

Ethnographic perspectives on political minorities inside the Brazilian Parliament

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Abstract

As a part of the project “Global Comparative Ethnographies of Parliaments, Politicians and People: representation, relationships and ruptures”, the data and reflection articulated in this paper present a methodological approach to study political minorities and their strategies of action inside parliaments. The main point is to explain how an ethnographic perspective can unveil complexity and help the researcher to find a specific place from where to observe the political field with accuracy.

To analyze discursive performances, communicative strategies and political relations established by Brazilian women federal deputies during the 56th legislature (2019-2023), I used a combination of methodological strategies guided by an ethnographic look at the parliamentary political process.

The data obtained for this reflection have several sources: official profiles of parliamentarians on social media platforms; public speeches made in legislative spaces such as committees and plenary; media coverage of legislative action; administrative documents of a restricted nature obtained by e-mail; public legislative documents and open data available on the Chamber Portal; field diary produced from the observation of daily work situations within the institution, meetings and legislative events; informal conversations with civil servants, advisors and parliamentarians; and, in a very intense way, a dialogue with the reflection on gender and politics and on the parliamentary activity produced by other researchers.

This paper explains how this diversity of sources, articulated in an ethnographic perspective, can frame a more complex understanding of contemporary parliamentary political activity. It is especially useful when we focused on members of political minorities in a turbulent scenario of ideological polarization and the rise of the extreme right in different contexts.

Keywords

Political Anthropology; Ethnographies of Parliaments; Political Minorities; Gender and Politics; Brazilian Chamber of Deputies; Women Parliamentarians

Introduction

How can an ethnographic perspective unveil complexity and help a researcher find a specific vantage point from which to observe the political field with accuracy? To answer this question, the data and reflections articulated in this paper present an epistemological approach to studying political minorities and their strategies of action within parliaments.

As part of the project "Global Comparative Ethnographies of Parliaments, Politicians and People: Representation, Relationships, and Ruptures" (EOPPP), the main aim is to analyse the discursive performances, communicative strategies, and political relations

established by Brazilian women federal deputies during the 56th legislature (2019-2023). To achieve this, I employed a combination of methodological strategies to collect data, always guided by an ethnographic lens on the parliamentary political process.

The data for this reflection come from various sources. These include official profiles of parliamentarians on social media platforms, public speeches made in legislative spaces such as committees and plenary sessions, media coverage of legislative action, administrative documents of a restricted nature obtained via email, public legislative documents, and open data available on the Chamber Portal. Additionally, insights were drawn from a field diary documenting daily work situations within the institution, meetings, and legislative events; informal conversations with civil servants, advisors, and parliamentarians; and an intensive dialogue with existing research on gender and politics and parliamentary activity.

By learning from these diverse sources, I explain how this variety of data, when articulated through an ethnographic perspective, can frame a more nuanced understanding of contemporary parliamentary political activity. This approach is particularly useful when focusing on members of political minorities in a turbulent scenario marked by ideological polarization and the rise of the far right, as observed in Brazil over the last decade.

Anthropology of Parliaments as a Comparative Approach

The study of parliaments has been largely monopolised in contemporary times by the disciplines of Political Science, Law, and Public Policy around the world. Specialists in statistics and game theory are developing extremely sophisticated quantitative methodologies and techniques, in line with the Anglo-Saxon tradition of social science studies, to evaluate the political behaviour of parliamentarians and the work of legislatures. Linear regression and correlation, informed by the neoinstitutionalist perspective, form the basis for the observation of politics.

One of the reasons I accepted being part of the EOPPP project was precisely to adopt a diverse approach to the study of politics and parliaments and to examine these institutions from a different epistemological perspective. Coming from a qualitative tradition of thinking, heavily influenced by my experience as a journalist and communications scholar, I engage with a different set of concerns regarding the political field. Trained in discursive analysis and in-depth interviews, I have been studying the Brazilian Congress from the inside, having been a civil servant within the institution for almost two decades. Throughout this journey, I have found numerous opportunities to develop a more sociological and cultural approach to the political community that constitutes the institution.

The anthropology of parliaments and its use of ethnography are the most fruitful perspectives I have encountered for systematising observations made over the years from various sources of data. Ethnography involves pursuing the "thick description" conceptualised by Geertz (1973), or in the words of Travancas, the "interpretation process that intends to cover all the signifying structures behind the smallest human gesture" (2010, p.98). In this sense, ethnography is not just a method of field study, as Peirano (2014) cautions, but an intellectual effort to create a thick description of a culture from a different viewpoint. As the Brazilian author states,

Ethnography is not a method; all ethnography is also theory. I always warn students to be suspicious of the claim that a paper has used (or will use) the 'ethnographic method', because this claim is only valid for the uninitiated. If it is good ethnography, it will also be a theoretical contribution; but if it's a journalistic description, or one more curiosity in today's world, it won't bring any theoretical contribution. (Peirano, 2014, p.383)

Bearing in mind the specificity of ethnography in incorporating a theoretical approach, I agree with Rai and Spary (2019) when they state that Parliament is both a functional and symbolic institution embedded in power networks, which makes it impossible to address political representation merely in a descriptive manner. As Saward (2006) has highlighted, legislatures are part of the political context of each society, and representation is a dynamic and precarious relationship subject to the social, economic, and cultural transformations that affect communities and their members. Hence, we need a more comprehensive view of parliaments and politicians and their relationships to understand what political representation entails for a particular society.

As Emma Crewe (2021, p.2) states,

The study of politicians requires an understanding of the highly skilled work involved in doing politics. It is an arena of power, a jostling for public recognition and an encounter with difference. It involves struggling with friends and foes to realise aspirations, share resources, discipline people or thwart opponents' goals. It happens informally in families, communities, organisations, in the street, and formally within institutions across and between nations. Of those institutions, it is parliaments – politicians' workplaces – that tend to be the most ritualised, exposed and complex political spaces within a governance world, although courts are serious competitors. It is a place where hierarchies, power, conflict, rituals, rules, are always found alongside loyalty and disobedience.

The advantage of taking an ethnographic perspective of parliaments is that it is inherently comparative (Peirano, 2014). Ethnographic work requires us to compare our views and conceptions with those of our subjects. As Peirano highlights, the first task is to explore the constant surprise, the unexpected, the diversity, and the curiosity about the other, coupled with the humility to recognise and respect different viewpoints. This dimension of estrangement is crucial for ethnographic work; after all, recognising difference is the main purpose of anthropology.

As summarised by Roberto Da Matta (1978, p.28), another Brazilian anthropologist,

In fact, you only have social anthropology when you have the exotic in some way, and the exotic invariably depends on social distance, and social distance has its own component marginality (relative or absolute), and marginality feeds on a feeling of segregation, and segregation implies being alone and everything leads – to quickly change this long chain – into liminality and estrangement. In such a way that to put on the ethnologist's cloak is to learn to perform a double task that can be roughly contained in the following formulas: (a) transform the exotic into the familiar and/or (b) transform the familiar into the exotic.

This double movement of approximation and separation, or the estrangement the researcher feels about their own culture – what Ingold (2014) describes, and criticises, as the split between “being in the world” and “knowing about it” – is experienced not only by the researcher but also by the subjects of the study. The relationships

established between them in the field will shape and produce the empirical-theoretical analysis and formulations.

According to Ingold, however, observing the world is not about the “objectification of beings and things that command our attention” (Ingold, 2014, p.387), but rather the dynamic process of learning and studying with people to understand their social world. He emphasises that “the skills of perception and capacities of judgment that develop in the course of direct, practical, and sensuous engagements with our surroundings” (Ingold, 2014, p.387) are crucial for achieving observation and the knowledge it produces.

For to observe is not to objectify; it is to attend to persons and things, to learn from them, and to follow in precept and practice. Indeed there can be no observation without participation— that is, without an intimate coupling, in perception and action, of observer and observed (Ingold, 2014, p.387-388).

Inhabiting the world and trying to make sense of it is the first task of any scholar. This holds true for political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists alike. However, the awareness that we study with people to educate ourselves for better living, as stressed by Ingold (2014), helps us understand our place within the political field as researchers and as citizens.

In this research, I have been constantly reminded of my relationships with the people I was studying with. Initially, choosing to focus on women seemed the most obvious strategy since I am also a woman working inside the Chamber. This strategy was designed to leverage my position, as being close to women parliamentarians would be more challenging for a male researcher from another institution. Being a woman facilitated my initial contact with the Women’s Caucus and the justification for the study, as well as my position as a civil servant. This dual status made it easier for me to be accepted in formal meetings and informal exchanges I have witnessed over the years.

The comparative endeavour, therefore, is made between our perspectives and the views of the political actors and institutions we study. To understand a political community, institution, or ritual, we must engage with the people involved and learn from their perspectives, rules, norms, ideas, concepts, and beliefs. Framing reality through their schemes of classification is the first task to broaden our own views.

Having worked for almost two decades inside the Brazilian Congress has given me a unique perspective on the institution. Part of this time was spent as a journalist for legislative media, interviewing people daily and conveying their views, opinions, and beliefs to the Brazilian public. The other decade was dedicated to understanding legislative work and the relationships established by the actors within the institution, working as a researcher and professor at Cefor, the Legislative School. During these periods, my focus was directed towards the strategies, tools, and methods chosen by parliaments and parliamentarians to communicate with citizens.

These two experiences have given me the opportunity to observe the political process almost as an external party, as a privileged witness not directly involved in the negotiations but close enough to see them unfold in detail. Despite being a Brazilian citizen, as a journalist or communication researcher, I could detach myself from the process, analysing it objectively, explaining the strategies, and discerning the meaning behind the political behaviours witnessed.

In part, I constructed a perspective moulded by a tripartite role: journalist, civil servant, and researcher, as discussed previously (Bernardes & Nuñez, 2021). From this experience and specific point of view, the fieldwork for the EOPPP research was built with an understanding of the structures, norms, rules, formal and informal institutions that organise the relationships between politicians, bureaucracy, social movements, and lobbyists inside the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. The focus was then placed on gender relations within parliament and Brazilian society.

The position of witness was no longer possible in this research because the gender approach made me identify with the same dilemmas presented in the political process I was observing. Viewing the political process through a gender lens created a closeness between women politicians and me; it was something that resonated with my identity, mind, and body. Like them, I am perceived as a female body within Parliament, and no woman can escape this condition. At certain points, I found myself getting emotional during speeches about political violence or becoming angry at the disrespect suffered by a female politician during a meeting. At that moment, I realised I was no longer studying them but learning with them, as Ingold describes.

One of the main advantages of ethnography is that it allows us to observe what social actors actually do, not just what they say they do (Jordaan, 2020, p. 3). Additionally, ethnography enables us to learn from other communities, people, and experiences. Prolonged and relatively close contact with the research subjects allows us to “discover how a certain network of meanings is organised” (Godoy, 2010, p. 125). In the case of this research, it is almost impossible not to incorporate my conceptions of power and politics since I am studying my political community. Without claiming any neutrality in the task, I believe that the internal institutional perception I bring aids in analysing the results, especially since the parliamentarians studied were chosen precisely for their institutional relevance.

Gender Perspective on Brazilian Parliament

To understand the significance of Parliaments in contemporary societies, it is essential to consider and analyze the role of women within these institutions. Following the perspective of Rai and Spary (2019), it is crucial to reflect on the challenges women have faced in political recruitment, the negotiations they have navigated, and the political narratives they have employed to survive institutionally. This approach is vital for a critique of the institutionalist view of Parliaments.

Studying the Women's Caucus within the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies requires an examination of the historical, social, economic, cultural, and political context of the institution. It involves understanding the conditions that have led to both institutional changes and continuities, as well as how a gender-sensitive parliament has been shaped during the last decades of the country's re-democratization. Additionally, it is necessary to consider the specific conditions experienced by political actors before their arrival at the institution and during their terms as they contribute to its development.

In Brazil, during the Constitutional Assembly of 1986/88, women achieved 5% of the seats in the Chamber for the first time. They organized to discuss crucial issues on the “female agenda,” as it was termed. Although the media and male politicians dubbed them “The Lipstick Caucus” to belittle their efforts, the women embraced this title and used it to gain public visibility for their interests throughout the constitutional debate.

Today, women hold 18% of the seats in the Chamber, with a similar percentage in state assemblies, and slightly lower representation in the Senate at 14%. This is despite the implementation of a 30% quota for candidacies since 1997, and the allocation of 30% of legal resources for party campaigns and propaganda since 2017. These figures place Brazil 133rd in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) 2024 ranking of gender equality in Parliaments.

Shirin Rai's earlier works frame performance as an analytical approach to Parliament, viewing it as a space of symbolic representation (Rai, 2014; 2017). This includes analyzing the body, space, voice, and work of representatives, as well as the dimension of authenticity. I adopt this perspective, supported by Leston-Bandeira (2016) and Vergè (2022), and use the public performance of political actors as a lens to examine the Brazilian parliament and its political dynamics.

According to this perspective on "performative" representation, legislative institutions perform an institutional role that both reproduces and sometimes challenges dominant social and political relations. This is particularly true regarding women's political representation. Other scholars also take this approach, viewing women's performances as indicators of the social norms, informal rules, and rituals established by Parliaments.

Descriptive representation—the effective and numerically significant presence of women in committee presidencies or other power positions within legislatures—is linked to symbolic representation for women. As a political minority, women gain prominence when occupying positions of power, which enhances public visibility. Their presence helps build the image of a parliament supportive of gender equality. Thus, occupying these positions produces symbols that disseminate values, feelings, beliefs, and opinions (Vergè, 2022) and creates public performances aligned with specific ideological stances (Saward, 2006). These symbolic representations can also have substantive effects on public policy.

As Vergè (2022) highlights, the power of symbols lies in their ability to create meanings and transform the social imaginaries that shape political spaces. Framing politics as a symbolic activity reveals how the construction of representation can challenge hegemonic political practices, allowing for a perception of the "mutual relationship between descriptive, substantive, and symbolic perspectives of representation" (Vergè, 2022, p. 20).

For political minorities, this potential is heightened, as their presence in Parliament introduces a disruptive element into the political field. Bourdieu argues that including women in the political field changes the actors' positions and has the potential to influence the criteria for producing political capital and the discursive approach to politics (Bourdieu, 2005, 2006).

In Brazil, the increased presence of women in Parliaments has led to public debates on previously overlooked issues, such as the legal status of domestic workers (mainly women), maternity and paternity leave, domestic violence against women, breast cancer prevention campaigns, menstrual poverty, and gender-based political violence.

Women in Parliaments are often considered "space invaders" (Puwar, 2004) or "norm breakers" (Meeks, 2012) because they do not conform to the expected body norm of these institutions (white males). It is important to assess how they construct their public performances. How do they use public discourses and claims of representation to perform authentically? As Vergè and Pastor (2018) note, a woman holding a traditionally male-associated political office introduces significant symbolic changes in the political field by reversing traditional perceptions of the activity.

According to Bourdieu, women must continually fight to access the floor and maintain the attention of listeners (2010, p.74), often being interrupted or patronized by men who unconsciously exhibit these behaviors. This undermines women's right to participate in public discourse, compelling them to use various tactics to gain public space and build authority. The prevalence of political violence against women in parliaments worldwide, and specifically in Brazil, underscores this struggle.

Dominant groups will always seek to make their particular views appear universal, and the definition of excellence is "full of masculine implications" (Bourdieu, 2010, p.78). These implications are not seen as specific to men but as essential characteristics of Politics. Political positions and spaces of power are designed for men, catering to their needs and characteristics, which are constructed in opposition to those of women. Consequently, women face difficulties in occupying these positions, as shown in studies on parliaments (Busanello, 2016; Perlin, 2019; Rai; Spary, 2019).

A woman in a position of power risks being deemed "excessively feminine," subtly denying her the masculine attribute of power (Bourdieu, 2010, p.118). Conversely, if she is "excessively masculine," it suggests she is not conforming to the norms prescribed for women. References to appearance, body, or clothing are common ways to undermine women, particularly in the media. Women's public performances take this into account, adhering to socially accepted behaviors and constituent expectations, including regular use of makeup and frequent visits to the hairdresser.

Research on gender and politics addressed this issue two decades ago (Avelar, 2001). According to Avelar, emphasizing the "singular aspects of the feminine style of doing politics" (2001, p.131) is common in most studies, which consider the "social perspective" (Young, 2000) of women as a starting point for political action, despite their multiple identities and intersectional conditions (Collins; Bilge, 2021). One axis of reflection and political practice arising from this perspective is the sexual division of labor within Brazilian politics, evident in committee seat allocation and the types of bills reported by women and men (Busanello, 2016; Perlin, 2019; ONMP, 2024).

Data from the last five years of my research shows women across the political spectrum frequently using this discursive frame to advocate for their causes, emphasizing their qualities compared to men. They highlight in social media posts and Chamber speeches their greater concern for economic and social problems, education, health, social assistance, and other care-related issues. They often cite their professional backgrounds to assert their qualifications for these issues.

A common perception is that women in politics are less confrontational, less interested in internal political power struggles, and more altruistic, making them better suited for political representation. Women politicians often use maternal images and symbols to

explain their actions, comparing their political activities to those of a mother and using terms like "protection," "care," "attention," "responsibility," "kindness," and "affection."

They frequently mention their families, especially when they have children and are married. On Instagram, pictures with husbands, parents, and children are common. Many right-wing parliamentarians include their family status in their social media bios, while left-wing parliamentarians may not. However, some left-wing parliamentarians use pictures with their children and their experiences as mothers and professionals to advocate for care policies.

Crewe's depiction of parliaments as the "embodiment" of democratic politics is relevant when considering the role of female bodies in Politics.

"Parliaments are the embodiment and expression of democratic politics in concentrated form (it is hoped): an idea, a process, a place, a building, a time and a symbol. They are an idea-in-action in the sense that they are the 'what, where and when' – the parliamentary laws and motions, in the house of parliament, during parliamentary terms and sessions – and so constitute the means for elected politicians to do the work of representation." (Crewe, 2021, p.7)

The symbolic perspective of women's presence in parliaments is essential for analyzing their daily activities and political performance. To conduct this analysis, I employed a combination of mixed techniques, which I will briefly describe in the next section.

Studying Performances and Discourses

To consider symbolic power requires an understanding that Politics cannot be isolated from other social fields. This means viewing the political field as part of the broader world of human experiences and ideas. After all, the notion of power is not confined to political institutions but permeates all aspects of social life (Kushnir, 2004). The Anthropology of Politics focuses on political culture—actions, beliefs, and affections that give order and meaning to the political process and reveal the rules and common assumptions under which social actors behave.

Since the socialization process defines political behavior (Kushnir, 2004), it is useful to view parliamentarians as intermediaries between different cultural levels. Politicians translate popular values, projects, and demands into the structures of government. Political representation is dynamic, and representatives adjust their appearances for voters throughout the process (Crewe, 2021; Saward, 2014). This translation process occurs in the public sphere.

In contemporary politics, social media play a crucial role by serving as spaces for public discursive performance. This justifies studying the presence of female parliamentarians on these platforms. To analyze their communication practices on social media, I employ a mixed-method strategy. In addition to following their official profiles through passive observation on Facebook, Instagram, and X/Twitter, I use databases systematized by colleagues at the Brazilian National Institute in Science and Technology in Digital Democracy (INCT.DD) and by Dr. Giulia Fontes, a research assistant at EOPPP. These databases have been analyzed quantitatively on various occasions (Bernardes, 2023; Sarmento; Bernardes; Fontes, 2023), providing valuable insights for my ethnographic work. I also coordinated the observation of TikTok and YouTube by two undergraduate students in 2022. During this observation, researchers avoided interactions with official

profiles or expressing feelings through emojis or other platform features (like, love, hate, etc.).

Simultaneously, I collected documents from the official website of the Chamber, especially during the COVID-19 crisis when all legislative work was conducted digitally. I watched floor sessions, committee meetings, and other events organized by the Women's Secretariat, which were streamed through the Chamber's Portal or Zoom.

Writing field notes throughout the observation period was crucial for making sense of the work. One challenge during the observation of digital practices was defining the empirical field's boundaries since territories and temporalities are no longer physically bounded (Markham, 2020). The field notes helped construct the research limits and anchor it in my own experience and body.

Additionally, I participated in collective ethnographies of the political field in both Brazil and the United Kingdom. The first instance was in Sheffield in April 2022, with two Brazilian research assistants and a British colleague. We followed and interviewed local politicians during the electoral campaign, exchanging ideas about the similarities and differences between the political processes in Brazil and the UK.

From February to July 2022, I coordinated a film crew for an observational documentary about the work of women parliamentarians in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. After two months of research with the producer and the other director, we spent another two months following and recording federal deputies in their daily routines. The resulting film, "The Chamber," was completed in 2023 and has been screened in various countries (Portugal, England, France, and Brazil).

In September 2022, another group of researchers—half Brazilian, half British—gathered in São Paulo, Curitiba, and Brasília during the national electoral campaign. We followed local and national women politicians and their assistants at campaign events and interviewed political brokers (Hoyler, 2022) to learn more about local political strategies and discourses. In many ways, we followed Crewe's insights on parliaments and their relationship with the society around them.

Parliaments often operate as both an insular bubble, creating a small town-like political workplace for politicians, journalists, lobbyists and staff where you can also drink, eat and get your hair done, but also a forum at the centre of a web connected to others across the country and the world. To describe all the connections comprehensively would be impossible. To research parliament, you have to study it locally, nationally and globally – to have the world in view – with a sense of culture, theatre, geography, history and the imagined future. The continual dynamism means that the study of any parliament never stops: as soon as you have finished writing about a specific parliament, at least some of your observations are out of date and you have to prepare to start all over again. (Crewe, 2021, p.9)

These three opportunities to conduct collective ethnographies on parliaments, politicians, and their relationships with people have deepened my understanding of the complexity inherent in qualitative and anthropological research. The continuous exchange of views, perspectives, perceptions, and insights among the diverse groups of researchers sharpened my observation of performances and discourses. It highlighted the specificities and similarities between parliamentarians from different political

systems and regions. In essence, these experiences of comparative ethnographies have honed my focus on the challenges faced by political minorities in various political contexts.

As Berthet et al. (2023) underscore in their study of the European Parliament, closely following politicians and sharing the spaces where political action occurs is crucial for building trust and establishing relationships. Spending time with them—sharing experiences, opinions, meals, and informal conversations—helps researchers understand their perspectives and capture the dissonant or minority voices that are often hidden in the legislative process. This requires an aptitude for openness, transparency, and reciprocity, embodying the learning with them, not just from them, as Ingold (2023) suggests.

My experiences with local politicians in Brazil and the United Kingdom, observing their roles inside and outside legislatures, and closely following women parliamentarians in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies in their daily activities, allowed me to share their world and views for a time. These opportunities heightened my awareness of my own position as a bureaucrat, researcher, woman, citizen, witness, foreigner, or native within the political field. Some roles were comfortable, while others were quite challenging.

Gaining access to political elites is always a complex experience for researchers. While it provides an opportunity for qualitative and in-depth exploration, it can also introduce ethical dilemmas. Elites, accustomed to being heard and having their viewpoints considered, may feel uncomfortable with interpretations of the political field that diverge from their own. The researcher's proximity can create an expectation of agreement, which may not always be met, especially when the researcher is native to the institution or community being studied, as I am.

Ingold (2023), Peirano (2014), and Crewe (2021) provoke reflection on the contemporary observation of legislatures by many scholars. How can we, as analysts living in these globalized political communities, observe legislative work without engaging in relationships with the political field? How can we pursue the ideal of a positivist Political Science that evaluates different political systems without embedding normative values in our analysis? Can we genuinely claim our analyses are purely "technical" or "legal," without acknowledging their deeply political nature? And, finally, what is the superior value of a technical analysis over one that is engaged with political practices?

But anthropology is different. For in anthropology, we don't just study people. We study *with* people. This means drawing them into the conversation. It is no longer a conversation, confined within the walls of the academy, *about* the many worlds of those who live beyond them. With anthropology, the walls themselves come down. The very world we inhabit—the one world we all share—becomes our place of study. (Ingold, 2023, p. 1).

Final Comments

In this paper, I aim to share my main concerns during the research for the EOPPP with fellow ethnographers and researchers interested in studying parliaments and political minorities within them. These concerns are deeply intertwined with our position as

researchers relative to political elites and the relationships we establish with them throughout the research process.

The proximity or distance between researchers and political elites at different moments and during various ethnographic experiences helps us better understand their positions by contrasting them with our own. This is crucial for a sharp comprehension of their performances and discourses, including the apparent contradictions between their actions and speeches, a common feature of contemporary political practice.

The inherent comparison in the ethnographic approach is essential for qualitative research. It provides the opportunity to learn from other human beings about the world we share with them. Gaining access to their daily work, usual performances, and preferential discourses through close observation allows us to engage in a process of collective education. This enhances our understanding of their perspectives and sharpens our awareness of our own.

Ultimately, this approach offers a complex but honest way to connect with different worlds and respect them, a practice that is much needed for the health of democracies.

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