaces of participation and representation, occupying positions such as councilors, mayors, or governors. On the other hand, and with great regret, we also realize that only slowly are male figures detached from their image as public beings and venture into domestic chores and routines, such as taking care of the house or children. This relationship is still absurdly (and conveniently) associated with the domestic, natural, and, consequently, feminine with the endurance of capitalist relations of not only work but living.

The model of public-private has been used by many scholars to explain the core of the inequality of men and women in public spaces. It helps to understand, but it is not enough. Gender inequality in current society has more complexities than the basic panorama of the gender gap between men and women. Understanding the definition of gender is a basic element to start the discussion about gender inequality and exemplify why the issue is more complex than the public/private spheres. This model neglects accounting for low-income women, especially those from the Global South who historically conciliated domestic labor and outside work. It is a useful model: however, we must account for other social realities those not captured by the traditional public/domestic sphere model. Especially in the reality of Argentina, the first country in the world to have a woman as president, and where Peronism has thrived as a populist government.

Studies on intersectionality bring more substance to the discussion on gender inequality in understanding that there are in reality, more elements that converge in dissolving obstacles to social opportunities.

'Within intersectional frameworks, race, class, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and other aspects of identity are considered mutually constitutive; that is, people experience these multiple aspects of identity simultaneously and the meanings of different aspects of identity are shaped by one another'
(Kang, et al., 2017)

According to the author, not only do gendered, racialized, and sexualized differences exist in the US domestic labor market, resulting in disparities in work and pay, but these distinctions also define the globalized labor market. Trade relationships between countries and the ideology of neoliberalism that governs them have profound effects on the quality of life of people all over the world.

In this context, the inequality we discuss between men and women becomes more nuanced. We are talking about different bodies and ways of existing being classified by the androcentric Western science as *Other* - a category that comprehends all that has not been desiccated yet. The unknown, the still-to-discover identities and forms of life that are still not covered extensively by literature have their own way of existing and surviving despite the hegemonic power in society.

1.2 Sexism, Gender Stereotypes, and Performance

Gender essentialism is the perception of natural skills and values attached to different genders structural in Western societies. It is structural because it shapes people's beliefs and actions by perpetuating stereotypes and manifesting through generations as if it is something given or natural (Smiler & Gelman, 2008). This is why a common perception is that certain traits are natural to women, like being more sensitive or caring.

Despite the essentialism and gender stereotypes, women and men usually have slightly different values and political attitudes. (Conover 1988). There are many studies on female representation in politics, especially those quantifying the voter's attitudes toward gender representation in elections. Bauer (2014) finds that the preexistence of a stereotype in society does not necessarily imply that this stereotype will be used electorally unless activated. In her experiment made with U.S. citizens, she reports that electoral campaign framing has the power to activate these perceptions on female candidates. Still, we have yet to test how Argentinians respond to sexist scales without electoral activation.

The very first perception of gender duality is also societal based. According to many scholars of queer theory (Butler, 2004), gender itself is a social construct where people are classified according to their reproductive organs when born and therefore learning and performing gender throughout their lives. Statistically, only a few people dare to challenge gender dichotomy. Gender stereotypes about the abilities and traits of political women and men are clear and well-documented (Dolan, 2010). Voters tend to believe that female politicians are warmer and more compassionate, better able to handle education, family, and women's issues, and are more liberal, democratic, and feminist than men. On the other hand, male politicians are seen as strong and intelligent, best able to handle crime, defense, and foreign policy issues, and more conservative.

Gender stereotypes indeed play a significant role in shaping public attitudes towards women candidates. Studies (Scheider & Bos, 2014) have shown that voters' evaluations of women candidates are influenced by their perceptions of gender roles and expectations. For example, voters who value honesty and ethics in government are more likely to vote for a woman running against a man, while people most concerned about foreign policy issues are more likely to support a man over a woman.

Feminist scholars in the '60s and '70s described basic differences between the sexes as social constructions emanating from the different roles that men and women play in a patriarchal society (Conover, 1988). From this social construction of gender, sexism is defined as prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination based on sexual orientation and/or gender.

Inside gender stereotypes, women are often depicted as mothers or related to private activities in political campaigns. The archetypes below (D'Adamo, Garcia Beadoux & Gavensky, 2017) describe the main elements found in journalistic coverage of women from the research of electoral campaigns in Argentina (Rista, 2018) and how they portrayed Cristina Kirchner and María Eugenia Vidal, both Argentinian politicians:

1. Role of mother, domestic life, and care.
2. Political careers attached to their husbands, fathers, or other male mentors.

3. Lack of control, irrationality, and emotional intelligence
4. Physical traits and/or clothes



Figure 1 - Cristina Kirchner, *La Barbie Negadora*

In these stereotypes, Cristina Kirchner, former Argentina's president, is framed in all categories, with multiple examples of this practice. I experienced one of these moments while watching a mainstream Argentinian news in July of 2023, from La Nación¹ broadcasting. The following image (Figure 1) shows a current afternoon journal. It portrays Cristina as *La Barbie negadora*, a critique of her position of denying a crisis during the long-time ongoing financial crisis in the country. In that same month, the inflation rate was 158% per year, and one dollar was worth 550 pesos. Six months later, when writing this thesis, the peso was worth around 1650², and the inflation rate was around 260% per year.

By denying evident economic instability, Cristina hoped to help Alberto Fernández, her controversial political ally. As we can see in the picture, more than just creating the name, they

¹ This news portal is highly sensationalized and partisan against Peronism and more recently anti-Kirchnerist.

² Rate from February of 2024.

actually put a picture of Cristina in a Barbie box. This attention to her look is a recurrent topic in the news, and it is part of the discursive-performative representation of populist leaders in South America (Casullo, 2020). Studies like this bring the relevance of the female leadership phenomena in Latin America during the 2010s and its sociocultural and performative framing by the mainstream media to the forefront of the conversation about gender stereotypes.

And also, sub-categories (Panke, 2016) when analyzing the Brazilian take out of sexism with the former president Dilma Rousseff:

1. The leader, warrior, tough.
2. The mother, sensitive.
3. The professional, worker, or subordinate.

All these archetypes show how gender stereotypes operate in political campaigns and, although the effects of this campaign might be short-term, the imaginary used usually becomes part of the common sense about an identity. These long-term stereotypes can be seen in Cristina's and Dilma's cases (Encarnación, 2017).

In this study, we understand populism as a performative representation of a leader, where the leader assumes the synecdochic representation of the people itself. (Ref Book). Inside this performativity, we have examples of *macho* populism, such as Carlos Menen, Silvio Berlusconi, Jair Bolsonaro and lastly, Javier Milei. We also have examples of this performativity among female politicians like Cristina Kirchner. On both sides, there is a centralization of the body, as if the leader could literally channel people's choices through their bodies. On the importance of the performative body in populism, Diehl (2017, 361) points out that:

“The body is one of the most effective instruments in political representation. It is the physical support for political performances since it enables the politician to speak, to gesticulate, and to produce facial expressions. In so doing, the body is an ideal medium for activating emotions and producing identification.”

(Diehl, 2017, P. 361 *apud* Casullo, 2020)

The literature on populist presidents usually focuses on male leaders, who represent the image of a strongman, derived from *machismo* and gender stereotypes. Though populism, politicians commonly assume themselves as strong, virile, and healthy, in an attempt to represent the people as united and strong (Moffit, 2016; O'Donnell, 1994). This is partially correct for most left-wing populists in South America had represented themselves during the pink tide. This period occurred in the early 2000s until the mid-2010s when most of the leaders in South America belonged to left-leaning parties and held embryonic moments for the far-right backlash in the region (Biroli & Caminotti, 2020).

The current mainstream politician body is male, white and middle class - the usual figure of politicians associated with congressional and presidential roles. There are, however, other non-mainstream bodies in populist politics, highlighting the cases of Evo Morales and Cristina Kirchner. These populist leaders are analyzed in opposition to technocratic leaders like Michele Bachelet and Mauricio Macri. There is a clear performative aspect in making politics, especially if the body is socially underrepresented, which, in this case, becomes a way of disidentification when, at the same time, someone assumes and rejects the hegemonic discourse (Muñoz, 2013).

In the case of Cristina Kirchner, we can see the construction of a gendered populist bodily representation, framing herself and later being framed by media within a very specific Argentine political tradition. Avoiding the most common repertoire for female populist leaders, such as “tough mom”, followed by Pauline Hanson and Sarah Palin, Cristina's style does not fall entirely in this category and assumes a very specific model in Argentina: “*the female half of a Peronism militant couple*” (Casullo, 2020). Cristina's style is unique and derives from Eva Perón. This historical figure became a fashion icon and known as “the standard-bearer of the poor” for her social work. During her presidency (2007 - 2015), Cristina was strongly criticized by newspapers - about her style and the use of very expensive Dior purses and Louboutin shoes.

“She was always fashionably dressed and wore long black hair, high heels, and quite a bit of makeup, as opposed to most other female Argentine (and international) politicians, who favor sensible suits, shoes, and non-fuss hairstyles. [...] She did not want to be seen as a unisex politician like Angela Merkel and Margaret Thatcher.”

(Casullo, 2020. P.85).

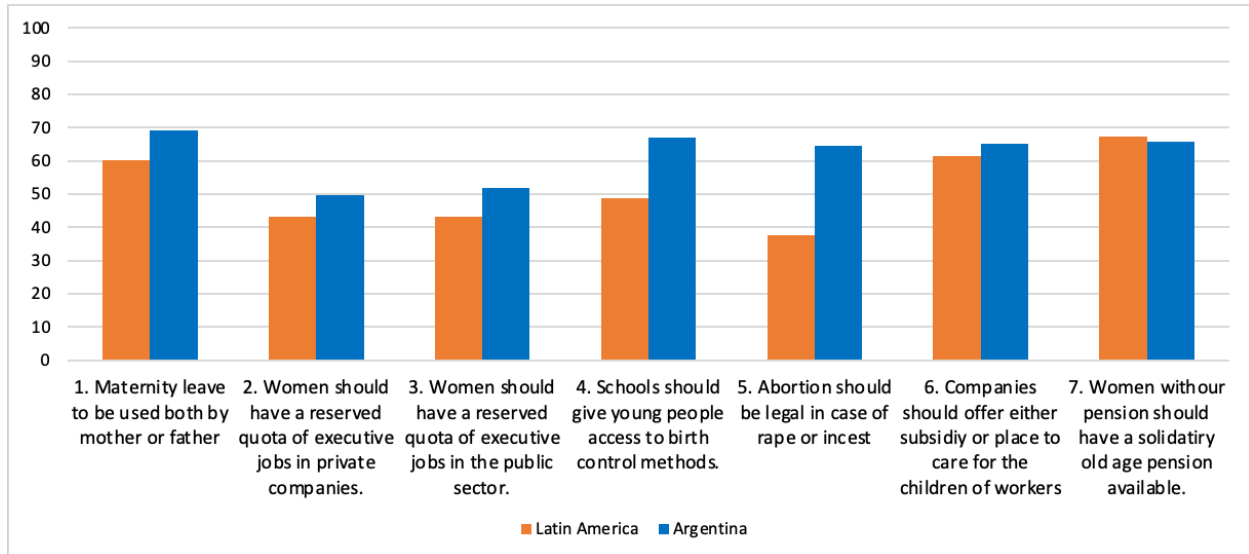
Embodying aspirations of the poor, such as jewels and furs by Evita and Cristina, shows another side of Peronism, where instead of just building charisma through mirroring the people's habits, it also represents their ambitions and aspirations. The people can take their share from the rich and “high” culture as a way of transgression, just like their gendered bodies were also transgressive in the political environment. Cristina's style, however, changed when her husband and former president Néstor Kirchner died in 2010. She stylistically adopted the figure of the widow, dressing only in black clothes for two years and being recognized as a grieving figure. In the next elections, in 2011, she was elected with 54% of the votes, the highest of any president in Argentina since the re-democratization in 1983.

In recent data from Argentina in 2023 from the Latinobarómetro³, we can see in Graph 1 Argentina has greater agreement on pro-gender equality statements than other countries in the region. The other countries follow the sentences with high agreement. However, two statements stand out. *“Schools should give young people access to birth control methods.”* and *“Abortion should be legal in case of rape or incest.”* have the highest differences compared to Latin America. Argentina was above 18% and 27%, respectively, in terms of difference compared to the rest of

³ It is a non-profit private law corporation, based in Santiago de Chile and has the responsibility of carrying out the Latinobarómetro study both in the execution of the project and in the distribution of the data. The Latinobarómetro Corporation consists of a board of directors made up of Chileans, governed by Chilean law, and an international advisory council that provides advice to the project management. Latinobarómetro is an initiative that is produced, designed and used mainly in the region by social and political actors, it has no dependency links with any external institution.
<https://www.latinobarometro.org/lat.jsp?Idioma=724>

Latin America. This discrepancy shows one side of the political culture of this country and stresses the contrast with the new presidency.

Graph 1- P38 Comparative Argentina and Latin America



From the same group of statements, the only agreement lower in Argentina in the last datapoints shows a peculiar relationship between the Argentines and a figure of elderly women receiving pension from the government. A derogatory image of a person who lives with social programs is very common in the shared imagination in many countries, similar to the “welfare queen” stereotype in the United States and, in Brazil, we have conservative groups falsely denouncing the misuse of the *Bolsa Família* program, responsible for taking millions of people from extreme poverty. In all these countries, we have a female stereotype of this figure, and in Argentina, it is not different - the figure of *pensioneros* poses a threat in the conservative imaginary. And co-opted by the far-right, this image was negatively attached to elderly women who were looking for their disappeared children in Argentina’s context.

CHAPTER 2: GENDER AND FAR-RIGHT POLITICS IN ARGENTINA

The far-right movement, characterized by extreme conservatism and nationalism, encompasses a spectrum of beliefs ranging from traditional to radical ideologies. Within this spectrum, far-right groups advocate anti-science, anti-gender equality, and anti-minority sentiments, manifesting through denial of established scientific facts, rejection of progressive gender identities, and hostility towards marginalized groups (Blee, 2020). This chapter investigates the gender dynamics within far-right populism, where leaders strategically employ symbols of masculinity, physical prowess, and authority to cultivate a sense of strength and exceptionalism among their followers (Casullo, 2020). Through comparative analysis of leaders such as Bolsonaro, Milei, and Trump, this chapter shows how populist rhetoric and imagery intertwine gender to mobilize support and perpetuate power structures. It also sets the stage for further exploration into the political behavior surrounding gender within far-right movements.

2.1 Argentinian Modern History on Gender

Peronism, like Populism, is a term that many political scientists try to define and yet haven't reached a consensus about its definition, which varies according to time and place in history. From socialist to fascist, many scholars and politicians elaborated definitions for this socio-political phenomenon that is remarkable and structural in Argentinian society. In the beginning, in the mid-40s, *Peronismo* was used to describe the workers-based movements around President General Juan Perón (1895-1974). The president ruled Argentina during two different movements. The first period was from 1946 to 1955, when the military overthrew him and also dissolved the Female Peronist Party, founded in 1949 by his wife Eva Perón (1919-1952), in an atmosphere of increasing female engagement in politics. Eva Perón's image is crucial for feminist movements in the country, attached to the figure of his husband, who established women's suffrage in 1947.

The first Perón presidency is described as a moment of intense labor movements, nationalism, industrialism, and social programs. Peronism was a broad movement encompassing several ideologies and concepts like nationalist, populist, and Christian socialist elements (Buchrucker, 1987). The following quote represents the complexity of the movement, organized and supported by people from different sectors of the Argentinian society at the time:

[The peronism] *“sought to give meaning and combine in a univocal direction representation such as organized community and national socialism, generational transfer, and unionist tradition, nationalization of the middle classes and Peronist aesthetics, charismatic leadership and revolutionary prophets, tercerismo and third worldism, Justicialist ethics and Christian utopia, popular mobilization and outlines of democratization”*⁴
(Cucchetti, 2008. P.1)

The figure of Eva Perón was also vastly influential for early Peronism, represented by the massive support of the movement *los descamisados*, or “the shirtless,” a term that initially was used as an insult by the bourgeoisie, like the *sans-culotte* in France, and then assumed by groups from the lower and middle class to fight against the rich. This term was also very common among anarchist groups, a notorious political sector in Argentina, especially inspired by the strong wave of migration from Europe that became even more significant during and right after World War II. Unfortunately, besides anarchist ideals, Argentina also imported many fugitives nazis with the end of the war. The country is known for having served as an escape plan for many high ranking nazis officials in the 40-50s.

From 1946 to 1955, Perón’s first and second terms as elected president, Argentina lived in an intense period of modernization, growth, and economic prosperity. A common nickname for the country was “The Paris of the Tropics,” which illustrates the general excitement with the developing country. Eva Perón died in 1952 and was buried with head-of-state honors, symbolizing her prominence and importance in the country. Evita, as she was called popularly,

⁴ My translation

had major public approval while also performing on the radio as a singer and in many other capacities. The couple knew how to take advantage of the radio's golden times for political purposes. The fame of General Perón, however, created a strong polarization and rise of reports of politically motivated attacks on groups or individuals related to the Peronist movement, brewed among other social discontents. In 1955, a *coup d'Etat* named *Revolución Libertadora* was organized by the military, and Perón was taken from power.

During Perón's exile, the Justicialista Party, founded in 1946 by Juan and Eva Perón, was banished by the military. However, the popular clamor for Perón echoed over the years, especially among the union workers, who cherished the memory of the early years of his presidency.

After 18 years of exile, Perón returned to Argentina and, in 1973, was elected as president again, having his second wife, Isabel Perón, as vice president. The General, however, died less than a year after assuming power again, and the presidency ended up in the hands of Isabel, the first woman in the world to serve as president of a country, but not elected. Isabel's presidency was marked by an expression of right-wing Peronism, notoriously attacking leftish governors and people of interest. The 70s saw many anti-communists paramilitary groups forming, such as the Triple-A (Argentina Anticommunist Alliance), to antagonize anarchists and communist groups who were fighting back, like the *Montoneros*, a far-left guerilla anarchist group.

In 1976, a military *Coup d'Etat*, named the National Reorganization Process, removed Isabel Perón and installed a bloody military dictatorship in the country. The coup established a period of extreme repression in the country and was guided by U.S. interests and interventions such as Operation Condor. The techniques used during the dictatorship have been organized and applied throughout Latin America: Persecution of left-wing intellectuals, unionized workers, and social minorities, cruel assassinations and torture methods to extract information about urban guerrilla movements, disfiguration and disappearance of the bodies, among other cruel methods of torture, assassination and disappearance of the bodies, among other destabilization tactics.

Despite the cruelty and terror techniques aimed at silencing the opposition, Argentinian officials behind the dictatorship were prosecuted in the *Juicio de las Juntas* (Trial of the Juntas) in 1985. It was the biggest trial of war crimes after the Nuremberg Trial and the first with a civilian court. The country is the only one in the region that effectively prosecuted high ranking officials connected with the dictatorship. Other countries in Latin America had their version of trials, but no important arrests were made. In the Argentinian case, the prosecutor Fiscal Julio Cesar Strassera became a national hero, after the trial condemned Jorge Videla and Emilio Massera. General Videla was the most well-known Argentinian dictator, and it is estimated that 30 thousand political dissidents vanished during the dictatorship period.

The movement Madres de la Plaza de Mayo started during the military dictatorship, and it was initially a collective of women organized to find *los desaparecidos*, people who had been persecuted, killed, and disappeared during the dictatorship's secret operations. The mothers started to gather in the May Plaza in 1977. Despite intense police repression, the group organized and grew during the dictatorship and nowadays has international relevance in denouncing crimes against humanity in Argentina. The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo are currently divided into two groups: the majority group, called Mothers of Plaza de Mayo (chaired by Hebe de Bonafini), and the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo *Línea Fundadora* (chaired by Marta Ocampo de Vásquez). Until nowadays, every Thursday, rain or shine, at 3:30 p.m., the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo led by Hebe de Bonafini, continue to carry out the march around the Pyramid of Mayo, and at 4:00 p.m., a speech is made at the Belgrano Monument, where they give their opinion on current national and world events.

In 1983, the military dictatorship finally ended with Raúl Afonsín election. Among many actions, the president created the CONADEP (*Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas*), a division to investigate exclusively crimes against humanity during the dictatorship. This investigation created a book named *Nunca Más* and counts 8961 people who disappeared, a number very different from the Madres de la Plaza da Mayo report that account for 30 thousand.

The number of people killed during the dictatorship became one of the elements discussed in the 2023 elections since Milei insists on the official count of deaths of around 8 thousand, while other organizations persist with the counting of 30 thousand desaparecidos.⁵

The democratic government was established in 1983 with Afonsín's election; however, the economy was not performing as it used to in the last democratic period with Peronism. In 1989, the liberal Peronist Carlos Menen (Justicialista) won the election and governed the country for 10 years with many neoliberal implementations. After the election of Fernando de la Rúa (UCR), in 1999, the country lived its most politically intense years in the recent democracy. In November 2001, De la Rúa established the *Corralito* plan, which prevented people from withdrawing money from their bank accounts. This created many riots across the country, especially in Buenos Aires; an increase in social discontent and the famous *cacerolazos* took place throughout the country. There were multiple lootings of supermarkets, warehouses, and businesses of all kinds. In response, De La Rúa decreed a state of siege that ended in a repression that left 38 dead, hundreds injured, and 4,000 detained throughout the country.

During the chaos and violence, De la Rúa left the *Casa Rosada* by helicopter, an image that became a symbol of the fall of the administration's political and economic project. On the morning of December 21, he carried out his last action as president by repealing the State of Siege.

This political moment is extremely well-known by the Argentinians and even became a common joke - *cinco presidentes en once días* - The country had five presidents in eleven days. After the exit of Fernando De la Rúa on December 21, Ramón Puerta assumed, then Adolfo Rodríguez Saa, then Eduardo Camaño, and lastly, on January 1st of 2002, the Legislative Assembly elected Eduardo Duhalde (Justicialista) as president.

⁵ In this context, the terms *disappeared* and *killed* are interchangeable. Its use depends on the emphasis of the role of the state in hiding the bodies of people they executed or who died under torture.

This time, Peronism was rising again, and the successor of Duhalde, Néstor Kirchner (Justicialista) placed Argentina on a fast track to economic growth. Kirchner's plan was to rebuild the Argentine industrial base, public works, and public services, renegotiating the operation of public services privatized by Carlos Menem and owned by foreign companies. His policies were accompanied by a nationalist rhetoric sympathetic to the poor (Romero, 2013). Under his government, the International Monetary Fund debt decreased, and the general economic mood of the country was improving.

The early 2000s was an interesting time for Latin America as a whole. Once democratized, during the third wave of democratization (Huntington, 1991) and trying to get rid of the neoliberalism trends during the 90s, this decade constitutes one of the most progressive moments in the region. Indicated by the alignment of several left-leaning governments throughout Latin America: Hugo Chávez (Venezuela), Lula da Silva (Brazil), and Evo Morales (Bolivia) during the pink tide. More than having left-wing presidencies in the region, this period is also marked by female presidencies, with Dilma Rousseff (Brazil), Cristina Kirchner (Argentina) and Michelle Bachelet (Chile).

Cristina Kirchner, the second female president in the country, also succeeded her husband, Néstor Kirchner, who died a couple of years after her election. Both Cristina and Isabel Perón had their presidencies haunted by their husband's figures, usually depicted as an ideal model of the presidency to be followed by their wives and successors. This kind of connection with a prominent male politician is extremely common for female presidents in South America and in many other countries. In the case of Cristina, however, she was elected president in December of 2007 but her government could not generate the same economic benefits as Néstor. In fact, her government was strongly depicted by the media for its closeness to corruption scandals, particularly the mysterious death of the federal prosecutor Alberto Nisman in 2015.

During her presidency, the media coverage was centered on much more than her political style: her outfits, accessories, purses, shoes, and basically everything related to her physical

presentation. This attention is not usually given to male politicians. Media representation can reinforce stereotypes and walk backward on gender equality politics, as shown by Luciana Panke (2015) and Micaela Andrea Rista (2018) when analyzing elections in Argentina and Brazil.

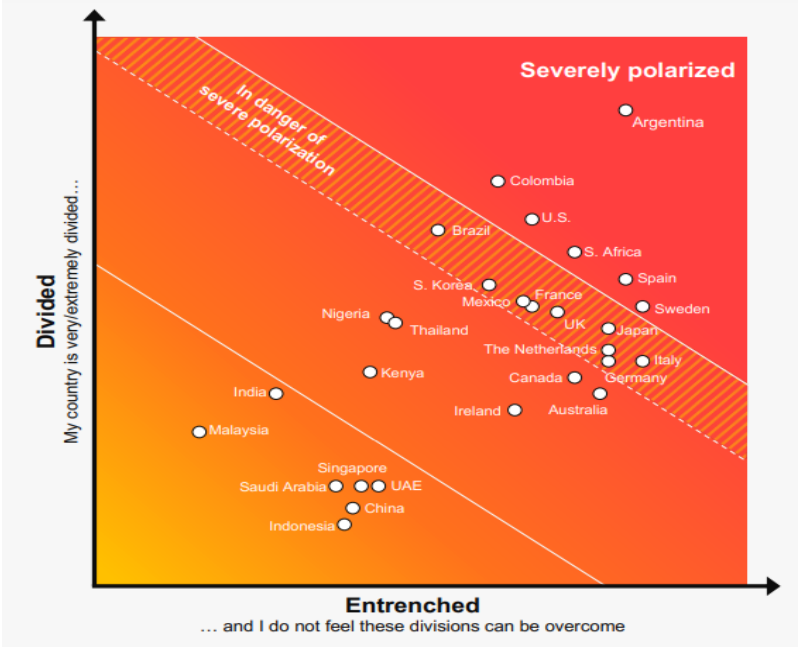
However, it is important to mention that the literature does not have a consensus about how long lasting and profound are the effects of electoral campaigns on voters. The experimental survey produced by Gerber *et alii* (2011) shows that the effects of electoral campaigns on voters' minds are usually shallow and short-term. However, this study tested only specific platform proposals of each candidate. The idea brought forth from this research differs because it tests broader and already existing perceptions in society. Gender discrimination affects all countries, and even with many politics and affirmative actions, few presidencies in the world are female. It is also crucial to notice that sexist media representation of female candidates does not only occur during campaigning - a great part of the offenses occur during their presidencies and political careers.

Sexist attacks against Cristina Kirchner and Dilma Rousseff happened substantially during the campaigns and throughout their terms as presidents (Panke, 2016; Encarnación, 2017). In Cristina's case, the existence of sexist content is very impressive, considering the recent gender achievements in the country, crystalized by the movement Ni Una Menos and the recent legalization of abortion in January of 2021. After Cristina's second term, Mauricio Macri became president, facing protests from Cristina's followers. Electing an ally was only possible in 2019 when Alberto Fernandez succeeded but faced many economic instabilities. In the beginning, Cristina was more attached to Fernandez's presidency, distancing herself in the second half. His minister of economy, Sergio Massa, competed against Javier Milei in the 2023 elections.

Ironically, in a book that claims a populist leader is not on Argentina's horizons, the scholar and Argentine political analyst Sergio Berensztein (Berensztein, 2014) indicates that the apparition of populist leaders or anti-system generates polarization in public opinion, institutional erosion, attacks to the free press and weaken the social fabric. All these elements happened and

are happening in Argentina. In 2023, the Edelman Trust Barometer considered Argentina the most polarized all out a study among 28 countries.

Graph 2 – Polarization



Currently, Argentina’s population is the 33rd in the world, with 46 million inhabitants, 92% of it in urban areas. As we can see in the graphs below (Figure 2 and Graph 5), Argentina shows one of the highest levels of support of democracy in the region, right after Uruguay and followed by Chile. According to Graph 3, 36% of the population believe that the current economic situation has worsened in the past 12 months⁶, showing a high level for the region and pointing out how the Argentines see their economy. Still about the public opinion on the economy, Argentina shows the lowest level of satisfaction with the economy in Latin America⁷, while being one of the largest economies in the region.

⁶ Question P6STGBS. Do you consider the country’s present economic situation to be better, a little better, the same, a little worse, or much worse than 12 months ago?
⁷ Question P11STGBS.B. In general, would you say you are very satisfied, quite satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the working of the economy in (country) ?

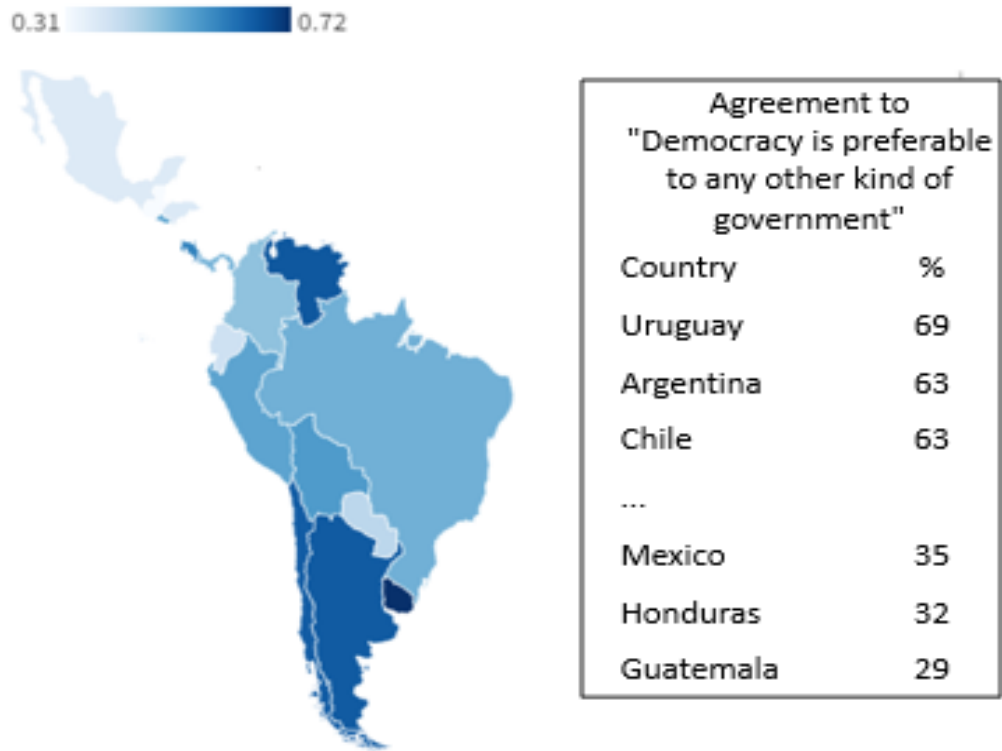
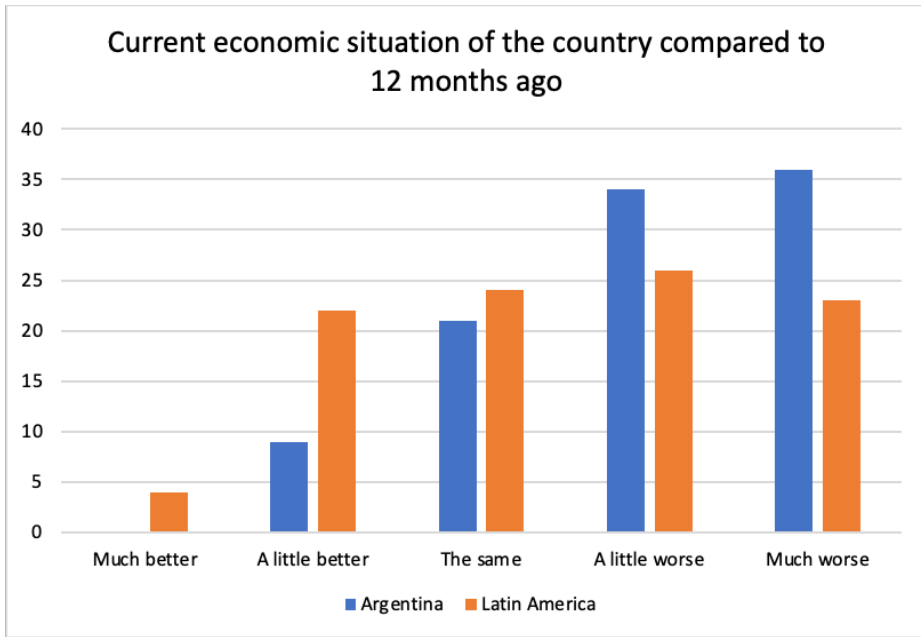
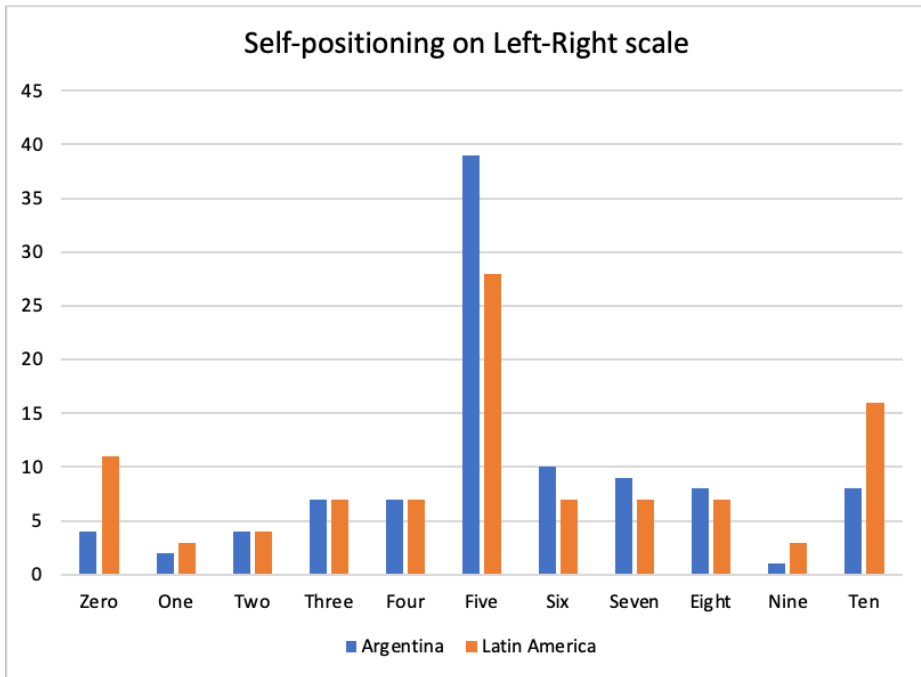


Figure 2 - Map democracy Latin America

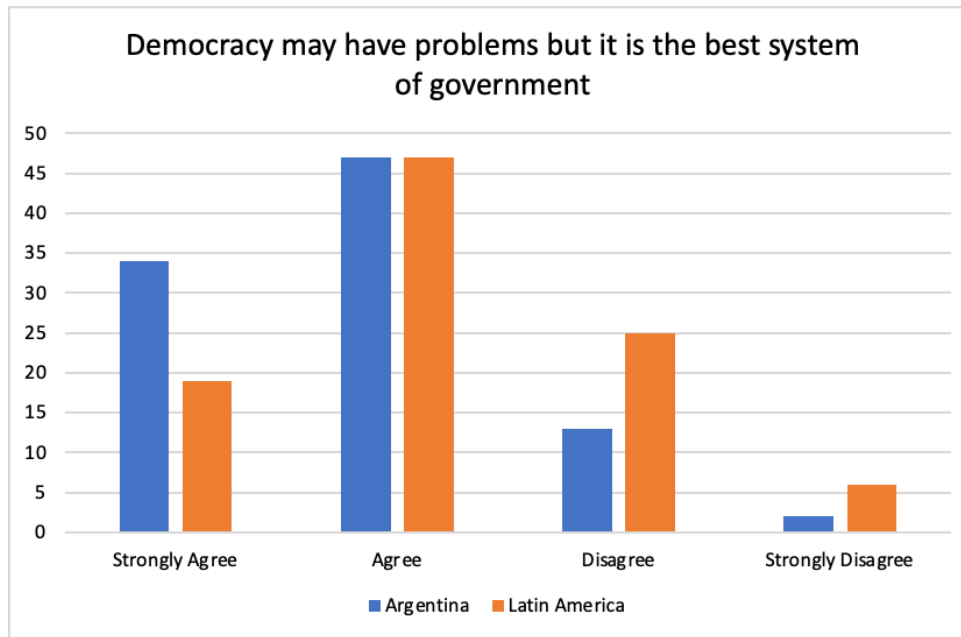
Graph 3 – Economic Situation Argentina and Latin America



Graph 4 - Self positioning in political scale Argentina and Latin America



Graph 5 - Democracy Argentina and Latin America



The self-positioning on the left-right scale (Graph 4) indicates a conservative/moderate political spectrum in the country, followed by strong support for democracy, displayed by two different variables (P10STGBS⁸ and P18ST_A⁹).

In general, Argentina is a complex and very politicized country with an intricate history of populist leaders, love and hate for them. Understanding the context of this study is crucial to carry on with the narrative of this investigation. Therefore, it is critical to discuss how gender is relevant to the far-right imaginary by bringing the most relevant literature on gender in politics and methodologies to this investigation. To show how Milei, just like Trump and Bolsonaro, present an aggressive neoliberal approach questioning the validity of elections itself and the traditional political status. The establishment of this political ideology threatens democratic institutions.

⁸ P10STGBS. Which of the following statements do you agree most? 1. Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government

⁹ P18ST.A. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements.: Democracy may have problems but it is the best system of government

2.2 Gender and the Far-right

Political attitudes toward gender represent one facet of the pervasive *machismo* culture that permeates the political arena and in Latin America. The far-right movement has consolidated itself and used different elements of each culture it is merged with: as shown by examples from Trump, Bolsonaro, and Milei's presidencies and their continuous electoral campaigns.

The global far-right movement is an important social phenomenon centered on political communication using shared symbols and meanings, such as dog whistles, to communicate messages to its followers. Dog whistles are concealed messages transmitted as ordinary messages that carry shared derogatory meanings, usually racist (Quaranto, 2020). The term "far-right" describes political ideologies and movements that lean towards extreme conservatism, often coupled with strong nationalism - beyond the traditional conservatism from the right wing. These groups typically prioritize traditional values and emphasize national identity, advocating for racial or ethnic superiority, like White supremacists in the United States and fascist groups in the south of Brazil. Characteristics of far-right movements include authoritarianism, xenophobia, eugenics, resistance to multiculturalism, skepticism towards democratic principles, and other reactionary ideologies (Blee, 2020). It is also very well associated with social Darwinism and liberalism as economic doctrine. It is important to recognize that the far-right umbrella encompasses many beliefs, from more mainstream conservative views to more radical and fringe ideologies. The expressions of far-right politics can vary significantly depending on the cultural and historical context, what was considered far-right a century ago in Europe, today shows very distinct parallels in the Americas.

The far-right is a reactionary ideology often associated with anti-science, anti-gender, anti-equality, anti-minorities, and anti-political correctness. Anti-science sentiments within far-right circles can manifest through beliefs such as denying established scientific facts, including the belief in a flat Earth or opposition to vaccines. Regarding being anti-gender, this often translates

into rejecting or opposing progressive understandings of gender identity and roles and *misogyny*. The anti-gender aspect is reflected in the “gender ideology” agenda, which is a global agenda based on religiousness and allegedly science aiming to abolish all recent progress in gender equality (Petõ, 2015). Not only based on misogyny and hate of women and the feminine but also homophobia and transphobia.

Far-right groups adhere to traditional gender norms and resist efforts towards gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights. In terms of being anti-equality, far-right ideologies may advocate for hierarchies based on race, ethnicity, gender, or other factors, opposing policies aimed at promoting equality and social justice. Lastly, being anti-politically correct reflects a rejection of language and behavior inclusive and respectful towards marginalized groups, it is often seen as an attack on free speech and an assertion of traditionalist values.

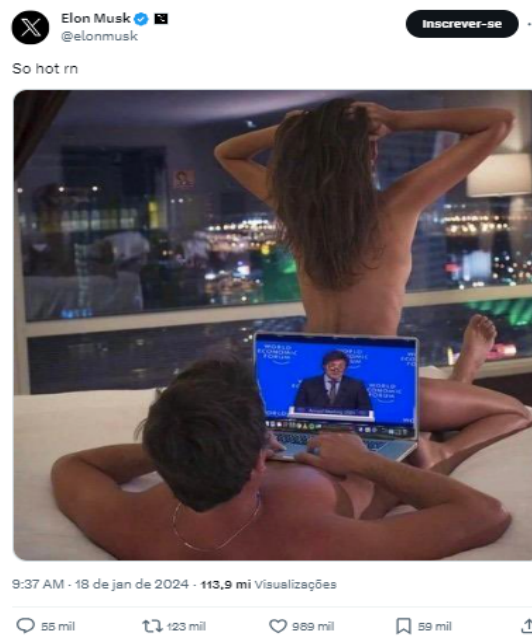


Figure 3 - Elon Musk Tweet about Milei at CPAC

Misogynistic behavior can be seen in many elements of Latin American culture, from the Brazilian tourism campaign in the 70s to the Congress speeches when Dilma Rousseff was impeached in 2016. The construction of retro-macho politics characterized by “*swashbuckling*

masculinity, overt sexism, and misogyny” is a threat to women's participation in politics. (Encarnación, 2017). The region is marked by violence against female leaders' lives, as shown by the murder of politician and activist Marielle Franco in 2017.

Gender is a central issue in the intricate far-right landscape, *“Many far-right parties, movements, and virtual spaces are male-dominated, promising a **homosocial brotherhood**¹⁰ of male belonging.”* (Blee, 2021). An example of the communication pattern of this brotherhood is a tweet of Elon Musk, a strong supporter of Javier Milei.

In the image, we can see a sexualized expression of homosocial brotherhood as the man in the picture is watching Milei's speech while having intercourse. This image reference echoes other equally sexualized political behavior from the far-right members. Katrine Fangen & Inger Skjelsbæk (2020) argue that this anti-feminist and anti-gender equality sentiment marks new nationalist policies and rhetoric. On the occasion, Javier Milei made the opening speech of the ceremony, defending the free market and capitalism.¹¹

Nationalism is also one of the main elements of the far-right political ideology, however, it might show distortions: such as the admiration of the United States that Bolsonaro and Milei supporter's display. For both, the derogatory name of “Tropical Trump” was a reason for pride. Another exception to the nationalism of the far-right movement is the apparent connection with the state of Israel: many supporters show the country's flag in public rallies. Both Bolsonaro¹² and Milei¹³ signed intentions to change the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in an attempt to gain more prestige from the Israeli government, which was done by Trump in 2018. Milei did it as the

¹⁰ My highlight

¹¹ In the speech, he stated: "We need to defend individual freedom and limit the power of the state." <https://eightify.app/summary/economics-and-politics/javier-milei-s-historic-speech-at-world-economic-forum-defending-free-market-capitalism>

¹² <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/11/1/brazils-bolsonaro-wants-israel-embassy-moved-to-jerusalem>

¹³ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-02-05/milei-s-jerusalem-visit-signals-argentina-s-support-of-israel>

first bilateral visit of his recently elected government¹⁴. In a public rally with his supporters, Bolsonaro (Figure 4) was waving an Israeli flag, also as a display of polarization with the actual president of Brazil, Lula da Silva, who denounced the genocide of Palestinians promoted by the Israeli occupation financed by the United States and Western powers. This borderline nationalism turns the far-right ideology into an even more complex identity, in figure 4 it is possible to see Bolsonaro's supporters holding both American and Israeli flags¹⁵.



Figure 4 - Israel and U.S. flags in Bolsonaro rally

It is important to point out that women often assume roles in far-right movements. We have examples from many countries, highlighting Giorgia Meloni, prime minister of Italy. The rise of female far-right leaders is a topic of concern in Western Europe (Fangen & Skjelsbæk, 2020). While far-right ideology perpetuates traditional gender roles and norms that may limit women's agency, examples from various countries showcase significant female participation within these movements, both as active participants and as symbols of their ideals. For instance, Marine Le Pen, leader of the National Rally in France, has advocated for anti-immigration policies and

¹⁴ <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-first-bilateral-visit-argentinas-milei-says-he-will-move-embassy-to-jerusalem/>

¹⁵ <https://www.jta.org/quick-reads/brazils-president-speaks-next-to-an-israeli-flag-at-anti-democratic-rally-confusing-and-angering-jews>

nationalist rhetoric, aligning herself with far-right ideologies. Similarly, Alice Weidel and Beatrix von Storch in Germany have played prominent roles within the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, championing nationalist and anti-immigrant stances. In Brazil, while not politicians themselves, women in Bolsonaro's family including Michelle Bolsonaro, have actively supported his far-right agenda. Michelle, in her role as the First Lady of Brazil, has championed causes aligned with her husband's conservative platform, despite the corruption investigations on her and her family. In the United States, Sarah Palin, while not strictly aligned with far-right movements, has been associated with conservative and populist ideologies, advocating for gun rights, anti-abortion policies, and limited government intervention.

From the discussion of elements within far-right movements to the exploration of far-right populism, it is crucial to consider how gender, gender imaginaries, and gender ideologies operate within these destructive political dynamics. Anti-women sentiments are a defining element of far-right movements, it prompts us to wonder the populist aspect of this phenomenon. In line with Ostiguy's characterization of *"populist style as being in-your-face, aggressive/transgressive, and aimed at transmitting the idea that the populist politician "has balls" is also of utmost importance"* (Casullo, 2020. P77), we should question: Is Milei a populist? This question leads investigation deeper into the populist discourse and tactics employed by figures like Milei, particularly as they intersect with gender issues. Drawing on Casullo's comparison between the elite as an "adversary" and *"la casta,"* we can elucidate the contrasting narratives propagated by far-right populist leaders, framing themselves as champions of the people against a corrupt and detached elite. Through this comparative lens, we can better understand the populist rhetoric and imagery far-right movements utilize to obtain support and advance their agendas.

To create a populist leader, it is necessary to select and combine previously existing symbols and cultural elements. This hybridization process implies that *"the leader bodies must perform three tasks simultaneously: to mirror the followers, to project exceptionality, and to appropriate*

some symbols of power” (Casullo, 2020). Trump, Bolsonaro, and Milei apply each of these elements and qualify themselves as populist leaders:

1. To show closeness (including mirroring).

“For the first objective, the leader’s body must mirror some of the people’s cultural characteristics: ways of dressing, ways of eating, demeanor, patterns of speech”

Bolsonaro, the *farofa* president¹⁶



Figure 5 – ISTOÉ Magazine cover with Bolsonaro eating farofa

In February of 2022, a case became very emblematic: Bolsonaro was photographed eating *Farofa*¹⁷ and chicken, and the food was falling on him and in the floor. The content, posted by his team in an attempt to look sloppy, did not catch well within his fanbase. Later, Bolsonaro pronounced, “I am human, this is not searching to be popular.” Figure 5 shows the picture on a magazine cover, which says, “The farofa president - Bolsonaro already smells the defeat, see the

¹⁶ <https://istoe.com.br/populismo-desastrado/>

¹⁷ Farofa is a traditional Brazilian side dish made with toasted cassava/tapioca flour.

big center onboarding from his candidacy, has rejection over the 64% and takes a wave of populist actions to try to survive”.

Milei, “ – [...] él dice los que todos gustarian de decir”¹⁸



Figure 6 - Milei with a chainsaw

During the 2010's, Milei created his name serving as an economy commenter in many afternoon programs in Argentina, his tone was recurrently aggressive and disruptive. On many occasions, he insulted his colleagues and notorious politicians. To his supporters, it means to have the courage to say what *people* think about *la casta política*, a recurrent term to designate the political caste in the country. The term was frequently used by Milei to put himself on the side of the people and against *la casta*. This aggression is frequently highlighted by Milei, who usually brings a chainsaw for rallies with his supporters. The chainsaw is also seen as a reference to the manga *The Chainsaw Man*, a character that fights against devils.

¹⁸ <https://apnews.com/article/milei-argentina-chainsaw-fed35a37c6137b951e4adada3d866436>

Trump eating KFC chicken in his private jet



Figure 7 - Trump eating KFC in his jet

This became an iconic example of how politicians' pictures are staged. In this image, we can see Trump eating chicken in his private jet. It has a great symbolism on how, despite flying on a private jet and being a millionaire, he has “humble” taste. In fact, on many visits to different countries, the president chooses to eat fast foods, such as McDonalds. Despite a claimed addiction to fast foods - in the most obese country in the world - the taste for this kind of food reinforces this popular aspect of the politician.

Beyond framed pictures, the Trump campaign was crucial to materializing the MAGA slogan, “make America great again” the image of reviving an America that never existed, or at worst, was established on a racial apartheid before the Civil Rights laws, is basilar on Trumpism ideology. The economic growth imperative and a dusty salutation of the American Dream reinforce the anti-equalities principles of the far-right.

2. To show charismatic exceptionalism.

“For the second one, certain markers of exceptionalism will be underscored: vigor and physical prowess are typical.”

Bolsonaro, the *imbrochável*

On the 200th anniversary of Brazilian independence, a year before the elections, he used the opportunity to make a big campaign rally with his supporters in an event funded by public funds. On the occasion, he refers to himself and chants to the crowd: “ - *Imbrochável, imbrochável*” [“Never limp”]¹⁹, in a hypersexualized and shameful attempt to build his masculinity. This frustrated attempt to pump up his self-esteem is an anecdote inside of a repertoire questionable to look stronger and attach his electoral performance to his virility.

Milei, the lion



Figure 8 - Milei, the lion

¹⁹ The translation of this expression is complex. The source, NY Times, translates as “Never limp, never limp.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/07/world/americas/bolsonaro-brazil-bicentennial.html>

Hola a todos, yo soy el león - that's how Milei commonly started his speeches, growling. A very common soundbite in his electoral campaign, calling himself a lion helped Milei build his image as strong and fearless.

Featuring the religious figure of the lion, Milei was raised Catholic but nowadays wears his religion as a jewel. Surfing on the metaphor of the Lion of Judah, his campaign materials, and especially the material made by his followers, underscore the image of the president of Argentina as the lion. This crazy beast will clean the political caste in Argentina and restore the liberty. His camping slogan, *"Viva la libertad, carajo!"* is aggressive: like he wants it to be.

Trump, the tough guy

Many times, Trump questioned his adversary and now U.S. president, Joe Biden. The inquiries, however, were not about political matters but physical abilities. Throughout the campaign, Trump dropped accusations that his opponent would not be physically or mentally capable to serve as president. Recurrently, he compared both physiques. Trump's approach to power is characterized by coercive power forms (Körner *et al.*, 2022). On his social media, he frequently endorses/supports anti-equality discussions and presents an aggressive approach, especially with political adversaries.

3. To appropriate and display the symbols of power:

"For the third one, the leader's bodily representation must underscore her possession of markers of institutional power: presidential emblems, military uniforms, displays of wealth, diplomas of higher education and the like."

Bolsonaro, the captain



Figure 9 - Bolsonaro doing push-ups



Figure 10 - Bolsonaro with children making a handgun

One of the elements more explored by Bolsonaro's campaigns is his physique and having been a captain in the army: despite being dishonorably discharged by the army in the 90s for planning a coup. He continued to use the rank to define himself as a courageous and strong military man. There are multiple moments where Bolsonaro highlights his alleged capacity. During the campaign one of his usual moves was to defy supporters to make push-ups. The handgun is also one of the trademarks among his supporters, and it is very well connected with the rise of registration of guns during his term as president, despite the army having declared not being able to know the exact number of registered arms in civilian hands²⁰

²⁰ <https://noticias.uol.com.br/cotidiano/ultimas-noticias/2022/09/15/exercito-diz-nao-saber-tamanho-do-arsenal-de-cacs-em-cada-cidade-brasileira.htm>

Milei, the economist



Figure 11 - Milei speaking at CPAC

Milei leverages his background as an economist to establish credibility and authority on economic matters. By presenting himself as an expert in the field, he positions himself as a knowledgeable and competent leader capable of addressing complex economic issues. He also frequently participates in public speaking engagements, discussing economic theories, policies, and trends. His articulate and persuasive communication style allows him to effectively convey his economic expertise to his audience, further solidifying his image as a knowledgeable authority figure. In the figure, Milei is making the opening speech, already mentioned, in the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) in February of 2024. Talking exclusively to his audience increases the perception of concordance around him by the confirmation bias. This way, his followers have the impression of being in a bigger group than it really is. This bubble phenomenon is very common on social media, the preferred media of new populism.

Trump, the businessman

“If he is good in business, must be good in politics as well.” – That is the common association for the Trump voter, transferring Trump’s perceived business acumen to the political world. The politician, without previous experience, won his first electoral in 2016, while having fewer votes than Hillary Clinton. His campaign was marked by this framing of him as a business

shark, as portrayed in his TV show, *The Apprentice*. To make it happen, he frequently employs business language and terminology in his public speeches and communication. He speaks in terms of "winning," "deals," and "success," reinforcing his image as a businessman who gets things done. Trump frequently highlights his business background and success as a central aspect of his public persona. He emphasizes his experience as an entrepreneur and real estate developer, framing himself as a self-made businessman who has achieved wealth and success through his own efforts. Trump has built a powerful personal brand centered around his business ventures, including the Trump Organization and the Trump brand name. Through branding and marketing strategies he has cultivated an image of luxury, success, and prosperity, which he leverages to enhance his public image and influence. It was also discovered that he misrepresents inflating his fortune, to make it look bigger than it really was. An action reinforcing the idea that Trump attaches his personality and skills to his money.

Some scholars are reluctant to classify governments in developed countries as populists as if the phenomenon were something restricted to countries from the third world and with low *political culture*. Understandably, this phenomenon is more recurrent in the global south, especially marked by the bitter heritage of colonialism and democratic instability provoked by European and American imperialism nowadays. This study posits that Donald Trump, based on his electoral and political strategies, can be classified as a populist president along with Bolsonaro and Milei. The strong connection with a leader and blind following masses can explain the disaster of January 6th in the United States and January 8th in Brazil. Hopefully, Argentina will not have a similar occurrence if Milei is not reelected. The signs, however, show a big alignment between the country and far-right trends.

The proximity between Milei and Trump is no surprise, they had a meeting at CPAC in February 2024, where the former affirmed, he was working to make Argentina great again. This attempt to stick on Trump's figure and this eugenics ideal received an ovation from the crowd.

Inside a synecdochic representation, “*Donald Trump is different things to different audiences [...] rather than being a passive recipient of his followers’ representations, he performs and embodies these meanings: he might speak with religious undertones one day, use white supremacist language in the other, act as a TV host another one*” (Casullo, 2020. P.80). As we can see, Trump’s populism generates a particular hybrid identity, proper of the process of hybridization that generates populist leaders.

By applying a multidisciplinary lens, it becomes evident how deeply connected gender dynamics are within far-right politics. Through a comparative lens, we have scrutinized the rhetoric and imagery deployed by far-right figures, exposing the strategic use of gender symbols to galvanize support and advance agendas. The next chapter, presents the methodology used in this study and proposes hypotheses to be tested using quantitative methods, considering the qualitative explorations so far.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study uses social sciences research methodology (Stebbins, 2001), combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to study the issue of gender and far-right in Argentina. On the qualitative side, case studies and comparative methods. Prior chapters described literature research on the topic and the application of archetype models to qualify the object of study and deepen the second question of this research on whether *sexism is a component of the far-right*. Quantitatively, this research presents some statistical analysis of demographics from Argentina and from a survey experiment developed for this study using the programs STATA, Excel and RStudio.

Mobilizing the elements explored in the last chapters, the following hypotheses are proposed and further explored in the following next chapters.

H0: Far-right political behavior regarding gender is the same as that of other groups

This control hypothesis serves to establish the baseline for comparisons. Before knowing more elements, it is necessary to scrutinize far-right voters present a different pattern of political behavior than the population. To do so, I am basing the analysis on two different surveys, looking for patterns of political behavior among Milei voters.

Ha: There is a difference in the political behavior among far-right voters

Upon finding statistically significant differences in political behavior among Milei voters, it will be possible to follow the next hypothesis.

Ha1: Far-right voters are more sexist than the others

Having statistically significant behavior patterns from far-right voters is crucial to determining how and how much voter groups differ. From the literature discussed and archetypes analyzed so far, we have shown that Milei is, like Trump and Bolsonaro, a far-right populist leader reinforcing anti-gender equality discourse in a context —politics— where women are already underrepresented.

3.1 Survey

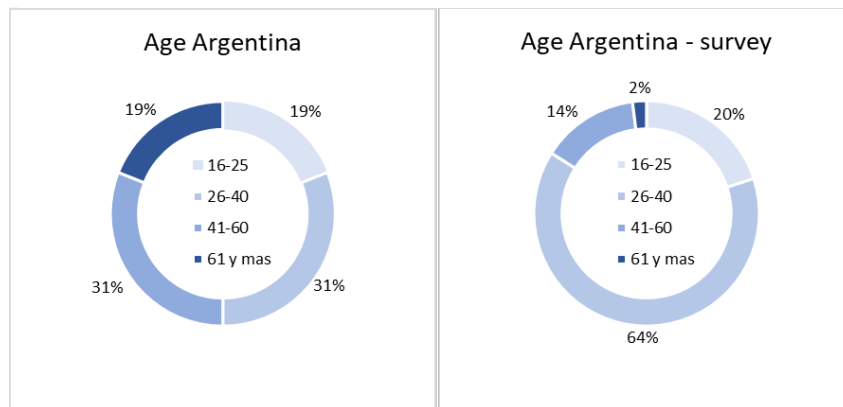
A survey²¹ was created on Qualtrics, a web-based software that allows users to create complex surveys and integrated into the Amazon Mechanical Turk and Prolific platforms. The survey experiment had 50 respondents, within a brief time frame due to funding and logistics reasons from February 9 to March 2, 2024. mTurck is a platform that reaches out to people to solve Human Intelligence Tasks (HITs) such as classifying pictures or answering surveys for a

²¹ For this study an IRB protocol was created and approved on November 16th, 2023, with number 809055. The average time to answer the questionnaire is approximately 4 minutes. The questionnaire and its translation can be found in Appendix 1.

small financial bonus per each task. Similarly, Prolific also connects requesters of jobs and people who can meet this demand. Those two tools are widely used in social sciences to gather social and political data (Paolacci, Chandler & Ipeirotis, 2010), (Difallah, Filatova & Ipeirotis, 2018). These platforms, however, show limitations in reaching people in South America, pointing out that these websites are not so popular in the region. This is explained by the authors, who found that 90% of the mTurk workers are from the U.S. and India.

The sources of respondents were multiple, using mTurk, Prolific and publishing it on WhatsApp and Facebook groups. The last was necessary considering that the first platforms cited are not really used in Latin America, which affected the possible number of surveys completed. This way, in this study, we utilize the primary data from this survey with 50 respondents and secondary data from Latinobarómetro with a sample of 1,200 respondents, where we can find very similar questions, as demonstrated in the next section. In this section, we compare the survey sample and the stratified sample from Latinobarómetro.

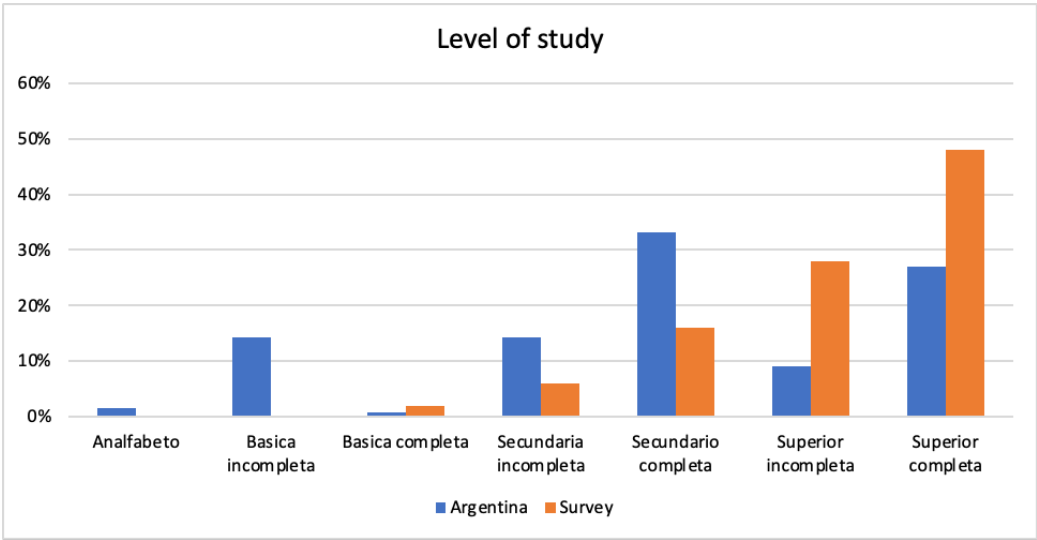
Graph 6 - Age Survey and Latinobarómetro



The survey and the Latinobarómetro dataset reveal that 52% of the respondents are female, aligning with the country's demographic structure. However, the survey demonstrates a higher proportion of young participants, likely due to its nature as an online platform. In the survey, 84% of the respondents are 40 years old or less, while this category in the population corresponds to 50%. Such platforms typically attract a younger demographic, with fewer older individuals engaging in paid work through these channels.

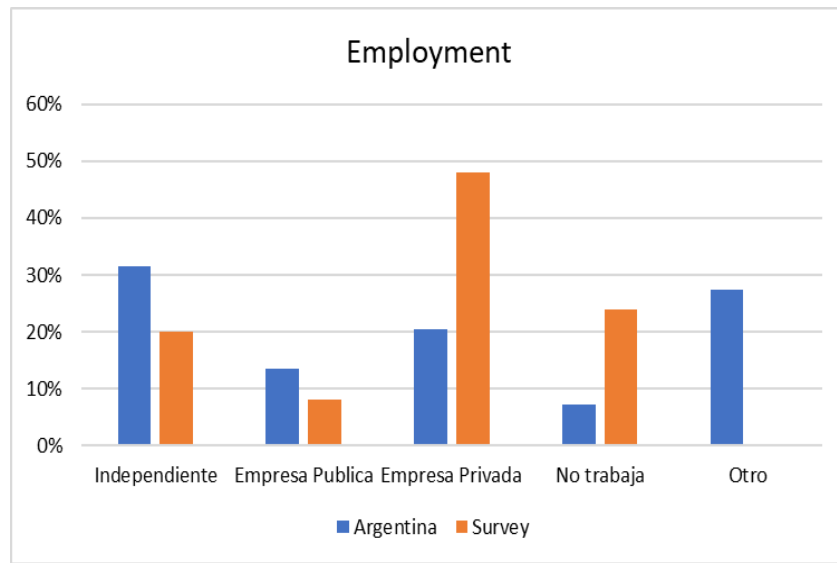
Regarding the level of study, it is first important to point out the high scholarly level in the country, especially higher education, which is free and attracts even people from other countries to study there. The percentage of people with college diplomas in Argentina is 27%, in the rest of Latin America it is 13%. Comparing the survey and the Latinobarómetro, we can see that the group who participated in the survey has a higher level of education, again one of the elements predicted of having some difference (Difallah, Filatova, & Ipeirotis, 2018). In this case, the respondents from the survey show a higher level of education than the population in general.

Graph 7 - Level of study Survey and Latinobarómetro



Regarding employment, as we can see in graph 8, most of the Argentinians who answered the survey are working for a private company (48%) or do not work currently (24%). Reflecting the profile of the respondents from online platforms.

Graph 8 - Employment Survey and Latinobarómetro



The survey sample serves to support the Latinobarómetro survey, which have a representative sample of Argentina. Overall, it was possible to see that the survey aligns mostly with the Argentina population, with distortions due to the nature of the sample, already predicted in previous studies. In the next section, I will discuss how to measure sexism and how the survey experiment was elaborated for this study.

3.2 How to measure sexism?

The discussion on how to measure sexism is extensive. The study of Glick and Fiske, (1996, 2011) generated 22 statements containing gender roles or stereotypes, which people have to answer in a scale of agreement. This ASI (Ambivalent Sexism Index) combines both types of Benevolent and Hostile Sexism. Another measure is very well established in the literature, the

MSS (Modern Sexism Scale) (Swim et al. 1995), used in ANES, which innovates by bringing less statements, but the dimensions of sexism (within Hostile and Benevolent) are not measurable.

It is important to keep in mind the possible dimensions of sexism, as elucidated in the ASI, because the reason for the sexism might be different as well and not necessarily rooted in hate of women. Sentences such as *“Women have a superior moral sensibility”* are classified as Benevolent sexism and denote a difference in the conception of women and men based on gender despite not being hateful or hostile.

The reduced sexism scale (Schaffner, 2022) summarizes different measures of sexist attitudes, the ASI and the MSS. However, the reduced scale brings only hostile sexism elements because, according to the study, these sentences had the greater explanatory power. In the survey, I am applying some questions from the literature on sexism measurement, inspired by the unsettling debate around this topic in the literature. The use of this scale is important because it brings elements of both Hostile and Benevolent sexism, a more subjective explanation of the differences to be observed in evaluating the fictional politicians.

For this study, I chose three from each type of sexism listed in the studies, considering the most predictable ones (Schaffner, 2022) and the benevolent statements that fit the most in the actuality.

Table 1 - Statements of sexism in the Survey

Hostile sexism	
Women exaggerate problems at work	<i>Las mujeres exageran problemas en el trabajo</i>
Women fail to appreciate all men do for them	<i>Las mujeres no tienen total aprecio por todo lo que los hombres hacen por ellas.</i>
Women seek power by gaining control over men	<i>Las mujeres buscan poder controlando hombres</i>
Benevolent sexism	
Women have a superior moral sensibility	<i>Las mujeres tienen superior sensibilidad moral</i>
Women should be cherished and protected by men	<i>Las mujeres deben ser mimadas y protegidas por los hombres</i>
Men are incomplete without women	<i>Hombres son incompletos sin una mujer</i>

The above phrases were analyzed by comparing the responses between the Milei voters and not Milei voters. The level of agreement ranges between 1 (Completely disagree) to 5 (Completely agree). The more agreement with the sentences, the higher the score of sexism in this test. Table 2 shows the average of agreement among far-right voters, group defined by voting on Milei and/or self-declaring between 8 to 10 on the political scale²².

²² This variable binary was created by the sum of two others: Vote for Milei and self-declared between 8 to 10 on the political scale spectrum. Inside the 50 respondents, 20 were classified in this category.

Table 2 - Mean and p-value of Survey statements

Sentence	Mean of agreement NON "Far-right" (1-5)	Mean of agreement "Far-right" (1-5)	P-value "Far-right" (T-test)²³
1. Women exaggerate problems at work	1.70	2.35	0.0700
2. Women have a superior moral sensibility	2.56	3.35	0.0456
3. Women fail to appreciate all men do for them	2.00	2.65	0.1300
4. Women should be cherished and protected by men	1.76	2.60	0.0322
5. Women seek power by gaining control over men	1.83	2.65	0.0384
6. Men are incomplete without women	2.03	2.65	0.1445
Overall index	1.98	2.70	0.0204

By analyzing the differences in means, it is evident that the far-right group shows higher levels of agreement with all the statements. Except for statements 3 and 6, all p-values are lower than 0.05, indicating that we can reject the null hypothesis, which stated that "H0: Far-right political behavior regarding gender is the same as that of other groups."

²³ p-values from a T-test performed on STATA. Values for two-tail test against the null Hypothesis. The lower the p-value, the higher the chances of rejection the null hypothesis.

3.2.1 Survey experiment

Survey experiments have become very common in many political science studies (Leeper, Hobolt & Tilley, 2020). This kind of conjoint experiment generates Average Marginal Components Effects (AMCEs), *“By capturing the multidimensionality of target objects, the randomized conjoint design breaks any explicit, or implicit, confounding between features of these objects.”* (P. 207). Therefore, by using this model, we plan to break down the analysis about sexism and public opinion up to a point where is possible to infer how much can sexism explain voting for Milei.

For this research, a survey experiment is applied with Argentinian citizens, where, among other questions like partisanship and sociodemographic, they must evaluate fictional politicians generated by artificial intelligence²⁴ on a scale of 0-10. The fictional politicians have their gender and political affiliation randomized [María/Juan/Ana/Jorge] and defined as [liberal/peronist]. With this experiment, is expected to see a difference in the evaluation of female politicians, if voters usually fall back on simple cues, in this case, gender. This experiment is structured as shown in Table 3.

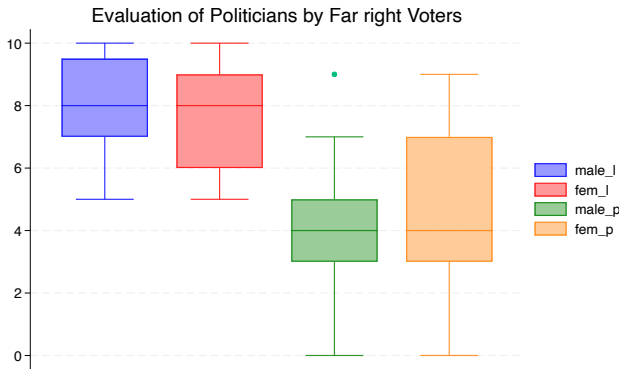
²⁴ The website used is called Fotor.com and the prompt for all 4 pictures were “man/woman with 64 years old politician Argentinian standing up with/without crowd surrounding”

Table 3 - Experiment profiles

EXPERIMENT A	EXPERIMENT B
 <p>Juán, Peronista.</p> <p>Juán propone impuestos más rígidos y altos para compañías privadas y los más ricos, aunque eso signifique meterse con la gente de la casta política.</p>	 <p>Ana, Peronista</p> <p>Ana propone impuestos más rígidos y altos para compañías privadas y los más ricos, aunque eso signifique meterse con la gente de la casta política.</p>
 <p>María, Liberal.</p> <p>María reducirá los impuestos para perjudicar menos a la gente y estimular la economía, aunque eso signifique recortar el gasto público.</p>	 <p>Jorge, Liberal</p> <p>Jorge reducirá los impuestos para perjudicar menos a la gente y estimular la economía, aunque eso signifique recortar el gasto público.</p>
 <p>Jorge, Liberal</p> <p>Jorge propone simplificar los impuestos y disminuir la intervención estatal para criar un mercado más eficiente y competitivo.</p>	 <p>María, Liberal</p> <p>María propone simplificar los impuestos y disminuir la intervención estatal para criar un mercado más eficiente y competitivo.</p>
 <p>Ana, Peronista.</p> <p>Ana subirá los impuestos sobre los más ricos, con el fin de alargar los gastos gubernamentales en servicios sociales para los más necesitados.</p>	 <p>Juán, Peronista</p> <p>Juán subirá los impuestos sobre los más ricos, con el fin de alargar los gastos gubernamentales en servicios sociales para los más necesitados.</p>

The evaluation of the profiles can be seen in the graphs below (Graph 9 and 10), that brings a comparison between the general evaluation medians and between far-right voters and non-far-right voters. As we can observe, Graph 9 shows that male and female liberals were better evaluated than peronists. This group naturally supports more liberal politicians, but this test was not sufficient to reject the null hypothesis yet. There is more variability among the non-far-right voters, indicating that this group is dispersed.

Graph 9 - Evaluation of politicians by far-right voters



Graph 10 - Evaluation of politicians by NON far-right voters

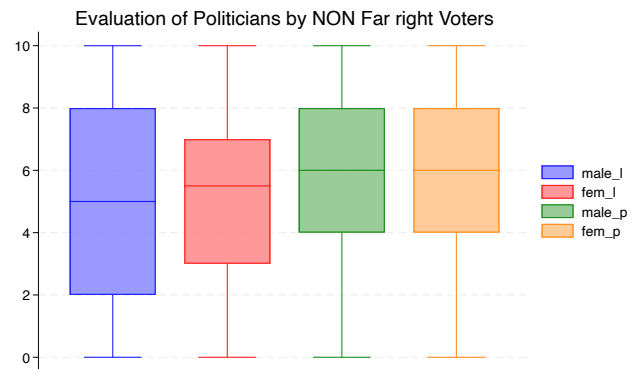


Table 4 presents the mean evaluations for each profile and the corresponding p-values from a t-test comparing far-right voters (n=20) with non-far-right voters (n=30). As shown, the p-values are below 0.05 for most profiles, indicating that there are statistically significant differences in the evaluations by far-right voters. This allows us to reject the null hypothesis, which states that there is no difference in evaluations based on voting behavior. Notably, the male liberal profile has the lowest p-value, suggesting a particularly strong distinction in how this group is evaluated by Far-right voters.

Table 4 - Mean and p-value of Survey profiles

	"Mean Evaluation for Non-Far-right (0-10)"	Mean evaluation for "Far-right" (0-10)	P-value Milei voters (T-test)
Female_liberal	5.36	7.5	0.0042
Female_peronist	6.00	4.45	0.0509
Male_liberal	4.86	8.00	0.0001
Male_peronist	6.16	4.2	0.0060

Assuming the relationship also found on the prior sections, we propose this following model to test our explanatory variables: A regression with the evaluation of the politician profile as the dependent variable, explained by gender, far-right voting, school, sexism index (summarized from the statements) and interactive term of gender*Milei voting, shown in Table 5:

Table 5 - Regression of Survey variables (Profiles and Statements).

VARIABLES	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Male Liberal	Female Liberal	Male Peronist	Female Peronist
Gender	2.545*** (0.805)	1.637* (0.847)	-1.005 (0.852)	0.301 (1.016)
Far-right	3.427*** (0.859)	2.418** (0.904)	-2.022** (0.909)	-1.089 (1.084)
School	0.156 (0.264)	0.102 (0.278)	-0.124 (0.280)	-0.0652 (0.334)
Sexism Index (statements sum)	0.110* (0.0591)	0.0882 (0.0622)	-0.0846 (0.0625)	-0.0562 (0.0746)
Gender*Milei voter	-2.167* (1.201)	-1.824 (1.264)	1.164 (1.271)	-0.557 (1.516)
Constant	1.633 (1.639)	3.070* (1.725)	8.228*** (1.734)	6.836*** (2.069)
Observations	50	50	50	50
R-squared	0.514	0.314	0.243	0.090

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Considering the hypotheses presented “*Ha: There is a difference in the political behavior among far-right voter’s*” and “*Ha1: Far-right voters are more sexist than the others*” we can prove these statements facing the results from these models.

Model (1) shows the evaluation of liberal male politician as the dependent variable, with a very strong and positive interaction with being male and far-right voter. The sexism index, however, shows a positive explanatory power over the evaluation of liberal males. This index was created by the sum of the levels of agreement with the sexist statements²⁵. Although this finding

²⁵ Composed by six statements and five levels of agreement from 6 to 30.

is relatively weak, it is consistent with the observed in the qualitative analysis. The independent variable of this model explains 50% of these variable data variations.

When analyzing model (2), having the evaluation of female liberals as the dependent variable, we notice that gender was not as strong of a predictor for this variable compared to male liberals. And to be significant it needs a broader confidence interval. Far-right also interacts positively with this variable, showing that great part of the good evaluation of liberals is explained by far-right belonging.

Model (3) show a negative coefficient for far-right voters, since who evaluate positively male Peronist hardly would vote for Milei or self-declare on the right side of the political spectrum, as predicted.

Overall, the result points out that Milei voters present a specific pattern of political behavior. For being in general younger than other voters, they tend to reject traditional attributions of gender. However, they still show some sexist attitudes, especially those examined in Chapter 2. In this section, we could explore the variables from a survey created especially for this study, and in the face of this examination, in the next section, we are going to apply the hypotheses again, but this time using the Latinobarómetro to make generalist estimations for the population.

3.3 Analysis with Latinobarómetro

More than discussing the probabilities based on the experimental survey, in this section, I bring similar explorations using the Latinobarómetro to have generalized findings from this study to the whole Argentine population. The latest version of the Latinobarómetro brings a series of statements very similar to the ones we have observed in the literature and tested with the survey. These statements compose the question P38 of the Latinobarómetro, described in table 6, which also bring a similar test of the p-value of each statement in relation to the variable “far-right” that

summarizes people who qualified themselves between 8 and 10 on the political spectrum plus the ones that declared vote for Milei.²⁶

Table 6 - Mean and p-value Latinobarómetro P38 statements

P38: Please tell me whether you agree with the following statements	Mean of agreement NON “Far-right” (0-1)	Mean of agreement “Far-right” (0-1)	P-value “Far-right” (T-test)
1. Maternity leave to be used both by mother or father.	.69	.69	0.9386
2. Women should have a reserved quota of executive jobs in private companies.	.51	.42	0.0134
3. Women should have a reserved quota of executive jobs in the public sector.	.54	.43	0.0025
4. Schools should give young people access to birth control methods.	.69	.57	0.0004
5. Abortion should be legal in case of rape or incest	.66	.56	0.0067
6. Companies should offer either subsidy or place to care for the children of workers	.66	.61	0.2280
7. Women without pension should have a solidarity old age pension available.	.67	.59	0.0211
Overall Index	.63	.55	0.0004

²⁶ Question P43STGBS_A: “If elections were this Sunday, which party would you vote for?” Then, categorized as 1 only people who intend to vote for Milei, in the Party Avanza Libertad, plus the variable P16ST In politics, people normally speak of “left” and “right”. On a scale where 0 is left and 10 is right, where would you place yourself?

As we can observe, the variables with lower p-values variable are statements 3, 4 and 5. On the exception to statements 1 and 6, it is possible to observe that the low p-values turns these statements very predictable of the beliefs of the far-right group. Highlighting the statement “4. Schools should give young people access to birth control methods” because that was one that showed divergences in Latin America. Besides, reproductive rights are the core of mobilization around public polices among the far-right group.

The Latinobarómetro also brings another set of sentences²⁷ on a range of agreement, observed on the table 7:

Table 7 -Mean and p-value Latinobarómetro P37 statements

P37 - Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements:	Mean of agreement NON “Far-right” (1-4)	Mean of agreement “Far-right” (1-4)	P-value “Far-right” (T-test)
3. It is better that women concentrate at home and Man at work	1.83	1.92	0.1393
4. Men are better political leaders than women	1.84	1.95	0.0695
5. If the woman earns more that man is almost certainly she will have trouble	2.09	2.16	0.2703

²⁷ Question “P37CSN. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements:”

Cont. Table 7

7. When Jobs are scarce men should have more right than women to have a job	1.79	1.97	0.0043
1. For couples of the same sex to adopt children	2.97	2.75	0.0009
2. Marriage between people of the same sex	3.07	2.89	0.0036
6. For Id document to recognize Sex change of any one person	3.04	2.82	0.0018
8. Homosexual couples are equally good parents as other couples	3.02	2.87	0.0116

Despite not being entirely about women's rights and bringing a bigger scope about political attitudes regarding gender norms, these statements show to be promising indicators of sexism. Because the statements have different directions about sexism, distinguished by color, it would be not accurate to present an overall index for this set of statements.

Observing the statements with attention it is possible to notice that they have different directions. An agreement with sentence one shows a not-sexism attitude, while an agreement with statement three reveals a sexist attitude/belief. Considering these differences, the statements are presented bi-dimensionally as “Good/Inclusive/Green,” “Bad/Sexist/Red.” Considering that Milei voters are younger than the rest of the population, it is expected that they would not show greater values of hostile sexism, usually attached to traditional and rooted demonstrations of sexism.

The hypotheses present distinct political behaviors and attitudes towards gender among different voter groups, particularly focusing on the potential for higher levels of sexism among Milei voters. The analysis supports these hypotheses by demonstrating significant differences in

attitudes towards LGBT rights, social welfare policies, and democracy. Milei voters exhibit more conservative and authoritarian tendencies, following the literature on far-right populist movements.

Considering the set of questions P37 and P38 from the Latinobarómetro, it was possible to run a Principal Components Analysis (PCA)²⁸ and test the variables, instead of separate statements. Because question P37 has two dimensions, as described earlier, the test was designed to request two principal components from this variable. To break down this variable, a color scheme is used, this way the proxy for benevolent sexism is the PCA score of statements 1, 2, 6 and 8 and the others were classified as hostile sexism. Question P38 has only one component, once the question is unidimensional. The PCA scores can be interpreted as a sexism scale, and below is a table of logistic regression having the PCA coefficients as proxy explanatories for sexism.

²⁸ Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is a statistical method used to reduce the dimensionality of a dataset while retaining most of the variation present in the data. It does this by transforming the original variables into a new set of uncorrelated variables called principal components (PCs). The first few principal components capture most of the variance in the original data.

Table 8 – Logit with PCA scores of Questions P37 and P38 Latinobarómetro

VARIABLES	(1) PCA P37 Benevolent Sexism	(2) PCA P37 Hostile Sexism	(3) PCA P38 Attitudes towards women
Far-right	-0.435*** (0.111)	0.180* (0.102)	-0.387*** (0.106)
Gender	-0.466*** (0.101)	0.461*** (0.0911)	-0.291*** (0.0938)
Age	-0.0341*** (0.00306)	0.00942*** (0.00273)	-0.00662** (0.00281)
School	0.141*** (0.0306)	-0.167*** (0.0278)	0.0937*** (0.0282)
Catholic	0.0913 (0.146)	-0.187 (0.131)	0.190 (0.135)
Protestant	0.00219 (0.00184)	-0.00451*** (0.00165)	0.00313* (0.00171)
Constant	0.932*** (0.265)	0.386 (0.238)	-0.143 (0.244)
Observations	1,021	1,104	1,200
R-squared	0.174	0.084	0.040

Standard errors in parentheses

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Consolidating both profiles of Milei voters and self-declared on the right spectrum of the political scale, it is possible to generate the variable “Far-right”, composed by the sum of both former variables like it was created with the survey experiment (Table 5). This time, the PCA components, representing different aspects of sexism, are tested as dependent variables, to verify how much the independent variables can explain variations on these variables, used as proxies for sexism scale.

Model (1) presents the benevolent sexism as the dependent variable. It has a negative and statistically strong and significant coefficient with the far-right variable, indicating this group scores low on the benevolent sexism. Additionally, this variable also interacts negatively with gender, proving that more women agree with those statements. The higher agreement with benevolent sexist sentences is also associated with younger age and higher education.

Model (2) brings hostile sexism as the dependent variable that, at 90% confidence interval, interacts positively with the far-right variable, indicating that this group might show higher levels

of hostile sexism. People who agree with hostile sexism sentences are usually male and older, with lower levels of education. Protestants show disagreement with these sentences.

On model (3), the dependent variable is the PCA of a list of statements containing attitudes towards women. The first two negative and statically significant coefficients indicating disagreement from males and the far-right group with sentences that promote gender equity.

The Latinobarómetro analysis corroborates the presence of distinct sexist attitudes among Far-right voters. Far-right voters were less supportive of gender equity measures, such as quotas for women in executive positions or access to birth control methods in schools, as indicated by the lower mean scores and significant p-values in these areas. The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) of the Latinobarómetro data revealed that Far-right voters tend to score lower on benevolent sexism but higher on hostile sexism, reinforcing the notion that this group holds more entrenched conservative and authoritarian views. Additionally, Far-right voters exhibited more conservative attitudes towards LGBTQ+ rights, further explicating the ideological and attitudinal differences between them and non-Far-right voters.

It was possible to reinforce the profile of far-right voters as young, sexist and anti-democratic males, coinciding with the description of the far-right as a homosocial brotherhood (Blee, 2020) debated in chapters one and two. This chapter tested the hypothesis that far-right voters are more sexist than others by showing statistically significant coefficients of variables representing political attitudes. In the next chapter, I summarize the discussions presented in this study and draw a conclusion based on these econometric tests, archetypes analyzed, and literature review presented so far.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

This study proposed to answer multiple questions about the connection between far-right ideology and political attitudes regarding gender. In the last chapter, we were able to test the

hypotheses and dig deeper on this behavioral difference using econometric tests. This final chapter summarizes all the paths delimited so far to a better understanding of the research and to bring possible clarifications and discussions pointed out.

The first chapter begins highlighting the persistent gender gap in political representation globally, with special attention to the underrepresentation of women in positions of power. Emphasizing the significance of traditional gender roles and societal expectations in perpetuating women's exclusion from active political engagement and how some theories attribute the gender imbalance to the dichotomy between the public and private spheres. The chapter explores the origins of inequality through the lens of Western political thought on gender and intersectionality, examining the historical neglect of the private sphere and its implications for women's political participation. We discussed feminist critiques of contractualism and the sexual contract, exposing the systematic disenfranchisement of women from political decision-making processes.

Section 1.2 centers the conversation on sexism and gender stereotypes, by unpacking the structural nature of gender essentialism and its impact on societal beliefs and actions. It discusses how gender stereotypes influence public attitudes toward women candidates, shaping perceptions of their abilities and traits. Through the analysis of archetypes and media portrayals of female politicians like Cristina Kirchner, it was possible to illustrate how gender stereotypes permeate political campaigns and contribute to the marginalization of women in politics. Additionally, the chapter explores the performative nature of populism and its dimensions, examining how populist leaders construct and embody gendered representations to appeal to the people.

Chapter 2 delves into the dynamic between far-right and gender in Argentina by delineating the far-right movement's ideological spectrum, characterized by conservatism, nationalism, and opposition to scientific facts, gender equality, and minority rights. Through a comparative analysis of leaders like Bolsonaro, Milei, and Trump, the chapter shows how far-right

populism intertwines with gender, employing symbols of masculinity, physical dominance, and authority to galvanize support and perpetuate power structures.

The historical backdrop of Argentina, particularly the era of Peronism, is examined to elucidate the country's socio-political landscape. Peronism, a multifaceted phenomenon, evolved from a workers' movement around President General Juan Perón and marked by intense labor activism, nationalism, and social programs. Exploring Perón's presidencies, the rise of Eva Perón's influence, and the subsequent political turmoil, including military *coup d'état* and the oppressive dictatorship era provides context for the current political climate.

The narrative follows with the resilience of movements like the Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, symbolizing the struggle against state-sponsored violence and advocating for human rights. Transitioning to the democratic era, the chapter shows the economic and political upheavals, from the Corralito plan to the succession of presidents, each grappling with varying challenges and legacies. The discourse pivots to contemporary politics, encapsulating the rise of populist figures like Milei and the deep polarization within Argentine society, as evidenced by the Edelman Trust Barometer's findings. Despite Argentina's vibrant democracy, the country grapples with economic discontent, reflected in public opinion surveys and ideological alignments. This rich historical and socio-political context lays the foundation for the subsequent exploration of gender dynamics within far-right ideologies in Argentina, echoing global trends while retaining its unique national nuances.

Section 2.2 elucidates how political attitudes toward gender reflect the pervasive *machismo* culture. It explores how far-right movements, characterized by extreme conservatism and nationalism, utilize gender ideologies to consolidate power, in special mobilizing against a supposed “gender ideology” agenda. Supported by examples from the presidencies of Trump, Bolsonaro, and Milei, illustrating their promotion of traditional gender norms and resistance to gender equality and LGBTQ+ rights, which was again revealed by econometric explorations on Chapter 3.

Far-right movements are characterized by authoritarianism, xenophobia, and resistance to multiculturalism, often manifesting as anti-science, anti-gender, anti-equality, anti-minorities, and anti-“political correctness” sentiments. These movements prioritize traditional values and national identity, advocating for racial or ethnic superiority. In Latin America, misogynistic behavior is ingrained in the culture, posing a threat to women's participation in politics. While far-right movements are typically male-dominated, women also assume roles within these movements, with examples like Giorgia Meloni in Italy and Michelle Bolsonaro in Brazil. Despite perpetuating traditional gender roles, far-right movements see significant female participation, both as active participants and symbols of their ideals. The section further explores the populist aspect of far-right movements, analyzing how leaders like Trump, Bolsonaro, and Milei employ populist discourse and tactics. These leaders project an image that appears to mirror the cultural characteristics of their followers, projecting exceptionalism and appropriate symbols of power to cultivate support. Examples include Bolsonaro's portrayal as "*the imbrochável*," Milei's depiction as "the lion," and Trump's image as "the tough guy" explored in the archetypes of section 2.2. The analysis suggests that Trump, along with Bolsonaro and Milei, can be classified as populist leaders based on their electoral and political strategies. Their strong connection with followers and manipulation of symbols of power contribute to their populist appeal. The section concludes by proposing hypotheses to this research, including whether Milei voters exhibit different political behavior regarding gender compared to other groups.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodology employed in the study, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate the relationship between gender and the far-right in Argentina. The survey results revealed a demographic structure largely aligned with Argentina's population, with a higher proportion of young participants reflecting the online platform's nature. Section 3.2 discusses the measurement of sexism, making references to established scales such as the Ambivalent Sexism Index (ASI) and the Modern Sexism Scale (MSS). It presents selected

statements on hostile and benevolent sexism used in the survey, with an analysis comparing far-right and non-far-right voters.

The survey experiment conducted to assesses political attitudes, particularly toward gender norms, using fictional politicians as *stimuli*. Similar statements related to gender attitudes were examined in section 3.3 using the Latinobarómetro, revealing differences between far-right voters and the general population, particularly young age, anti-democratic attitudes, and sexist beliefs. A logistic regression model with Latinobarómetro further these statements by testing the hypotheses to reveal that Far-right voters are indeed younger and more sexist and anti-democratic than the rest of the population.

These findings affirm the profile of far-right voters as predominantly young, anti-democratic males, presenting sexist attitudes and beliefs consistent with the broader far-right discourse. These results are important for political science because studies about gender have a common objective: To promote gender equity in many areas of human capacities. The goal of this investigation is to show the importance of the gender struggle inside politics and how reactionary groups are treating the good functioning of democratic institutions. And more than showing that Milei voters - who correspond to the Argentinian version of a global far-right movement - are anti-gender equality, this investigation also showed the deeply anti-democratic character of this group.

There is hope, however, in understanding this phenomenon and the social implications of having such strong political changes in the scope of the common citizen. The inflation, political and economic instability, polarization, and many other consequences of the current capitalist states show that this system has faded to decimate the human essence by reducing humans to workers-consumers. In any post-structuralist understanding, this ideology doesn't sustain its arguments and even less its practices.

Far-right ideologies and the existence of billionaires are intertwined, both relying on a shared narrative: a fictional battle against their own taboos, fears, and aversions, all rooted in a

romanticized, non-existent glorious past. This research has shown that this conservative dream is both anti-democratic and misogynistic, posing significant threats to the stability of democracies by combining old liberal ideals with young political brokers oriented towards neoliberal beliefs. This is especially concerning when these groups create militias and armed factions to invade federal buildings and spread terror, such as white supremacist mobs and terrorist attacks in the U.S. or the *Gabinete do ódio* in Brazil.

However, within these challenges lies the potential for progress. By investigating the complexities of far-right ideology and its social impacts, we gain a valuable understanding of the forces at play. It is through this understanding and direct confrontation of these issues that we can pave the way for a more inclusive and fair future. As we navigate the turbulent waters of contemporary politics, let us remain steadfast in our dedication to democracy, equality, and human rights. Through collective action and solidarity, we have the power to overcome even the most daunting obstacles.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Original questionnaire

¿Eres ciudadano Argentino?

¿Cual es tu edad?

¿Cual es tu género?

¿Cual tu escolaridad?

¿Cual és tu empleo?

Como evalúas a ...

¿Sergio Massa?

¿Javier Milei?

¿Cristina Kirchner?

¿Patricia Bullrich?

¿Como te identificas políticamente en una escala donde 0 = extremamente de izquierda y 10 = extremamente de derecha?

¿A quién votaste en las últimas elecciones? (Segunda Vuelta)

¿Con cuál partido político te identificas más?

¿Cómo evalúas a éstos políticos en una escala de 0 = Lo peor posible y 10 = Lo mejor posible?

[pictures and description of the IA pictures posed as politicians. See section 3.2.1]

Por fin, tengo acá algunas frases y te pido que marques tu nivel de acuerdo o desacuerdo en cada una de ellas:

Las mujeres exageran problemas en el trabajo

Las mujeres tienen superior sensibilidad moral

Las mujeres no tienen total aprecio por todo lo que los hombres hacen por ellas.

Las mujeres deben ser mimadas y protegidas por los hombres

Las mujeres buscan poder controlando hombres

Los hombres son incompletos sin una mujer