



Administração Pública e Gestão Social

ISSN: 2175-5787

revistaapgs@ufv.br

Universidade Federal de Viçosa

Brasil

Fernandes Furbino Bretas, Paula; Bastos Gomes Neto, Manoel; Maria Mota-Santos, Carolina  
BETWEEN SUITS, HEELS, AND SNEAKERS: aesthetics in the trajectory of a young woman in politics  
Administração Pública e Gestão Social, vol. 17, no. 3, 1077, 2025, July-September  
Universidade Federal de Viçosa  
Viçosa, Brasil

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=351582528010>

- ▶ How to cite
- ▶ Complete issue
- ▶ More information about this article
- ▶ Journal's webpage in redalyc.org

redalyc.org

Scientific Information System Redalyc

Diamond Open Access scientific journal network

Non-commercial open infrastructure owned by academia

# BETWEEN SUITS, HEELS, AND SNEAKERS: aesthetics in the trajectory of a young woman in politics

ENTRE TERNOS, SALTOS E TÊNIS: a estética na trajetória de uma jovem mulher na política

ENTRE TRAJES, TACONES Y ZAPATILLAS: la estética en la trayectoria de una joven mujer en la política

Paula Fernandes Furbino Bretas

Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brasil

<https://ror.org/03j1rr444>

paulaffb.doc@gmail.com

Manoel Bastos Gomes Neto

Universidade Federal do Cariri, Brasil

<https://ror.org/00a4xxf76>

neto26bastos@gmail.com

Carolina Maria Mota-Santos

Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais, Brasil

<https://ror.org/03j1rr444>

cmotasantos@gmail.com

Recepción: 12 Noviembre 2024

Aprobación: 02 Septiembre 2025

Publicación: 30 Septiembre 2025

## Abstract

**Context:** The case based on true events tells the story of Helena Franco, councilor and pre-candidate for state deputy. In the context of women in Brazilian politics, during her preparation for a day of commitments, she reflects on the demands of her appearance in her political trajectory.

**Dilemma:** Several moments are presented at work, inside and outside the plenary, in which the councilor experiences exhausting and violent situations regarding her aesthetics, body, identity, and private life. Although her trajectory is marked by resistance and overcoming, Helena faces the challenge of being recognized and respected for her identity, while preparing for the next elections.

**Closing:** Students are expected to be able to: a) identify elements that compose the aesthetic work; b) understand it in the political environment and its differences in relation to private companies; c) denaturalize inequalities in gender relations, specifically regarding the body and physical appearance; d) analyze situations of lookism alongside other oppressions.

**Keywords:** Women in politics. Appearance. Aesthetics. Aesthetic work. Lookism.

## Resumo

**Contexto:** O caso, baseado em fatos reais, conta a história de Helena Franco, vereadora e pré-candidata à deputada estadual. No contexto das mulheres na política brasileira, durante sua preparação para um dia de compromissos, reflete sobre as exigências de sua aparência na sua trajetória política.

**Dilema:** São apresentados diversos momentos no trabalho, dentro e fora do plenário, em que a vereadora vivencia situações desgastantes e violentas sobre a sua estética, corpo, identidade e vida privada. Ainda que sua trajetória seja marcada por resistência e superação, Helena enfrenta o desafio de ser reconhecida e respeitada por sua identidade, enquanto se prepara para as próximas eleições.

**Fechamento:** Busca-se que estudantes sejam capazes de: a) identificar elementos que compõem o trabalho estético; b) compreendê-lo no ambiente político e suas diferenças em relação às empresas privadas; c) desnaturalizar desigualdades nas relações de gênero, especificamente ao corpo e aparência física; d) analisar situações de *lookism* junto de outras opressões.

**Palavras-chaves:** Mulheres na política. Aparência. Estética. Trabalho estético. Discriminação estética.

## Resumen

**Contexto:** El caso basado en hechos reales cuenta la historia de Helena Franco, concejala y precandidata a diputada estatal. En el contexto de las mujeres en la política brasileña, durante su preparación para una jornada de compromisos, reflexiona sobre las exigencias de su aparición en su trayectoria política.

**Dilema:** Se presentan varios momentos en el trabajo, dentro y fuera del pleno, en los que la concejala vive situaciones agotadoras y violentas respecto a su estética, cuerpo, identidad y vida privada. Si bien su trayectoria está marcada por la resistencia y la superación, Helena enfrenta el desafío de ser reconocida y respetada por su identidad, mientras se prepara para las próximas elecciones.

**Cierre:** Se espera que los estudiantes sean capaces de: a) identificar elementos que componen la obra estética; b) comprenderlo en el entorno político y sus diferencias en relación con la empresa privada; c) desnaturalizar las desigualdades en las relaciones de género, específicamente en lo que respecta al cuerpo y la apariencia física; d) analizar situaciones de lookismo junto con otras opresiones.

**Palabras clave:** Mujeres en la política. Apariencia. Estética. Trabajo estético. Discriminación estética.

## Introduction

This teaching case narrates the real life story of Helena Franco, elected as the youngest city councilor in Salvador's Municipal Chamber for the 2021–2024 term and a pre-candidate for the State Legislature in Bahia, alongside her closest advisor, João. Throughout the case, moments inside and outside the council chambers are presented in which the councilor experiences situations related to her aesthetics, body, identity, and private life. It is worth noting that certain details have been altered to preserve the anonymity of this public figure.

As she prepares for a demanding day filled with appointments, including a speech about her public life, she reflects on the social expectations of her appearance that have shaped her political trajectory. These reflections emerge through interactions with various secondary characters, such as fellow councilors, public employees—including chamber security staff and officials' secretaries—social media followers, her advisors, friends, and even herself. In this process, she identifies a central dilemma: How can I make others see me as I want to be seen? Considering my political platform, what policies could I propose to mitigate the barriers women face in politics related to appearance? And within my daily activities in the Chamber, could I foster change by advancing practices and organizational policies?

The case contributes to critical reflection on the regulation of women's appearance within organizational environments, where political work is also a form of labor. It enables the problematization of discriminatory dynamics within public organizations embedded in the political sphere—such as city councils, legislative assemblies, the Senate, and Congress—and their consequences for marginalized social groups. Finally, it encourages students to recognize the significance of social dimensions in this administrative context and to explore possible solutions through organizational practices and public policies.

## Context: Women in Brazilian Politics

The organization of the Brazilian state is based on three branches of government: the Legislative, the Executive, and the Judiciary<sup>iii</sup>. The Legislative branch is responsible for legislating and overseeing the actions of the Executive. At the federal level, it is composed of federal deputies and senators; at the state level, of state deputies; and at the municipal level, of city councilors. The Executive branch is exercised by public authorities responsible for administrative functions, namely: the president at the federal level, governors at the state level, and mayors at the municipal level. The Judiciary is responsible for applying the law, resolving conflicts, and ensuring the individual, collective, and social rights of all citizens. It is composed of magistrates—such as judges, appellate judges, and supreme court justices—as well as other professionals, including public prosecutors, state attorneys, public defenders, and lawyers.

Although women represent more than half of the national electorate, the political arena remains predominantly male, and women remain underrepresented across the three branches of government. Women's participation in Brazilian politics is the result of a long trajectory of struggles that began in the nineteenth century. It was only in 1932, during the government of Getúlio Vargas, that a decree granted women the right to vote, following intense mobilization by feminist leaders in Brazil. Women's suffrage was formally enshrined in the 1934 Constitution<sup>iv</sup>. Sixty years later, in 1994, Brazil elected its first female governor in the state of Maranhão<sup>v</sup>. In 2010, Dilma Rousseff became the first woman to hold the presidency, marking a significant milestone in female political representation<sup>vi</sup>.

The first gender quota policy in Brazilian politics was implemented in 1995<sup>vii</sup>, establishing a minimum of 20% of party list candidacies reserved for women, according to Law No. 9,100/1995. Two years later, in 1997<sup>viii</sup>, this percentage was raised to 30% under Law No. 9,504/1997. Even with these quota policies, nearly three decades later, the Brazilian political landscape still faces significant challenges in furthering gender equality. The effective integration of women into political spaces continues to be hindered by structural and cultural barriers that limit their participation and career progression. These obstacles sustain gender disparities in political power and highlight the need for policies aimed at overcoming inequality and expanding women's inclusion in the political

arena<sup>ix</sup>. Therefore, reflecting on the political and work environment in which these women operate is crucial in the Brazilian context of gender inequality—an environment that forms the backdrop of Helena Franco’s story.

## The story of a woman in politics

Salvador, May 9, 2022, 7:12 a.m. Helena Franco—historian, city councilor, and pre-candidate for the state legislature—was preparing for the first day of a long week filled with meetings and debates leading up to that year’s elections. After finishing her makeup, putting on her high heels, and sitting on the bed to take advantage of the few minutes left to check her schedule and update her social media, she received a notification that her advisor was already waiting for her. Concerned about traffic or the possibility of unforeseen events along the way, she grabbed her white suit and headed downstairs to the lobby.

Seated in the front passenger seat while her advisor drove, after a few minutes of conversation, she began to mentally rehearse the speech she would deliver later that day to present her political trajectory and her pre-candidacy to potential supporters. However, her mind soon flooded with memories of the several situations that had shaped her journey—recalling the early struggles, the looks of mistrust, the comments about being “too young” and “inexperienced,” how her public image was questioned, and how her private life had been invaded on several occasions.

## Character presentation: Helena Franco

Born in Salvador, the capital of the state of Bahia, Helena Franco is a 26-year-old cisgender Black bisexual woman from Brazil’s Northeast region and a feminist. She holds a degree in History from the Federal University of Bahia. Currently, she serves as a city councilor affiliated with a left-wing party and was elected at just 22 years old, becoming the youngest woman in history to join Salvador’s City Council.

Her political trajectory began at the age of 15, when she became involved in the reactivation of her school’s student union. Through the student movement, Helena engaged with and later joined a national youth collective. She also played a key role in coordinating the Brazilian Union of Secondary Students (UBES) and participated in various grassroots movements. During her undergraduate studies, she assumed the position of coordinator of the Central Student Directory (DCE).

Later, she became active in the feminist movement and the World March of Women—a global campaign against poverty and violence against women. She eventually joined the National Black Youth Collective (ENEGRECER), a nationwide autonomous movement that provides a space for political organizing and training around racial equality.

Within the Municipal Chamber, in her first year of office, she became leader of the opposition caucus. She currently serves on the Commission for Education, Culture, Science, Technology, and Innovation, and is also part of the Commissions on (i) Urban Planning, Environment, and Housing, and (ii) Human Rights, Women, Older Persons, Labor, and Equality. Over her three and a half years in office, she has authored and co-authored numerous projects and bills focused on youth, women, Black communities, the LGBTQIAPN+ population, and the environment.

## The (Trans)formation of Helena’s visual identity up to the City Council

The visual trajectory of Helena toward the elections began long before her candidacy. At the age of 18, she had long hair, and it was not uncommon for people to make comments assuming she was heterosexual. However, Helena wanted to affirm her homosexual identity through her appearance and decided to do so by cutting her hair short. That was her first political change of image.

Four years later, Helena was elected as a city councilor in 2020. She woke up the morning after the election with a lingering hangover feeling from the previous day's adrenaline. She was receiving multiple invitations for interviews with local newspapers and for her presence at events. Without a team and unsure of what to wear, she called a friend:

— *Friend, I'm so happy with the election results, but now what? I don't even have "councilor clothes," only student clothes.*

— *Helena, honestly... I think you need some more formal blouses. I have the perfect one and I can lend it to you. Remember those pants of Joana's that you like? I think she could lend them to you, too.*

— *Wow! Great idea! And you also have that more conservative dress. Can you lend me that as well?*

— *Of course, Helena. I'll bring it to you. But I think you also need a blazer, right? I always see those politicians wearing more formal clothes...*

— *I hadn't even thought of that. For sure, I'll need a blazer. But not black! I'll look for a different one to buy. It has to be something that matches me, right?*

She ended up buying a white blazer, which she has worn ever since. At that moment, the young councilor realized she was facing issues that were probably not a concern for her male colleagues, as the appearance standards in the City Council were built around formality, masculinity, and men. Thus, male colleagues wearing suits, ties, shirts, and dress pants always fit neatly into the constructed norm. However, for women, there was no single standard to meet this formality: they could wear blazers, long-sleeved blouses, short-sleeved ones, and so on. Helena reflected:

— *When we women enter this space shaped by such a standard, we need to follow that formality [which is, above all, masculine]. And for us, women, that formality also has to be feminine. So, when we step into this space, which is masculine and masculinized, we are pressured not to lose our femininity. So this beauty standard is not only formal but also feminine. We are expected to wear makeup, high heels, and ultimately to display femininity.*

Even though Helena had spoken with her friends about her clothing and her imminent role as councilor, her visibility as the youngest elected councilor put her under public scrutiny. Helena spoke with her advisor, João:

— *Did you see the report that just came out? I haven't even taken office yet...*

— *Yes, I did... they're articles with biting remarks about your appearance...*

— *How can they insinuate that I had a complete makeover once I was elected, that I went on a shopping spree?! Honestly, most of my clothes are borrowed from friends. I can only laugh at this...*

— *The worst part is, I think this is only the beginning, Helena. The articles are sensationalist, aiming to attack your image as a legislator. They're questioning your decision to abandon casual clothes and adopt a more formal style, as if you had betrayed your identity.*

The article stated that she was drawing attention in the City Council not for her work, but for the "shopping spree" she supposedly went on. In the photo, Helena was side by side with a colleague, raising her arm with a clenched fist in a protest gesture. She was dressed in an orange cotton blouse and white high-waisted jeans, in an outdoor city setting, without any sign of luxury. The article and the comments read:

— *She's become a "Snowflake councilor"; in just a few days of "power" she's already developed a taste for fashion.*

— *Excerpt taken from the news article.*

— *If that's a shopping spree, I can only imagine the disaster that she used to be. — Comment posted by an anonymous individual.*

The article and the dozens of comments contained insults and jokes directed at the councilor and her fellow party members. And she had not even entered the plenary yet.

## Challenging conventions: the arrival of a young councilwoman in the City Council

In the heart of the city, where historic buildings blended with modern constructions, stood the City Council. The building stood out for its grandeur—a stage where the voices of the community echoed, or at least should

have echoed. It was in this traditional setting that the young councilwoman found her place. Helena was a figure who stood apart from political traditionalism. Her short, loose hair, and vivid smile, combined with clothes that reflected her youth, stood in stark contrast to the black and white suits and ties of her fellow councilors.

It was January 7, 2021, the day of the first municipal session, when local press, advisors, councilors, the mayor, and citizens gathered to mark the beginning of the city's new mandate. The passport for entry into the chamber was an identification badge, required only for advisors and certain members of the press. Political representatives, such as councilors and the mayor, were recognized without the need for such markers.

Hours before the event, Helena was at home, speaking with her advisor about the need to dress according to the expected standard for the occasion. She was visibly uncomfortable:

— *But João, masculinity defines a standardized model of appearance and dress among men, which makes it easier for them to conform to the aesthetic norm.*

— *Helena, now you are a councilwoman. You'll need to dress according to the occasion. It's difficult for me to say this, since I've known you for so many years, but I know you can add a feminine touch that is uniquely yours...*

— *The problem is that this puts pressure on women to follow the same standard of formality, while at the same time demanding our femininity—makeup, hair, nails, high heels... It's as if we're required to fit into both molds no matter what.*

Even though she disagreed, Helena complied and chose the "councilor's outfit" for the occasion. However, all her preparation was not enough. Her profile was not immediately recognized as that of a people's representative. When she attempted to enter the session, she was stopped and blocked by the security guards.

— *Where is your badge? Advisors and press only with a badge!* — stated the guard, preventing her entry.

— *I am Councilwoman Helena. I don't need a badge.*

The guard's hesitation was evident. Another councilor, noticing what had happened, intervened and introduced the young councilwoman. Although quickly resolved, the situation served as a reminder that her identity was not acknowledged in that space. The embarrassment would become a motivator in her struggle to challenge entrenched norms and to promote greater diversity of identities in the political environment.

## Appearance and Work: A Parliamentarian Woman Beyond the Plenary

The beginning of her term was anything but easy. In addition to her schedule within the City Council, Helena also had to attend meetings in various other spaces of power. On one of her first visits to the Department of Education, she was asked:

— *Are you here to apply for the internship?*

After hearing this, she looked at herself and realized that, on that day, she was wearing sneakers and jeans. She was not dressed as one would expect a councilwoman to be: dress pants and high heels. She reflected to herself:

— *My identity is connected to our political project. I want to maintain my identity as a young woman. Am I supposed to be a "young parliamentarian" according to old standards? NO!! I want to keep my youthful identity, even while serving as a councilwoman.*

Another environment that made her particularly concerned about her clothing was the military sphere, connected to security. Being spaces dominated by men, marked by the authority of colonels and generals, and as a young woman meeting with this elite of power, she thought three times before choosing any outfit. The discomfort she felt was not towards the clothes themselves, but rather towards the looks her appearance would draw in that context and setting.

Still, Helena did not let herself be discouraged. She understood that in order to be heard and respected in those environments, she needed to adapt to expectations. It was not a matter of pleasing others, but rather an affirmation of her commitment to the office she held. She adjusted her clothing depending on the space she was in: more informal in her office, but always keeping her white blazer at hand in case she had to go to the plenary—the most formal setting of the Council—or other similar spaces.

Over time, Helena discovered a new facet of herself. She realized that heels were necessary, but not in every situation—and that they could be more comfortable, such as block heels rather than stilettos. She decided to use heels to her advantage: when she felt the need to assert herself more as a woman and as a professional, she would put on a pair of heels. At a City Council event, Helena spoke with another councilwoman:

— *The more we enter environments dominated by men, the greater the need to wear heels, right? Is it the same for you?*

— *Yes, yes... And you even dare to wear sneakers on some occasions. I can't bring myself to do that yet. Maybe one day? I don't know, but I'm afraid of people talking too much, like they gossip about that colleague of ours... But I must admit, these heels are killing me!*

— *On an occasion like today, wearing sneakers would make it harder for me to assert myself in this male-dominated space. So, wearing heels ends up being a way for us to claim our place here. But I'm glad to hear you say "maybe one day" about sneakers!*

She not only felt empowered but also increasingly recognized as a legitimate voice in that political arena. Yet Helena knew that when her colleague referred to the other councilwoman, she was speaking about a lesbian, right-wing woman who did not dress in a traditionally feminine way:

— *It is very common for people to say that she looks sloppy, that she doesn't conduct herself properly, and so on—all because she does not fit this femininity profile. She doesn't wear high heels. Things like that. So, in this space, for us... being elegant, being formal, means being feminine, being well put together. Well presented. It's quite complicated.*

Helena found ways to incorporate her unique personality. Small details, such as her white blazer, a printed blouse, or sneakers in her daily routine, became her signature—reminding everyone that she was still the same young woman who had entered politics with well-defined ideals. Her dressing style was also an affirmation of her individuality. While her fellow councilors chose sober suits, Helena displayed vibrant prints and bright colors, defying expectations of what a politician should wear. Yet, this authenticity came at a cost.

The young councilwoman became the target of criticism on social media for her fashion choices, from her haircut to her colorful clothes. Mocking nicknames about her bangs and comments on her appearance did not bother her as much as the fact that her message could be overshadowed by them. In one debate on the mayor's failure to comply with the teachers' salary cap, what drew the most attention in the video was her haircut. This upset her. It was as if all her effort, all her work, and that of her team were in vain.

Due to this, Helena carefully reviewed every Instagram story before posting, even though this had already become part of her daily work routine. She and her team were always careful with the posting of her photos in general, but she personally checked the positioning of the text in her stories so that it would not appear near parts of her body, such as her chest.

— *João, look at this... I'm about to post this story, is it okay?! Is it showing too much of my body?*

— *Relax, Helena. It looks great! You've reviewed this five times already... It's just a story!*

— *Ah... I don't know... I'm really paranoid about this. Like, when I write a sentence, where should I put it? Because if it's too close to my cleavage, people will think I placed it there just to draw attention to my chest, you know? So it's like this permanent care, always having to think about it, you know?*

— *With everything you've been through, Helena, I think your concern is natural. Come on, just post it and move on!*

Helena also worried about her haircut—not because of the comments on social media, but out of concern that she might not be recognized in moments close to the elections, since changes in appearance could lead voters to fail to identify her as the candidate who had worked so hard in the previous term.

Despite these negative experiences, as her term advanced, Helena became an inspiration to fellow councilwomen who occasionally wore sneakers and would come to her saying: *"Look at how I dressed today! I'm wearing sneakers!"* She was glad to inspire other women to seek comfort in the workplace. Still, this did not prevent her from continuing to face uncomfortable situations, especially within the plenary, her main workplace.

## Plenary: a space marked by the (absence of) formality

The parliamentary environment, which should be guided by formality, respect, and professionalism in discussing the population’s demands, has already been the scene of numerous exhausting and even violent situations regarding Helena’s image, body, identity, and private life. Early in her term, during the pandemic and the virtual City Council sessions, when she entered the room with braids in her hair to debate and vote on a bill, the council president paused the meeting and asked who was using the councilwoman’s computer.

— *It’s me, President. Councilwoman Helena.* — she replied, trying to remain calm despite her growing irritation.

This situation was not a technical error. The braid—a symbol of identity for Black women—had become an obstacle to Helena’s visibility and recognition as a legitimate legislative representative. Her assistant, who also wore braids, was abruptly stopped by a security guard while hurrying through the corridors of the Council. Without providing any convincing explanation, the guard demanded to search her bag. She knew this did not happen to any other employee, as it was not a routine procedure.

Another notable episode occurred during a popular demonstration at the Council. Helena and a fellow councilor approached the legislative police to mediate conflicts. At the height of the conversation, one of the officers addressed her as “*madam*”, completely ignoring her and mocking her authority as a councilwoman. It was a frustrating moment that reminded her that, for many, the image of a young, visibly non-white woman still did not fit the stereotype of a political representative.

A particularly painful incident happened when a councilor commented on a bikini photo she had shared. For Helena, the beach was her backyard. It was part of her daily routine and helped her relax from exhausting work and study schedules. Sharing these happy moments on social media felt natural. However, during a session, a fellow councilor, speaking loudly in the plenary, stated that he had zoomed in on the intimate parts of her beach photo.

— *Ah, I loved your photo, but I could hardly resist. I zoomed in to see it better.*

Although she was used to facing jokes, sarcasm, and comments from websites and constituents about her beach photos, hearing this remark inside the Council chamber was uncomfortable. She was left momentarily speechless and questioned her own behavior: “*Do I need to stop posting beach photos because of other people’s comments?*” For a few seconds, she even wondered if the problem was herself for receiving a comment that made her feel exposed and vulnerable.

## The Colored Dot Dilemma: Seeking Recognition in a Sea of Conformity

Upon arriving at her destination, Helena took a deep breath, feeling nervous about her speech and overwhelmed by so many memories in such a short period. As she stepped out of the car, still unrecognized, she saw dozens of guests arriving for the event—all wearing dark suits, mostly men. She hesitated. Turning her gaze back to the car, she saw her reflection in the window. She felt like a small colored dot amidst a sea of black dots. Firmly gripping her white blazer, she tried to hide the sweat on her hands caused by the dilemma occupying her mind:

— *How can we make others see us the way we want to be seen? Considering my political platform, what public policies can I propose to mitigate the barriers women face in politics related to appearance? And, in my daily work at the Council, can I do anything to change this reality through organizational practices and policies?*

Currently, according to data from the General Consultancy of the Chamber of Deputies, women’s presence at the municipal level has increased by two percentage points since 2020, and in 2024, they represent 17.92% of elected representatives (mayors and councilors). Furthermore, according to data from the Superior Electoral Court (TSE)<sup>x</sup> reported by Senado Notícias, the results of the 2022 general elections (for deputies, senators, and governors) show that women hold 17% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies, 12% of Senate seats, and 7% of governorships.

It is worth noting that women's participation in politics is part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5<sup>xi</sup>, which aims to *“achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”* in the 2030 Global Compact. Beyond *“ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls”*, it also seeks to *“ensure full and effective participation of women and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.”* Considering these issues, it is crucial to problematize the potential roles of councilwomen at the organizational and political-institutional levels, with the aim of promoting gender equality.

## Teaching Notes

These teaching notes are intended for the exclusive use of instructors, providing information on the construction of the case and pedagogical suggestions to guide classroom activities. As these are recommendations, instructors have the autonomy to modify the pedagogical approach according to their educational context and teaching objectives.

## Teaching Objectives

This case allows for the discussion of topics related to human rights, ethnic-racial and gender relations, diversity management, gender inequality in the workplace, moral and sexual harassment, women in politics, public policies, and misogyny on social media. It is suitable for undergraduate programs such as Public Administration, Management, Administration, Human Resources, Marketing, and Public Relations, as well as for graduate programs such as Political Marketing and Electoral Campaigns, and other fields related to management and business. Suggested courses for application of the case include: Organizations, Gender, and Race; Contemporary Topics in Public Administration and Social Management; Human Resource Management; Work and Gender; Diversity; Public Policy; Public Management.

The objectives are for students to understand knowledge about aesthetic labor, gender inequalities in the workplace, and appearance-based discrimination; to develop analytical skills for comparing organizational environments in the public and private sectors, as well as to propose practices and policies to address social problems; and to cultivate sensitivity towards social issues in public and social administration. Specifically, students are expected to be able to:

- a) Identify how the regulation of workers' appearance occurs in public organizations and political settings;
- b) Compare how aesthetic labor operates in the political environment and its differences from private companies;
- c) Deconstruct inequalities in gender relations, particularly those experienced by women in politics regarding their bodies and physical appearance;
- d) Identify situations of appearance-based discrimination (lookism) alongside other forms of oppression such as racism and sexism;
- e) Propose rules, regulations, practices, and/or policies in the context of organizations and public policy.

## Sources and Data Collection Methods

The data were obtained through a semi-structured interview with a parliamentarian. Primary information was recorded and transcribed to facilitate the analysis of the character's narrative and the construction of the case. Secondary data were also used, including materials provided by the parliamentarian's advisor and news articles covering the parliamentarian in relation to gender relations and physical appearance. Additionally, publicly available information from the Superior Electoral Court (TSE), the Senate Agency, the Chamber of Deputies, relevant legislation, and news on the Brazilian political context was utilized. Data collection occurred during the

first semester of 2024. Names, locations, and chronology were altered to preserve anonymity. The final version of the case was submitted to the parliamentarian and her advisors for review, evaluation, and approval.

## Discussion Questions

**Question 1: Which elements of Helena’s appearance are regulated in her work context as a city councilor in the Municipal Chamber?**

The regulation of appearance in the workplace is part of the discussion on aesthetic labor and lookism, or appearance-based discrimination, as proposed by Warhurst and Nickson (2020). A group of researchers in the United Kingdom argues that employers use aesthetic labor to appropriate, monitor, and manage workers’ physical appearance and other embodied dispositions (Witz et al., 2003). The authors draw on Bourdieu’s concept of habitus to understand that embodied dispositions include language, clothing, mannerisms, and other bodily capacities, which are taught and reproduced within the same social class (Warhurst & Nickson, 2020). Thus, within each organization, there exists a “good appearance” or “appropriate look” and a “proper way of speaking,” which are established as requirements in hiring processes and are also monitored and developed through training and rewards in the workplace (Warhurst & Nickson, 2020).

In the case at hand, although there were no aesthetic requirements in the hiring process given that it is a public organization, even before entering the Municipal Chamber, Helena expressed to her friends a concern regarding not having clothing suitable for the Council’s level of formality. Even when wearing “councilor attire”—social clothes in neutral colors—during her first plenary session she was stopped by security, who did not recognize her as a parliamentarian and demanded that she wear the identification badge intended for advisors and the press. In this sense, she was not presenting the “appropriate appearance” as understood within that organization. The security guard’s action in barring her functioned as a form of appearance monitoring, which is part of aesthetic labor (Warhurst & Nickson, 2020).

When Helena attended the meeting at the Department of Education and was asked whether she was there to apply for an internship, this can also be analyzed as a form of monitoring and control of aesthetic labor regarding her appearance (Warhurst & Nickson, 2020). The comment could have referred solely to her clothing or also to her identity as a young woman, which aligns with studies by Duncan and Loretto (2004), Jyrkinen and McKie (2012), and Lämsä et al. (2023), showing that appearance-based discrimination can disproportionately affect younger women by minimizing their competences.

Beyond clothing, the case also addresses hair as an element of appearance. Before becoming a councilor, Helena regulated her appearance by changing her hairstyle to affirm her homosexual identity, which is part of her political platform. Long hair is stereotypically associated with a heterosexual appearance, so she cut her hair short to distance herself from that identity. Trusty et al. (2023) highlight how hairstyles and hair are important for identity. Although their study focuses on Black individuals, the symbolic significance of hair allows a parallel to be drawn with homosexual identity, which is also part of a marginalized group. Trusty et al. (2023) further explore how hairstyles and hair can be targets of workplace prejudice. This is exemplified in the online Council session when the president asked who was using the councilor’s computer, not recognizing Helena because of her braids.

Warhurst and Nickson (2020) argue that aesthetic labor has been studied from the perspective of human senses, with a focus on vision since appearance is particularly salient. Organizations frequently appropriate workers’ appearance for their benefit or reputation. This is exemplified when Helena, already a public figure working in the Municipal Chamber, was exposed to media commentary regarding her appearance, such as a report claiming she drew more attention for a “makeover” than her work. Another instance occurred during a story about the mayor failing to meet the teachers’ salary cap, where the most noticeable aspect in the video was her haircut. These examples demonstrate how the reputation of an organization can be affected since commentary about the councilwoman reflects on the work of parliamentarians in the Chamber.

Helena was also concerned about her haircut to ensure she would be recognized close to elections. Changes in appearance could prevent voters from identifying her as the candidate who had worked so hard in the previous term. In this sense, appearance is understood as a competence (Warhurst & Nickson, 2020)—the ability to be recognized as a political actor.

Finally, Warhurst and Nickson (2007, p.132) argue that within this theme, both rewards and penalties exist depending on whether individuals conform to definitions of “appropriate or attractive appearance” versus “inappropriate appearance.” The discomfort Helena felt during meetings with military officials reflects a penalty imposed on her for being outside what is considered normal and appropriate. Conversely, she also received rewards when she conformed to expected standards, feeling more empowered when wearing heels. Maconachie and Sappey (2011) argue that physical capital can provide psychosocial rewards to individuals.

Question 2: How can lookism be identified in this case? Are there other discriminatory barriers present in the context of this public organization?

Appearance management for organizational benefit or reputation within aesthetic labor operates by selecting a standard of appearance that can have the effect of marginalizing already excluded social groups, such as Black women, plus-size individuals, people with disabilities, migrants, homosexuals, and others. This appearance-based discrimination, also known as lookism, emerges as a form of discrimination within aestheticized workplaces (Warhurst et al., 2009). Research on lookism generally addresses two or more forms of oppression that operate simultaneously and interdependently. Ageism and sexism in the workplace often result in women being perceived as either too young, as occurred with Helena, or too old within the organizational environment (Duncan & Loretto, 2004), which limits their professional opportunities. This phenomenon becomes further aggravated with lookism, as women are not only evaluated based on their age but also on appearing “too old” (Kaufmann et al., 2016). Consequently, women maintain constant concerns about beauty, body image, and concealing their age, alongside careful monitoring to “not send the wrong signal” (McKie & Jyrkinen, 2017). Helena’s continuous concern regarding her Instagram stories illustrates this self-monitoring within the political context.

Another interaction occurs between racism, sexism, and lookism. Black women experience hair-related prejudice in the workplace (Trusty et al., 2023) when choosing to wear natural hairstyles. In the United States, this constitutes a form of subtle racial discrimination, as Black women may be hired, but preference is given to those with lighter skin and straighter hair, highlighting the link between racism and lookism. In Brazil, Lage and Souza (2017) noted that darker-skinned Black women were dismissed even when they outperformed lighter-skinned Black women. They also noted that organizations required all female employees to maintain straightened hair, effectively enforcing a uniform standard. Opie and Phillips (2015) argue that women with natural hair are often perceived as more aggressive and less professional, a perception rooted in historical slavery contexts. Asare (2022) identifies four forms of hair-based workplace prejudice: discriminatory policies (dress codes, hygiene policies, etc.), hiring biases, microaggressions (touching hair, asking about hair), and unfair treatment.

In addition to this subtle racism and appearance-based discrimination, explicit acts of social injustice also occur against individuals with racial stigmas (Goffman, 2001). When Helena’s assistant, who wears braids, has her bag searched by legislative police, and whenever Helena is stopped by security, they are experiencing discrimination, as these situations are not routine for other workers or councilors in the Chamber. The act of searching Black individuals’ bags or barring them from spaces of power reflects underlying beliefs that: (1) these individuals are inherently prone to misconduct; and (2) they do not legitimately belong in that space. This exposes Black people to embarrassing situations rooted in racial prejudice and stereotypes.

To combat lookism at the institutional level (Jones et al., 2024), municipalities and states in several countries (U.S., U.K., France, Australia) have enacted legislation against appearance-based discrimination (Cavico et al., 2013; Barth & Wagner, 2017). In Brazil, Law No. 9,029/95 prohibits all forms of discrimination in a non-exhaustive list but does not specifically address this type of discrimination. However, physical appearance is included in Bill 6,653/2009, although the Chamber of Deputies has yet to conclude the legislative process.

Finally, at the level of public organizations, hiring processes with aesthetic requirements (Jones et al., 2024) are not the primary focus for combating lookism as in private companies. However, the case illustrates that some public organizations practice appearance regulation and lookism through formal and informal dress codes and behavioral standards (Baumann et al., 2016). Since lookism can trigger harassment, such regulations may also inform strategies for prevention and reparation, exemplified by Complementary Law 179/2025 of the Legislative Assembly of Minas Gerais, which aims to punish and curb harassment practices in the state public service. Additionally, awareness among women themselves is necessary, as gender inequalities are often normalized, leading to self-monitoring of appearance (McKie & Jyrkinen, 2017).

**Question 3: What gender inequalities are observed in this case? Why are these inequalities not natural?**

Scott (1995) argues that when we examine relationships between men and women, as well as among men and among women, there are a series of meanings and interpretations that are constructed and reproduced to sustain positions of power. Thus, gender inequalities are maintained based on perceived differences between the sexes, often justified biologically for cultural phenomena, which serves to naturalize social relations. Therefore, when feminist movements fight for rights, they are also contesting the social meanings attached to femininity, revealing the negative attributes imposed on women in social life.

The first and most evident gender inequality in this case concerns women's access to political space. The limited number of women in politics demonstrates that this socially valued space is perceived as legitimate for men. Kergoat (2009) defines this phenomenon as the sexual division of labor, which allocates socially valued positions to men while relegating women to care-related professions. While men occupy the productive sphere, women are directed towards the reproductive sphere. Kergoat (2009, p. 67) identifies two organizing principles of these practices: separation (some jobs are for men, others for women) and hierarchy (men's work "counts" more than women's work). However, since these are social relations, they are socially constructed and therefore changeable.

As the public political space has historically been constructed and occupied by white, heterosexual, property-owning men since ancient Greece, it is expected that "normal" aesthetics are defined from a male perspective, which positions itself as neutral and rational in modern science (Machado, 1994). This is evident in Helena's story through the male social dress code adopted in the Chamber, namely: black suit and trousers. Thus, what deviates from this norm is socially sanctioned by power that disciplines bodies, making them compliant (Foucault, 2013). In this case, the suit and trousers, which are masculine attire popularized with the rise of the bourgeoisie (Cotta & Farage, 2021), constitute a normative standard in the political space. Deviations, such as feminine clothing—colorful, patterned, fluid, with varied cuts, such as those worn by Helena—are seen as divergences. Therefore, work attire is not neutral; it is political, serving as a tool that amplifies gender inequality (Cotta & Farage, 2021). Helena's concern with clothing details to conform to professional expectations, while male colleagues do not experience such pressure, is not natural but rather reflects an unequal gender structure that reinforces male privilege in public spaces.

In a sexist country such as Brazil, where rape victims are often blamed for violence based on their clothing and behavior, there is an attempt to naturalize the idea that men cannot control their sexual impulses and that women are born to serve them both sexually and through domestic and care labor. Nonetheless, various academic fields have sought to understand the patriarchal gender structure (Saffioti, 2004) as a symbolic logic privileging hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013), where subjects are socialized through violence and reproduce this violence in domestic, urban, and workplace spaces (Welzer-Lang, 2001). Since it is culturally constructed, however, it is changeable and allows for alternative masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2013). Thus, these are not natural but socially produced gender inequalities. Helena's concern regarding whether her Instagram stories were too revealing near her chest or using a bikini in a post reflects such inequalities. The embarrassment she experienced when a male colleague zoomed in on her bikini photo constitutes sexual harassment through the creation of a hostile environment according to the International Labour Organization (ILO,

2018). Helena is also subject to sexual harassment when threatened with corrective rape in the workplace, a situation of sexual violence.

Furthermore, Freitas (2001) argues that in a not-so-distant past in Brazil, women working outside the home environment were culturally labeled as “sluts”, a perception that continues to influence women’s subjectivity today. Despite advances from feminist movements in striving to occupy positions of power, women are often not recognized as belonging to these social spaces and must, in some way, be legitimized by others. Saffioti (2004) reflects on how ideology materially affects the body: the category of women, with individual exceptions, is expected to maintain a modest posture and speak softly. Conversely, a deep, masculine voice signifies power. This may explain the need for assertiveness experienced by Helena and her strategy of wearing high heels and managing her appearance in different contexts to achieve such authority.

**Question 4:** Based on the case and the suggested prior readings, what differences exist between the theory of aesthetic labor in private organizations and in public organizations, such as a City Council?

The earliest studies on aesthetic labor were conducted in the retail and hospitality sectors, in spaces such as bars, hotels, nightclubs, and luxury stores (Witz et al., 2003; Warhurst & Nickson, 2007). However, researchers found that other service-oriented companies, which involved direct interaction between workers and clients, also sought to manage the attractiveness of their employees. It was therefore not long before the public sector was also studied as a locus of aesthetic labor, such as the search for more attractive traffic officers in China and changes in uniforms, self-esteem management, and diversity among officers in Denmark (Warhurst & Nickson, 2020).

In the public sector, however, there are additional purposes, such as diversity management and improving the organization’s perception by society (Dahl, 2014; Warhurst & Nickson, 2020). In this sense, Warhurst and Nickson (2020) argue that a common principle of aesthetic labor across private and public organizations is the use of the worker’s physicality for organizational benefit, regardless of whether there is an employer figure dictating organizational strategies, extending the notion of benefit to include organizational image and reputation beyond profit.

In Helena’s story, there was no hiring process in which appearance was a formal requirement. Nor was there an employer or HR department establishing written rules, training, or financial rewards based on appearance. This does not mean that expectations regarding an appropriate appearance for a councilor, and its corresponding monitoring and control, were nonexistent. Rather, the social norm of appearance and behavior in the City Council is embedded in the practices and discourses of multiple actors, including security guards and legislative police, public employees, the media, internet users, and society at large. This way of understanding aesthetic labor in public organizations, beyond the private company context, resembles Foucault’s concept of capillary and productive power (2014), where power is neither prohibitive nor possessed, but exercised in disciplinary relations in which bodies are regulated to conform to a norm (Foucault, 2013).

## Suggested pre-readings

The instructor will provide students with the following suggested pre-readings, referenced at the end of these teaching notes: Dahl (2014), Lämsä et al. (2023), Scott (1995), Trusty et al. (2023), and Warhurst et al. (2009).

## Possible classroom organization for case use

Preparation: To use the case in class, aiming to assess the level of student discussion and enhance knowledge regarding gender relations—especially regarding women’s bodies and physical appearance in politics—the instructor should provide the suggested pre-readings at least two class sessions in advance. During class, it is

recommended that the instructor present only the case and the suggested questions. If necessary, new questions may be drafted and provided by the instructor prior to the session.

**Application:** The instructor should integrate the narrative of the case with the theory covered in the course. The case can be applied individually (with an open discussion for the entire class) or in smaller teams of 3 to 5 members, followed by an open discussion with all groups. The case is suggested to be addressed within 100 minutes (2 class hours), beginning with 20 minutes for a brief presentation of the case, explanation of the discussion dynamics, and the evaluation method. In the following 60 minutes, the instructor should encourage student participation and discussion, with students prepared with responses to the questions. It is recommended that each question be discussed for approximately 12 to 15 minutes. In the final 20 minutes, the instructor should close the session by summarizing the discussion, highlighting key points, and connecting them to the relevant theory.

**Evaluation:** It is recommended that the instructor establish criteria, whether for individual or group assessment, such as: submission of written answers to the proposed questions; participation in case discussions; relevance and connection of responses and arguments to the studied theory; coherence of responses with the case context; and quality of arguments and answers presented. Additionally, it is recommended that, within a maximum of two weeks, the instructor provides feedback and conducts a debriefing session with the class, as illustrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1 – Suggested Classroom Organization for Case Use**

Steps		Time
<b>Preparation</b>	Provide the suggested pre-readings and contextualize the theoretical concepts related to the topic.	Ensure access to the case and theoretical pre-reading resources at least two class sessions in advance.
	Provide the case and the proposed questions.	
	If necessary, add other possible tasks.	
	Define the team structures and present the evaluation criteria.	
<b>Application</b>	Discuss the questions in class.	During the first 20 minutes, the instructor should organize the classroom, provide a brief presentation of the case, and explain the discussion dynamics and the evaluation method for the activity. Classroom debate on the questions.
<b>Evaluation</b>	Assess the students based on the previously established criteria.	Conduct the assessment within a maximum of two weeks after the activity.
	Publish the assessment and provide feedback on the activity.	

## References

- Asare (2022, 15 de agosto). Four Ways Hair Bias Shows Up In The Workplace. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2022/08/15/four-ways-hair-bias-shows-up-in-the-workplace/>
- Barth, I., & Wagner, A.-L. (2017). Physical appearance as invisible discrimination. In J.-F. Chanlat & M. F. Özbilgin (Eds.). *Management and diversity: Thematic approaches* (Vol. 4, pp. 127–146). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S2051-233320160000004008>

- Brasil. (1995, 13 de abril). *Lei n.º 9.029, de 13 de abril de 1995*: Proíbe a exigência de atestados de gravidez e esterilização, e outras práticas discriminatórias, para efeitos admissionais ou de permanência da relação jurídica de trabalho. Diário Oficial da União. Recuperado em 25 de junho de 2025, de [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/leis/l9029.htm](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l9029.htm)
- Brasil. (2009). *Projeto de Lei n.º 6.653, de 2009*: Cria mecanismos para garantir a igualdade entre mulheres e homens nas relações de trabalho. Câmara dos Deputados. Recuperado em 25 de junho de 2025, de <https://www.camara.leg.br/proposicoesWeb/fichadetramitacao?idProposicao=464901>
- Cavico, F. J., Muffler, S. C., & Mujtaba, B. G. (2013). Appearance discrimination in employment: Legal and ethical implications. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 32(1), 83–119. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151311305632>
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2013). Masculinidade hegemônica: repensando o conceito. *Estudos Feministas*, 21(1), 241–282. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-026X2013000100014>
- Cotta, M., & Farage, T. (2021). *Mulher, roupa, trabalho: como se veste a desigualdade de gênero*. Editora Paralela.
- Dahl, D. (2014). Looking neat on the street: aesthetic labour in public parking patrol, *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, 3(2): 59–78.
- Duncan, C., & Loretto, W. (2004). Never the right age? Gender and age-based discrimination in employment. *Gender, Work And Organization*, 11(1), 95–115. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.2004.00222.x>
- Estado de Minas Gerais – Assembleia Legislativa de Minas Gerais. (2024). *Lei Complementar n.º 179, de 27 de dezembro de 2024*: Acrescenta dispositivos à Lei n. 869/1952, Estatuto dos Funcionários Públicos Civis do Estado de Minas Gerais. Diário Oficial da Assembleia Legislativa de Minas Gerais. Recuperado em 25 de junho de 2025, de <https://www.almg.gov.br/legislacao-mineira/texto/LCP/179/2024/>
- Foucault, M. (2013). *Vigiar e punir: nascimento da prisão* (41ª ed.). Vozes.
- Foucault, M. (2014). *Microfísica do Poder* (28o ed). Editora Paz e Terra.
- Freitas, M. E. de (2001). Assédio moral e assédio sexual: faces do poder perverso nas organizações. *Revista De Administração De Empresas*, 41(2), 8–19. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0034-75902001000200002>
- Goffman, E. (2001). *Estigma: notas sobre a manipulação da identidade deteriorada*. LTC Editora. (Trabalho original publicado em 1963)
- Jones, J., Manoharan, A., & Madera, J. M. (2024). Lookism in hospitality and tourism workplaces: A multilevel review and research agenda. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 123, 103909. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2024.103909>
- Jyrkinen, M., & McKie, L. (2012). Gender, age and ageism: Experiences of women managers in Finland and Scotland. *Work, Employment and Society*, 26(1), 61–77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017011426313>
- Kaufmann, M. C., Krings, F., & Sczesny, S. (2016). Looking Too Old? How an Older Age Appearance Reduces Chances of Being Hired. *British Journal Of Management*, 27(4), 727–739. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12125>
- Kergoat, D. (2009). Divisão sexual do trabalho. In: Hirata, H. (org.). *Dicionário crítico do feminismo*. São Paulo: Editora Unesp.
- Lämsä, A. M., Ojasoo, M., Jyrkinen, M., & Pucetaite, R. (2023). Appearance-based discrimination against young women in the workplace. *Qualitative Research In Organizations And Management*, 18(2), 125-141. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-02-2022-2292>
- Machado, L. Z. (1994) Campo Intelectual e Feminismos: alteridade e subjetividade nos estudos de gênero. *Série Antropologia*, Brasília, Dan/UNB. <http://www.dan.unb.br/images/doc/Serie170empdf.pdf>
- Maconachie, G., & Sappey, J. (2011). Physical capital and its consequences for fitness workers in Queensland. *Labour & Industry: A Journal of the Social and Economic Relations of Work*, 22(1–2), 5–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10301763.2011.10669426>
- McKie, L., & Jyrkinen, M. (2017). My Management: women managers in gendered and sexualised workplaces. *Gender In Management*, 32(2), 98–110. <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-04-2016-0091>
- Opie, T. R., & Phillips, K. W. (2015). Hair penalties: The negative influence of Afrocentric hair on ratings of Black women’s dominance and professionalism. *Frontiers in psychology*, 6, 1311. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01311>

- Organização Internacional do Trabalho (2018). *Relatório V: Acabar com a violência e o assédio contra mulheres e homens no mundo do trabalho*. Conferência Internacional do Trabalho, Genebra, Suíça, 2018. [https://www.tst.jus.br/documents/1199940/1321373/Violencia\\_Assedio\\_Relatorio\\_V1\\_OIT\\_2018.pdf/614e8f0b-7267-8d86-a3f1-4a09a775bd95](https://www.tst.jus.br/documents/1199940/1321373/Violencia_Assedio_Relatorio_V1_OIT_2018.pdf/614e8f0b-7267-8d86-a3f1-4a09a775bd95)
- Saffioti, H. (2004). *Gênero, Patriarcado e Violência*. São Paulo: Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo.
- Scott, J. (1995) Gênero: uma categoria útil para análise histórica. *Educação e Realidade*, 16(2), 5-22, jul-dez. <https://seer.ufrgs.br/index.php/educacaoerealidade/article/view/71721>
- Trusty, J., Ward, D. A., Ward, M. G. P., & He, M. Y. (2023). Hair Bias in the Workplace: A Critical Human Resource Development Perspective. *Advances In Developing Human Resources*, 25(1), 5–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15234223221135557>
- Warhurst, C., & Nickson, D. (2020). *Aesthetic Labour*. Sage.
- Warhurst, C., & Nickson, D. (2007). Employee experience of aesthetic labour in retail and hospitality. *Work, Employment and Society*, 21(1), 103–120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017007073622>
- Warhurst, C., Van Den Broek, D., Hall, R., & Nickson, D. (2009). Lookism: The New Frontier of Employment Discrimination? *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 51(1), 131–136. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022185608096808>
- Welzer-Lang, D. (2001). A construção do masculino: dominação das mulheres e homofobia. *Estudos Feministas*, 9(2), 460–482. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-026X2001000200008>
- Witz, A., Warhurst, C., & Nickson, D. (2003). The Labour of Aesthetics and the Aesthetics of Organization. *Organization*, 10(1), 33–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508403010001375>

---

i Set of data summarizing the points of view on the quality of governance provided by respondents from companies, citizens, and specialists (WGI, 2017).

ii In the product-oriented model, the efficient unit is the one that produces relatively more for a given amount of inputs. In the input-oriented model, the efficient unit is the one that, with proportionally fewer inputs, manages to produce the same as the other units.

iii Federal, S. (1988). Constitution. Brasília (DF). Available at: [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/constituicao/constituicao.htm](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/constituicao/constituicao.htm)

iv Chamber of Deputies. (2021, February 15). The conquest of female voting rights [Infographic]. Chamber of Deputies News Agency. <https://www.camara.leg.br/internet/agencia/infograficos-html5/a-conquista-do-voto-feminino/index.html>

v G1. (2014, June 7). Roseana was the first woman elected governor; see her trajectory. G1 – Politics. <https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2014/06/roseana-foi-primeira-mulher-eleita-governadora-veja-trajetoria.html>

vi Senate News Agency. (2016, August 29). Dilma Rousseff: the first woman to preside over Brazil. Senate News. <https://www12.senado.leg.br/noticias/materias/2016/08/29/dilma-rousseff-a-primeira-mulher-a-presidir-o-brasil>

vii Brazil. (1995, September 29). Law No. 9,100, of September 29, 1995. Establishes rules for the municipal elections of October 3, 1996, and other measures. Official Gazette. Retrieved June 25, 2025, from [https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/leis/l9100.htm](https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l9100.htm)

viii Brazil. (1997, September 30). Law No. 9,504, of September 30, 1997. Establishes rules for elections (Election Law). Official Gazette. Retrieved June 25, 2025, from [http://planalto.gov.br/ccivil\\_03/leis/l9504.htm](http://planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/leis/l9504.htm)

ix De Olho Nas Urnas Team. (2024, March 20). Barriers to women's access to politics persist. De Olho Nas Urnas. Retrieved June 25, 2025, from <https://deolhonasurnas.ufg.br/2024/03/20/as-barreiras-ao-de-acesso-das-mulheres-a-politica-persistem/>

x Superior Electoral Court. (2022). Election results. Available at: <https://www.tse.jus.br/eleicoes/resultados-eleicoes>

xi Global Compact – Brazil Network. (2025). SDGs and Agenda 2030. Retrieved July 7, 2025, from <https://www.pactoglobal.org.br/ods-e-agenda-2030/>