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# Brazilian Public Policies and the Promotion of Gender Equity and Inclusion: An analysis of SDG 5 of the 2030 agenda from the perspective of Nancy Fraser's theory

*Políticas públicas brasileiras e a promoção da equidade e inclusão de gênero: uma análise do ODS 5 da Agenda 2030 sob a ótica da teoria de Nancy Fraser*

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**ABSTRACT:** The equity of gender is a fundamental pillar for the sustainable development and the strengthening of Democratic Rule of Law. Based on 2030 agenda of UN, especially of the SDG 5, this research seeks to answer: what public policies the has adopted to reduce gender inequalities? With a deductive approach and bibliographic-documentary method, based on theoretical assumptions about gender justice, sustainable development and the Nancy Fraser's theory of justice to critically analyze the normative and institutional actions implemented in the country. The study reveals that, despite legal and programmatic advances, structural obstacles persist, such as the absence of a budget with a gender perspective, institutional fragmentation, failures in inspection and the resistance to the incorporation of the gender agenda as a transversal axis. It is concluded that the implementation of SDG 5 requires the institutionalization of gender transversality in all phases of the public policy cycle, combined with solid intersectoral governance and coordinated engagement between the State, private sector and civil society. To overcome structural inequalities, it is essential to promote lasting changes based on substantive social justice, which guarantee the full and equal participation of women in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of public policies.

**KEYWORDS:** Gender Equity. SDG 5. Public Policies. Recognition and Redistribution. 2030 Agenda.



**RESUMO:** A equidade de gênero constitui um pilar fundamental para o desenvolvimento sustentável e o fortalecimento do Estado Democrático de Direito. Com base na Agenda 2030 da ONU, especialmente do ODS 5, esta pesquisa busca responder: quais políticas públicas o Brasil tem adotado para a redução das desigualdades de gênero? Com abordagem dedutiva e método bibliográfico-documental, parte-se de pressupostos teóricos sobre justiça de gênero, desenvolvimento sustentável e a teoria da justiça de Nancy Fraser para analisar criticamente as ações normativas e institucionais implementadas no país. O estudo revela que, apesar de avanços legais e programáticos, persistem entraves estruturais como a ausência de orçamento com recorte de gênero, fragmentação institucional, falhas na fiscalização e resistência à incorporação da pauta de gênero como eixo transversal. Conclui-se que a efetivação do ODS 5 exige a institucionalização da transversalidade de gênero em todas as fases do ciclo das políticas públicas, aliada a uma governança intersetorial sólida e ao engajamento coordenado entre Estado, setor privado e sociedade civil. Para superar as desigualdades estruturais, é indispensável promover mudanças duradouras baseadas na justiça social substantiva, que garantam a participação plena e igualitária das mulheres na formulação, implementação e avaliação das políticas públicas.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Equidade de gênero. ODS 5. Políticas Públicas. Reconhecimento e redistribuição. Agenda 2030.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Gender equality is an essential pillar for sustainable development and the Strengthening democracy, as it ensures the inclusion and equal participation of women and girls in all spheres of society. In the context of the UN 2030 Agenda, the SDG 5 establishes gender equality and women's empowerment as central elements for building a fairer and more inclusive world. This goal ranges from eliminating violence against women to promoting women's participation in politics, in the labor market and in access to economic resources. In addition to being a fundamental right, the gender Equity Drives Economic Growth and the reduction of social imbalances, enabling societies to move forward in a balanced and sustainable way.

The implementation of public policies aligned with SDG 5 in Brazil still faces structural challenges that limit their effectiveness. The

persistence of gender asymmetries requires integrated strategies, that combine the reduction of economic disparities with the recognition and confrontation of social and cultural barriers. So that these policies result in concrete and lasting changes, coordinated action between government, the private sector and civil society is essential, ensuring more effective actions in the promotion of gender equality.

The 2030 Agenda sets out a set of goals to promote equity, including the elimination of violence against women, the valuing domestic work and expanding female participation in politics and the labor market. However, the effectiveness of these guidelines requires well-structured public policies, adequate resource allocation, and continuous monitoring. Despite normative advances, such as the Equal Pay Act (Lei nº 14.611/2023) and the Law to Combat Political Violence against Women (Lei nº 14.192/2021), challenges such as wage disparity, gender-based violence, and low female representation in politics are still significant obstacles to achieving SDG 5 in Brazil.

Cross-sectoral governance and the adoption of a gender-responsive budget are key to ensuring the continuity and real impact of these policies. In addition, strategies such as tax incentives, strengthening the enforcement of existing laws, and expanding the protection network for women are essential to reduce asymmetries in a more structural way.

Given this scenario, the present research starts from the following problem: what public policies has Brazil been adopting to reduce gender inequality contemplated in SDG 5 of the 2030 Agenda? The objective is to analyze the main actions and public policies implemented in Brazil aimed at promoting gender equality, identifying their advances, limitations and possibilities for improvement in the context of the 2030 Agenda. The search for this answer is part of a context of urgency for structural transformations that guarantee equal opportunities and rights for women.

To this end, the deductive approach is adopted, through which we start from consolidated theoretical assumptions about gender

justice, sustainable development and democratic constitutionalism, and then analyze concrete public policies developed in Brazil. The investigation is guided by bibliographic and documentary research, based on official data, institutional reports and recent scientific literature, allowing a critical analysis of the actions implemented and the obstacles that still hinder the full realization of gender equality in the country. It is noted in advance that, despite normative advances, Brazilian public policies still lack transversality, adequate funding and intersectoral coordination so that gender equality becomes a concrete and structural reality.

## 2. GENDER EQUALITY AND THE 2030 AGENDA

As a global milestone in the search for sustainable and equitable development, the 2030 Agenda establishes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets to guide public policies and government actions, the implementation of which requires a coordinated effort between governments, the private sector and civil society, aiming to ensure that advances in one area can drive improvements in others (United Nations, 2015).

In Brazil, the adoption of the SDGs has been a challenge, especially with regard to gender equality, since the implementation of effective policies requires the adaptation of global objectives to local reality, ensuring that the strategies adopted are appropriate to meet the specific needs of the Brazilian population. The interconnectivity of the SDGs highlights the need for cross-cutting public policies that integrate economic, social and environmental aspects to ensure that gender equality is not just an isolated goal, but a structuring axis of sustainable development (Friedrich; Azeredo, 2024).

The adoption of a sustainable development model requires coordinated efforts between governments, companies and civil society, with the aim of eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities

in all their forms. In this sense, in 2015, the UN established the 2030 Agenda as a global commitment to structure guidelines that promote effective changes in the social, economic and environmental dimensions (United Nations, 2015). In addition to the redistribution of resources and the recognition of identities, the 2030 Agenda demands the strengthening of democratic spaces for participation. In the case of gender equality, this implies ensuring that women can intervene in political decisions that define public policies that affect them, in line with the notion of parity of participation (Fraser, 2002).

The SDG 5, focused on gender equality, encompasses several essential targets for social transformation, including the elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, the recognition and appreciation of unpaid domestic and care work, and the promotion of women's full and effective participation in political, economic and public life (United Nations, 2015).

Furthermore, this goal emphasizes the need to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, as well as the adoption of legislative reforms that ensure equality of opportunity and an end to institutional discrimination. Achieving these goals requires a multidimensional approach that integrates legislative actions, effective public policies and cultural changes that promote gender equality in a structural and lasting way (United Nations, 2015).

The UN commitment to equality between men and women establishes nine fundamental goals for the promotion of gender equity, including the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women of all ages, the eradication of harmful practices such as child and forced marriage, the recognition and appreciation of unpaid domestic and care work, the guarantee of women's full and effective participation in political, economic and social life, universal access to sexual and reproductive health, equal rights over economic resources, the expansion of the use of technology for women's empowerment and the strengthening of policies and legislation that promote equity (United Nations, 2015).

For these guidelines to translate into real change, it is essential that the formulation and implementation of public policies be based on a broad concept of social justice, which considers not only the redistribution of resources, but also the recognition of structural inequalities that perpetuate exclusion and gender discrimination, an indispensable condition for addressing historical inequalities and promoting full citizenship for all women. (United Nations, 2015).

Social justice cannot be analyzed solely from the perspective of resource redistribution, but also through the recognition of cultural and social differences that perpetuate inequalities (Fraser, 2002). In the context of the 2030 Agenda, this approach is crucial to ensure that public policies contemplate not only formal gender equality, but also the elimination of symbolic and institutional barriers that perpetuate gender asymmetries.

The Federal Constitution (Brazil, 1988) establishes equality as one of the essential foundations of the Democratic State of Law, reaffirming the commitment of the Brazilian legal system to the dignity of the human person and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. The principle of equality is enshrined in Article 5, caput, which guarantees everyone equality before the law, without distinction of any nature, and in Section I, which emphasizes the equality of rights and duties between men and women. In addition, Article 3, section IV, defines as one of the fundamental objectives of the Republic the promotion of the well-being of all, without prejudice of origin, race, sex, color, age or any other form of discrimination. Article 226, caput, deals with the family as the basis of society, deserving special protection from the State, which reinforces the role of the government in promoting gender equality also in private relationships. These provisions form the normative foundation for the formulation of public policies committed to overcoming historical inequalities between men and women in the country.

In addition to the formal equality provided for in civil and political rights, the 1988 Constitution also incorporates a concept of



material equality, which is essential for achieving social justice. In this sense, Article 6 lists fundamental social rights as essential elements for guaranteeing dignified living conditions. These rights are especially relevant for promoting gender equality, since women have historically faced greater obstacles in accessing these social goods. Thus, the implementation of the social rights provided for in Article 6 is a necessary condition for correcting structural inequalities and allowing women to fully exercise their citizenship, in line with the constitutional pact and the commitments assumed by Brazil within the scope of the 2030 Agenda (Brazil, 1988).

The UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) do not constitute a binding body of legislation, but represent an international commitment voluntarily undertaken by signatory States, including Brazil. These goals, especially SDG 5, serve as complementary and reinforcing parameters for the commitments already provided for in the Federal Constitution, giving greater concreteness to the ideal of substantial equality. By proposing goals such as the elimination of gender-based violence, the promotion of women's participation in politics and the valorization of reproductive work, the SDGs expand the interpretation of constitutional norms, offering guidelines for the formulation of more inclusive and effective public policies. In this sense, the incorporation of the SDGs into the national agenda represents a deepening of the 1988 constitutional pact, by aligning fundamental rights with a global vision of sustainable development, which recognizes gender equality as an indispensable component for social justice and the strengthening of democracy.

The consolidation of the constitutional pact on equality requires the formulation of public policies that give concrete form to the principles set forth in the Constitution and are capable of dialoguing with the international commitments assumed by the country. In Brazil, public policies have played an essential role in promoting fairer conditions for women, especially when addressing historical and

structurally rooted inequalities. The incorporation of the 2030 Agenda into state planning strengthens this movement by offering concrete guidelines for the promotion of gender equality. After a period of discontinuity between 2016 and 2022, the restructuring of the National Commission for the SDGs (CNODS) signaled the resumption of the institutional commitment to global goals, strengthening governance and monitoring mechanisms. This resumption is essential to ensure that policies aimed at gender equality are sustainable, effective, and consistent with the constitutional principles and international parameters that guide inclusive development (Brazil, 2024a).

In addition to the redistribution of resources and the recognition of identities, achieving gender equality requires strengthening democratic participation, especially in terms of the formulation and monitoring of public policies. In this sense, social justice must consider women's ability to act as political subjects, with an active voice in institutional decision-making spaces. Nancy Fraser's perspective (2002) contributes to this analysis by proposing equal participation as an essential dimension of justice, highlighting that the exclusion of historically marginalized groups compromises the legitimacy and transformative capacity of state actions. In the Brazilian context, gender policies that do not ensure real spaces for deliberation and active listening of women run the risk of reproducing limited solutions, far from the structural transformations required by SDG 5.

### 3. RECENT PUBLIC POLICIES AND THEIR IMPACT

Promoting substantive gender equality in the context of the 2030 Agenda requires a structural transformation that goes beyond traditional Western, patriarchal and economically exclusionary conceptions. Building a truly democratic and sustainable society requires an intercultural and intersectional approach that respects ethnic, religious and gender diversity (Liñan; Mejia; Ospino, 2021). This vision

is aligned with the concept of “planetary civilization” proposed by Boff (2003), which seeks to overcome the fragmentation and divisions imposed by modern rationality, promoting a new ethic based on the interconnection between human beings and nature.

This perspective proposes that humanity transcends cultural, religious and political divisions, adopting a diverse and intercultural approach that respects different forms of knowledge and ways of life. The central idea is that planetary civilization must be multiethnic, multireligious and committed to gender equality, allowing all voices to be heard and respected (Boff, 2003). Therefore, public policies aimed at gender equity must be formulated taking this broad perspective into account, ensuring that female inclusion occurs in a context of respect for multiple social and cultural realities.

The incorporation of the gender perspective into Brazilian public policies has seen significant progress, particularly with the implementation of programs aimed at women within subnational governments. However, these initiatives still face significant obstacles, especially because they often reinforce traditional conceptions of gender that limit women’s autonomy. In the field of social policies, there is a prioritization of actions focused on motherhood in the health area, while other dimensions of women’s health are often neglected (Farah, 2004).

Similarly, poverty alleviation policies often focus on women’s role as caregivers, without necessarily promoting their economic emancipation or ensuring their full insertion in the labor market. In this context, autonomy should be understood as the expansion of women’s power of self-determination, which includes greater participation in the labor market, increased income, and effective access to social protection (Silva, 2018, p. 143). These elements are essential for tackling structural gender inequalities and require public policies that go beyond the welfare-based logic and act in a transformative way, promoting women’s equitable and sustainable participation in all decision-making and power spaces (Farah, 2004).

In addition to these obstacles, public policies aimed at gender equality face the additional challenge of operating within a context marked by the predominance of neoliberal policies, which often result in budget cuts to essential social programs. As the literature points out, the privatization and deregulation of public services can hinder the implementation of gender equality policies by limiting women's access to fundamental rights, such as health, education and social security (Jácome; Villela, 2012, p. 15-17).

Despite legislative advances in promoting gender equality, it is important to highlight that the creation of laws is only one step in the process of formulating public policies. The implementation of these policies requires a set of coordinated actions, involving planning, allocation of budgetary resources, creation of responsible bodies, technical training and effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Laws such as the Equal Pay or Political Gender Violence Laws, when not accompanied by robust institutional structures, adequate investments and monitoring strategies, tend to remain at the symbolic level, without producing concrete changes. Thus, the consolidation of public policies aimed at gender equality requires a systemic and intersectoral approach, which goes beyond the legal norm and ensures their real application at all levels of public administration (Farah, 2004).

Promoting gender equality and expanding women's citizenship requires more than isolated measures; it requires integrated and institutionalized public policies capable of addressing the structural challenges that perpetuate social imbalance. In Brazil, several government initiatives have been implemented to guarantee rights and promote gender equity, in line with SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

The Equal Pay Act, for example, seeks to reduce the disparity between men and women through transparency and monitoring of salaries (Brazil, 2023). However, its implementation depends on more than formal compliance with the law. Economic gender inequality is not limited to salary differences, but involves deeper structural barriers, such as occupational segregation, the low presence of women in

leadership positions, and the overload of domestic and reproductive work, which limit women's access to qualified job opportunities and professional advancement.

This reality reflects the persistent sexual division of labor, according to which care tasks, historically attributed to women, are devalued and made invisible, while men's paid work is recognized and socially valued. This division is not natural, but socially constructed, which reinforces the hierarchy between the sexes and compromises female autonomy (Silva, 2018, p. 143-144).

In this context, it is necessary to implement complementary public policies that promote real conditions for women to enter, remain in and advance in their careers in the labor market. Fraser (2002) warns that strategies based solely on symbolic recognition, when dissociated from the redistribution of resources and opportunities, tend to produce superficial changes. Therefore, combating gender hierarchies requires a structuring approach that articulates effective monitoring mechanisms, redistributive policies and cultural changes that value women's work in all its dimensions (Saffioti, 2004, p. 38).

It is important to implement policies that not only guarantee equivalent incomes, but also promote the expansion of individual capabilities, enabling women to have the autonomy to choose and develop their professional careers. Without overcoming the factors that restrict their participation in strategic sectors of the economy and their rise to leadership positions, formal equality does not translate into material equity, perpetuating gender inequalities in the economic and social spheres (Sen, 1999, p. 16-18).

Another relevant initiative is the Menstrual Dignity Protection and Promotion Program, which seeks to mitigate the impacts of menstrual poverty by ensuring the free distribution of sanitary pads to women in vulnerable situations. This policy contributes to the inclusion and dignity of girls and women, preventing the lack of access to basic hygiene items from becoming an obstacle to education and work. Menstrual dignity should not be treated solely as a welfare

issue, but rather as part of a broader set of social justice policies with a gender perspective (Boff; Brum; Oliveira; Cabral, 2021, p. 140).

However, policies like these can reinforce a welfare-based vision if they are not articulated with structural actions aimed at the economic and social emancipation of women (Fraser, 2002). Menstrual precariousness is directly linked to social and gender inequality, affecting not only the health of menstruating people, but also their access to education and economic opportunities. The absence of structural public policies in this regard not only maintains this cycle of exclusion, but also worsens the vulnerability of millions of people who do not have adequate access to basic sanitation and hygiene products (Assad, 2021, p. 142).

This challenge is directly related to the fragmentation of public policies aimed at women's rights. Many initiatives are implemented in isolation, without integration with other strategies to combat gender and class imbalances, which compromises their long-term effectiveness (Assad, 2021, p. 144). In order to ensure menstrual dignity in a sustainable manner, it is essential that these policies be designed within an intersectoral model, involving not only the provision of inputs, but also educational actions, labor market reforms, and mechanisms that promote social equity.

Among the measures aimed at increasing female representation in politics, the Law to Combat Political Gender-Based Violence stands out, establishing mechanisms to curb discriminatory practices against female candidates and elected officials, ensuring a more egalitarian environment in the public sphere (Brazil, 2021). Female participation in Brazilian politics faces significant challenges, marked by gender-based violence and systematic exclusion from positions of power. The creation of this law represents a step forward in defining and criminalizing actions that aim to impede or restrict women's political rights.

However, gender oppression is not only manifested through direct threats, but also through the lack of equitable conditions for women to access and remain in politics. Fraser (2002) argues that

recognition is essential to correct social injustices, but it cannot replace the fight for redistribution. Therefore, the creation of legal norms must be accompanied by policies that ensure real opportunities for insertion into spaces of power, combating the hierarchies that hinder women's presence in decision-making bodies.

Furthermore, even policies that promote advances in the re-distributive or symbolic field may fail if they are not accompanied by permanent channels for listening, deliberation and social control. The absence of effective democratic participation by women, especially those who are most marginalized, compromises the legitimacy and depth of these actions (Fraser, 2009). Therefore, the implementation of legislation against political gender-based violence depends on the articulation with public policies that promote the expansion of female participation in spaces of power, aiming at a more representative and fair democracy.

Another measure taken by the Federal Government was the re-creation of the Ministry of Women in 2023, marking a significant advance in the formulation and implementation of public policies aimed at protecting women's rights. However, for its actions to have a real impact, it is essential that its policies adopt an intersectional perspective, considering the different forms of inequality that affect black, indigenous, LGBTQIAP+, and peripheral women. The formulation of these policies must take into account women's multiple identities and experiences, avoiding generalist solutions that may reproduce exclusionary patterns (Godinho; Silveira, 2004, p. 29).

Intersectionality is a central aspect in the construction of effective policies, since gender oppression does not operate in isolation, but is intertwined with other social markers, such as race, class and sexuality. Butler (2003, p. 22) argues that gender is not a fixed category, but a socially constructed performative process, regulated by cultural norms that determine which identities are legitimized and which are marginalized. Thus, the formulation of public policies must take into account this fluidity and plurality of female identities,

preventing certain experiences from being made invisible or excluded from government initiatives.

The lack of recognition of the diverse ways of being a woman can result in the perpetuation of inequalities within public policies themselves, which reinforces the need to ensure that these actions are structured in a broad and diverse way. Power relations shape not only gender norms, but also the institutional structures that regulate women's access to rights and opportunities (Butler, 2003, p. 56). Thus, for women's political and economic participation to be strengthened in an inclusive and effective manner, it is necessary that the policies implemented take this complexity into account, ensuring material and not just formal equity.

The expansion of the Women's Assistance Network, through the expansion of specialized police stations and shelters, strengthens the state structure for protecting women who are victims of violence. However, combating gender-based violence cannot be restricted to punishing the aggressors; a broad effort is needed to transform cultural and social norms that naturalize violence. Prevention, education and strengthening support network programs are essential to ensure that combating violence is not limited to an emergency response, but rather is part of a structural change in society (Godinho; Silveira, 2004, p. 73).

In this sense, advancing gender equality requires a balance between recognition and redistribution, so that public policies are not limited to specific responses, but rather build a solid foundation for effective social transformation. Addressing inequalities requires continuous and integrated actions that guarantee access to rights and promote women's autonomy, empowerment, and active participation in society. In this sense, the reading proposed by Saraiva (2019), when analyzing Nancy Fraser's theory of justice, shows that the recognition of identities and the redistribution of resources should not be treated as separate spheres, but as interdependent dimensions of the same emancipatory project. This perspective reinforces the need for public policies that combine the fight against socioeconomic injustices



with the confrontation of the symbolic structures that sustain gender exclusion.

Among the strategies implemented, the expansion of the Women's Assistance Network stands out, with the creation of specialized police stations and shelters for victims of domestic violence. These initiatives represent advances in the institutional protection of women at risk. However, tackling gender-based violence cannot be restricted to merely punitive responses; it is essential that public policies are accessible, effective, and structured in a humane manner. Violence against women is a violation of human rights that affects all social classes, requiring measures that go beyond criminalization and achieve cultural and educational transformations (Vigano; Laffin, 2019, p. 4).

The implementation of affirmative actions and policies aimed at combating gender-based violence must therefore adopt an intersectoral and integrated model that combines prevention, protection and awareness. In addition to punishing aggressors, it is necessary to ensure women have access to legal, psychological and economic support, promoting their emancipation and autonomy. The eradication of gender-based violence therefore depends on building a society that confronts patriarchal structures and promotes a culture of equality and respect (Vigano; Laffin, 2019, p. 6).

The promotion of substantive gender equality cannot depend exclusively on the creation of laws or government programs. An intersectoral governance model is essential to ensure the effectiveness of these initiatives, requiring permanent coordination between public authorities, the private sector, and civil society. The construction of sustainable policies requires strategic partnerships, especially in promoting the inclusion of women in the labor market and expanding opportunities for political and economic participation (Barcellos; Von Hohendorff; Buffon, 2022, p. 259-261).

At the same time, initiatives that promote partnerships between companies and social organizations can enhance the impact of these policies and contribute to a more lasting reduction in structural

inequalities (Sen, 1999, p. 30–31). Despite the progress made, the implementation of policies aimed at gender equality still faces significant structural and cultural barriers.

The implementation of these policies also depends on ensuring sufficient budgetary resources for their implementation. As the report on Gender-Responsive Budgets points out, the allocation of public resources often ignores gender inequalities, resulting in underfunded and low-impact policies. Although several countries have developed legislation to protect women, the lack of adequate investment compromises their implementation, often making them merely symbolic instruments (Hofbauer; Vinay, 2012, p. 35).

Finally, although the advances are significant, a critical analysis of public policies reveals that structural and cultural obstacles persist that limit their transformative capacity. In view of this, it is essential to understand and address the main challenges facing the implementation of these policies in the contemporary Brazilian context.

#### **4. CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING GENDER POLICIES IN BRAZIL**

The effectiveness of public gender policies in Brazil has been compromised by a fragmentation between the dimensions of recognition and redistribution. Although advances have been made in the symbolic field—such as the valorization of identities, the fight against political gender violence, and the promotion of equality campaigns—these initiatives are often not accompanied by structural reforms that promote the redistribution of resources, opportunities, and power. Fraser (2002; 2009) warns that, in contexts marked by neoliberal rationalities, recognition policies tend to be co-opted by agendas that avoid addressing the material bases of inequality. This separation creates a paradox: marginalized groups are symbolically visible, but continue to be substantially excluded from economic and political participation. In the case of women, this translates into persistent

wage disparities, the feminization of poverty, and asymmetry in the occupation of decision-making spaces, even in scenarios where there are laws and campaigns that affirm equality. For these policies to be truly transformative, it is necessary to break with this fragmented logic, adopting an integrated approach that articulates recognition, redistribution and democratic participation.

In this sense, although Brazil has made progress in implementing measures aimed at gender equality, its consolidation faces several structural challenges. The lack of robust monitoring and evaluation systems for the 2030 Agenda targets compromises the State's ability to monitor the effectiveness of the actions taken and to react strategically to persistent inequalities. Without specific indicators and disaggregated data that allow for the assessment of the concrete impacts of public policies, it becomes impossible to adjust strategies and redirect resources appropriately, making it difficult to overcome gender asymmetries in areas such as political participation, insertion in the labor market, and access to fundamental rights.

The wage gap between men and women remains one of the main obstacles to promoting gender justice in Brazil, revealing the persistence of discriminatory structures in the labor market. Although the enactment of Law No. 14,611/2023 represents a significant advance in addressing this problem, its practical application still faces significant challenges. The aforementioned legislation establishes the mandatory equal pay for women and men who perform identical functions in the same company, in addition to providing for transparency measures, such as salary reports, and the imposition of administrative sanctions for employers who do not comply with the legal criteria. However, the lack of robust monitoring mechanisms and the limitation of effective control instruments make it difficult to achieve the proposed objectives (Brasil, 2023).

Data from the 1st Wage Transparency Report, released in March 2024 by the Ministries of Women and Labor and Employment, indicate that, despite the new rule, Brazilian women still receive, on

average, 19.4% less than men. This disparity is exacerbated in leadership positions, where the salary gap reaches 25.2%, showing that legislation alone is not enough to guarantee material equality in the world of work (Brazil, 2024c). Given this scenario, it is essential to adopt complementary public policies that include incentives for hiring women, professional qualification programs, intensive monitoring, and educational actions aimed at deconstructing gender stereotypes. Only with a systemic and articulated approach will it be possible to transform legal guidelines into concrete and lasting changes in the socioeconomic reality of women.

Another critical dimension of gender inequality in Brazil is the persistence of violence against women, which demonstrates the need for more effective actions to ensure their safety and well-being. According to data from the 2024 Violence Atlas (Cerqueira; Bueno, 2024, p. 35–37 and 41), in 2022, 3,806 female homicides were recorded in the country, resulting in a rate of 3.5 deaths per 100,000 women. When considering Violent Deaths from Undetermined Causes (MVCI), this number is estimated to be even higher, reaching 4,670 cases and a rate of 4.3 per 100,000, a rate 22.8% higher than that officially reported. Lethal violence affects black women disproportionately, representing 66.4% of victims, with a rate of 4.2 per 100,000, in contrast to 2.5 per 100,000 among non-black women. These data reveal the urgency of intersectional public policies, supported by an adequate budget and federative coordination, capable of addressing the multiple vulnerabilities that permeate the phenomenon of gender-based violence in the country.

Given this scenario, gender-based violence remains one of the most persistent expressions of gender imbalance in Brazil, reflected in the high rates of femicide and domestic violence. Although policies such as the National Plan for the Prevention of Femicides have been implemented, insufficient investment in programs to protect and support victims, in addition to the need for stricter enforcement of existing laws, make it difficult to reduce these rates. Gender inequality

and the normalization of violence against women still represent deep-rooted cultural barriers that need to be addressed through public awareness and prevention policies. This logic of exclusion, however, does not manifest itself only physically or symbolically, but also in the restriction of women's presence in political decision-making spaces, which constitutes a significant obstacle to the implementation of SDG 5.

The low presence of women in political decision-making spaces also reflects a barrier to equal opportunities between genders, limiting the creation and approval of more inclusive policies that are sensitive to women's needs. Even with the adoption of mechanisms such as gender quotas for candidates, women continue to face structural and cultural barriers that hinder their access to and permanence in spaces of power. Recognition, when disconnected from redistribution, can generate symbolic changes without actually transforming the power structure. In this sense, incentive measures must be accompanied by actions that guarantee equitable conditions for women's political participation, reducing discrimination and the challenges faced by those seeking to occupy elected positions (Fraser, 2002).

Another crucial challenge is the lack of gender-equitable budget allocation, which directly impacts the sustainability of policies aimed at equality. Although Brazil has made progress in formulating regulations aimed at gender equality, the implementation of public policies still faces structural challenges that compromise their implementation and reach. In the political arena, women remain under-represented and face institutional, cultural, and social barriers that hinder their inclusion and advancement in decision-making spaces. The reproduction of gender stereotypes, which question their competence and legitimacy, combined with political violence manifested through harassment, threats, and discrimination, contributes to the maintenance of an exclusionary environment. Consequently, despite the mechanisms created to increase female participation, the political structure continues to reproduce asymmetries that limit the effective

presence of women in the decision-making process (Gomes Neto; Santos; Carvalho Neto; Grangeiro, 2024).

Institutional barriers still limit women's participation in politics, making it difficult for them to rise to positions of greater influence. Even when elected, women are often directed to less prestigious positions, while parties continue to favor male candidates (Brazil, 2025). This structural inequality demonstrates that effective gender justice cannot be achieved solely through normative advances; institutional changes are needed to expand women's access to positions of power. To this end, it is essential to adopt strategies that combine the redistribution of opportunities with the recognition of historical injustices, ensuring effective and not merely symbolic participation, as per Fraser's approach (2002).

Recognition, when separated from redistribution, can result in superficial changes that do not effectively alter power structures. Therefore, it is essential that incentive measures be complemented by concrete actions that ensure equitable conditions for women's political participation, combating discrimination and obstacles that hinder their presence in decision-making spaces (Fraser, 2002). Thus, institutional incentives must be accompanied by structural policies that expand women's effective access to political power.

In this sense, the Review of Public Policies for Gender Equity and Women's Rights (2025) points out that strengthening intersectoral governance is essential to ensure the continuity and impact of actions aimed at equality. The transversality of policies for women requires a coordinated effort between different spheres and sectors of the State, promoting greater integration between federal, state and municipal agencies. However, the absence of effective monitoring mechanisms and the insufficiency of structured resources with a gender focus have compromised the full implementation of these policies, resulting in fragmented and, at times, discontinued initiatives.

The transversality of gender equality in public policies represents a strategic approach that aims to integrate the gender perspective into

all stages of the policy cycle, from formulation to evaluation. More than isolated policies for women, this perspective seeks to reorganize the structure of the State so that the promotion of equality is present in all areas of government, such as education, health, public security and economic planning. This concept is based on the understanding that gender inequality is a structural phenomenon and, therefore, requires equally structural responses that permeate all government actions (Farah; Marcondes; Diniz, 2020).

However, despite the recognition of the importance of transversality, its implementation still faces numerous obstacles. The lack of coordination between sectors, the institutional fragility of women's policy bodies, and cultural resistance to the incorporation of the gender agenda by other areas make its full implementation difficult. Studies indicate that, without clear coordination and accountability mechanisms, transversality runs the risk of becoming a formal guideline devoid of practical effectiveness. This institutional gap often results from a segmented view of public management, in which the gender agenda is treated as the exclusive responsibility of certain bodies, instead of being understood as a transversal axis across all areas of government (Conteratto; Martins, 2016, p.4-5).

The 2024 National Voluntary Report warns that, although there has been progress in standardizing policies aimed at gender equality, their full implementation depends on the institutionalization of transversality as a guideline for public policy. This includes, for example, the requirement for gender indicators in budget planning instruments, the ongoing training of public servants with an intersectional approach, and the creation of control and evaluation mechanisms that consider the impacts of policies on women of different classes, races, sexual orientations, and territories (Brasil, 2024a). Thus, transversality is revealed not only as a technical strategy, but as an ethical and political commitment to transforming the structures that perpetuate exclusion and inequality. Without this commitment, actions aimed at gender equality tend to remain peripheral and

symbolic, far from the systemic transformations required by SDG 5 and the 1988 Constitution itself.

The Brazilian experience with intersectoral policies, such as the Network to Combat Violence against Women, highlights the potential of transversality when accompanied by federative coordination and institutional resources. Intersectorality, when associated with gender transversality, strengthens integrated responses, avoids policy fragmentation and expands the scope of public actions. The effectiveness of these strategies depends, however, on the State's capacity to integrate different spheres of government and policy areas, with a focus on human rights and combating structural inequalities (Bandeira; Almeida, 2013, p.11-14; Conteratto; Martins, 2016, p.9).

Furthermore, the analysis of these policies highlights the urgent need to improve systems for collecting and systematizing data disaggregated by gender and race, which are essential for measuring the effectiveness of government actions. Initiatives such as the Casa da Mulher Brasileira, the Women's Assistance Center (Ligue 180) and the Pró-Equidade Program represent significant institutional advances. However, the lack of consistent indicators for measuring their results compromises the assessment of the real impact of these initiatives on reducing structural injustices. Given this scenario, it is essential to develop strategies that ensure not only their formulation and implementation, but also permanent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, promoting structural transformations that go beyond formal normativity and produce concrete effects on the living conditions of the female population.

One of the main obstacles to implementing gender equity policies is precisely the lack of fiscal planning with a gender perspective. Budgetary structuring that takes gender asymmetries into account is essential to ensure the sustainability of actions aimed at women's empowerment. The scarcity of resources directly impacts the creation and maintenance of support services for victims of violence, the monitoring of equal pay laws, and the promotion of women's



participation in institutional spaces. Consequently, without clear budgetary guidelines, these policies tend to be discontinued or ineffectively implemented, limiting the achievement of the goals established by SDG 5 (Hofbauer; Vinay, 2012, p. 27-29). This mismatch between normative discourse and budgetary practice illustrates how the lack of fiscal redistribution weakens the concrete impact of recognition policies, as Fraser (2009) warns.

Furthermore, resource constraints compromise not only the expansion but also the quality of public services aimed at gender parity. This limitation directly affects the capacity to serve women in situations of violence, the enforcement of existing laws, and the implementation of training and inclusion programs in the labor market (Brazil, 2024). For these actions to be truly effective, an expanded government commitment and the allocation of specific and structural resources are essential.

Taxation can be an effective tool to promote material equality, encouraging business practices and public policies aimed at the inclusion of women in the labor market and society. Tax instruments can be used to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, highlighting their ability to induce behavioral and social changes through tax incentives and strategic regulations. In the context of gender equity, tax policies can be used to encourage the hiring of women, ensure equal pay, and encourage investment in programs that support women's participation in politics and the economy. Thus, when aligned with effective public policies, taxation can play a fundamental role in building a more equitable and inclusive society (Friedrich; Azeredo, 2024).

Despite regulatory and institutional advances, the 2024 Voluntary National Report highlights significant challenges in implementing public policies focused on gender justice. Political resistance to the redistribution of resources, regional inequality, and the absence of specific indicators to measure the impacts of gender policies are obstacles that limit the capacity for transformation of government actions. The lack of detailed regional metrics compromises the evaluation of policies

and makes it difficult to adopt necessary adjustments to improve their effectiveness. To overcome these obstacles, strengthening coordination between the different levels of government and expanding deliberative spaces are essential to ensure that public policies focused on gender justice are implemented more efficiently and in line with the goals of the 2030 Agenda (Brazil, 2024a).

Furthermore, measuring the impact of these policies still faces difficulties, since gender justice indicators are not always used efficiently to monitor progress and correct failures. Improving the collection and analysis of data on female participation in politics, wage gaps and gender-based violence is essential so that progress can be properly assessed and policies adjusted as necessary, since indicators of substantive gender equality are not always used efficiently to monitor progress and correct failures (Kronemberger, 2019).

According to the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), in 2024 women represented 52.47% of the Brazilian electorate (81,806,914 female voters), surpassing the number of men, who totaled 47.51% (74,076,997 voters). However, this numerical majority is not yet proportionally reflected in the occupation of elective positions. However, in the elections held that same year, only 12,331 women were elected, corresponding to 17.92% of the total number of elected candidates. In the case of mayors, 725 women were elected, which is equivalent to only 13.23% of the total number of elected mayors. In the position of deputy mayor, the percentage was 19.18%, with 1,051 women elected. In the municipal legislature, 10,555 women won seats in the Municipal Chambers, representing 18.24% of the total number of elected councilors (Brazil, 2024b).

To combat this historical exclusion, it is essential to implement measures that go beyond the criminalization of political violence. Creating incentives for female participation, strengthening support networks, and implementing political training programs for women are essential. In addition, it is necessary to ensure equal access and representation, ensuring that political exclusion does not continue to

be a factor in structural injustices. UN Women highlights the importance of supporting women's political participation in all spaces of power, formal and informal, ensuring their diversity and strengthening women's and feminist movements (UN Women, 2018). Only by strengthening women's democratic participation, the equitable distribution of resources, and recognizing the multiple forms of inequality will it be possible to achieve the goals of SDG 5 and the constitutional commitments made by Brazil to gender justice.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Brazil has made progress in implementing public policies aimed at gender equality, in line with the commitments made in the 2030 Agenda and the SDG 5 targets. Initiatives such as the Equal Pay Act, the expansion of the Women's Assistance Network, programs to protect menstrual dignity, and measures to curb political gender-based violence represent important institutional milestones. These policies indicate an effort by the Brazilian State to promote a normative and symbolic transformation that recognizes the inequalities historically imposed on women in the public and private spheres.

However, a critical analysis of these measures shows that, despite their importance, they still face significant barriers to their practical implementation. The lack of robust monitoring systems, insufficient public resources for their implementation, and the administrative discontinuity of many initiatives reveal structural weaknesses that limit the scope of gender policies. The wage gap persists as a concrete reality, and gender-based violence, in its multiple forms, continues to compromise the physical and symbolic integrity of women. Furthermore, the low political representation of women remains one of the main obstacles to the realization of an inclusive democracy.

In this context, Nancy Fraser's theory of justice offers a valuable insight to help us understand the limits and possibilities of Brazilian

public policies. Her proposal for social justice based on the articulation between redistribution, recognition and participation allows us to assess whether the State's actions promote structural transformations or remain restricted to palliative and compensatory measures. In particular, the dimension of participation is crucial: without ensuring that women from different social, ethnic and territorial contexts have an active voice in the formulation and monitoring of policies that affect them, government efforts tend to reproduce subtle forms of exclusion and injustice.

Fraser's approach shifts the focus from formal equality to parity of participation, understood as the possibility for all subjects covered by certain norms to intervene, on equal terms, in the processes that define such norms. In this sense, public policies that do not ensure the equal participation of women, especially the most vulnerable, compromise the legitimacy of state actions and weaken their potential for social transformation. Therefore, it is necessary to invest in permanent institutional mechanisms for listening, deliberation and social control, such as public policy councils, women's forums and ombudsman offices with a focus on gender.

Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that achieving SDG 5 targets in Brazil depends on a broader commitment to gender justice in its integral dimension. This implies the articulation of effective legal frameworks, structured public funding, appreciation of the diversity of women's experiences and strengthening of participatory democracy. The joint involvement of the State, civil society and the private sector is essential to build sustainable policies, oriented not only towards immediate results, but towards lasting changes that transform the social bases of gender asymmetries. Only in this way will it be possible to move towards a more just, democratic society that is sensitive to the various forms of oppression that affect Brazilian women.

An analysis of Brazilian public policies in light of SDG 5 reveals significant normative and institutional advances, but also highlights structural obstacles that limit their transformative capacity. From the

perspective of social justice proposed by Nancy Fraser, it becomes clear that addressing gender inequalities requires an approach that articulates, in an integrated manner, the dimensions of recognition, redistribution and democratic participation.

The enactment of laws such as the Equal Pay Act and the Act to Combat Political Gender-Based Violence represent important milestones, but the effectiveness of these regulations depends on their articulation with broad public policies, supported by adequate budget allocation, monitoring mechanisms and robust intersectoral governance. The lack of fiscal planning with a gender perspective, institutional fragmentation and the persistence of cultural and social barriers compromise the effectiveness of these measures.

Furthermore, the cross-cutting nature of gender equality is still a weakly implemented guideline, often treated as a peripheral issue in the government structure. The Brazilian experience shows that only by institutionalizing this perspective in all stages of the public policy cycle will it be possible to address the multiple layers of exclusion that affect women, especially those in situations of greater vulnerability.

Data on gender-based violence, pay gaps and political underrepresentation reinforce the need for a new paradigm for formulating and implementing public policies, based on substantive gender justice. This implies incorporating disaggregated indicators, encouraging women's active participation in decision-making spaces and overcoming welfare-based models that fail to address the structural causes of inequalities.

It is therefore concluded that achieving SDG 5 targets in Brazil requires more than formal compliance with international treaties or the creation of new laws. It requires a profound structural change in the way the State formulates, implements and evaluates its public policies, based on a concept of justice that recognizes historical inequalities, redistributes resources and opportunities, and promotes equal and democratic participation of women in all spheres of social life.

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## **Data Availability**

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