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### Language as Battleground: Gender-Fair Language in Brazil's Legislative Arena (2000–2024)

**Abstract:** This paper investigates how gender-fair language (GFL) has been framed, contested, and politicized within Brazil's federal legislative domain, focusing on proposals submitted to the Chamber of Deputies. Drawing on a corpus of 61 official legislative initiatives (2000–2024), this is the first longitudinal study of parliamentary debates that both support and oppose inclusive and gender-neutral language. Each proposal referencing gender-inclusive or gender-neutral language was subjected to close reading and manual coding to identify argumentative patterns. The analysis reveals two major discursive shifts. First, since 2020 there has been a sharp increase in proposals seeking to restrict or prohibit GFL, frequently deploying frames of “ideological subversion” that portray inclusive forms as a societal and cultural threat. Second, new supportive frames have emerged that recast GFL not only as a tool for equality but also as an act of democratic resistance against censorship and authoritarian intervention in language use. Building on Vergoossen et al.'s (2020) typology of resistance to gender-fair language, the study identifies five oppositional and four supportive argumentative categories, including a novel one—*Societal Threat and Ideological Subversion*—that reflects Brazil-specific patterns of conservative mobilization. The findings extend existing typologies, which have largely been developed from European and North American contexts, by situating them within Brazilian institutional dynamics. By examining the Brazilian legislature as a site of symbolic struggle over language, the paper contributes empirical insights into GFL becomes proxy for broader political conflicts in polarized democracies. More broadly, it highlights the role of governmental institutions in shaping, obstructing, or legitimizing gender-inclusive reforms.

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**Brief biography:** Laura Álvarez López is a sociolinguist and Professor of Portuguese at Stockholm University. Her research focuses on the interaction between linguistic and cultural practices in

multilingual contexts, with particular attention to how linguistic norms, ideologies, and attitudes shape identities and social relations. She has conducted fieldwork in Latin America and Lusophone Africa, examining language variation, change, and the role of Portuguese in postcolonial settings. A central strand of her work addresses language policy, especially how institutional and legislative frameworks regulate multilingualism. Her current projects include studies of gender-fair language in Brazilian legislation and multilingual practices in higher education.