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Far Beyond Samba: How Brazilian Women Face Gender Inequality

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Introduction- It is constantly said that Brazil is not a country for amateurs. Our thriving industrial parks and boldly designed cities, our technology-dependent lives, and the big city frenzy all give the impression that we live in modern society because this is the image produced and confirmed by rhetoric that boasts our (post)modernity. However, that is merely a mirage which we believe because we intend and want to be a modern and civilized country, even though the heavy burden of our colonial and slavery past – which bequeathed us misery, inequality, violence, and backwardness – remains intact.

Only breaking free from this rubbish that binds us to the past and constringes us will lead us into the group of modern societies, into the club of the so-called civilized countries. Getting a passport to gain such admission implies banishing backwardness, that perverse inequality embodied in the privileges enjoyed by few, which challenge and compromise our democracy, the very essence of modern societies.

However, abolishing privileges and abandoning cultural practices that are incompatible with any idea of civility finds resistance in several layers of the fabric that comprises Brazilian society – and not only within privileged groups – because, after all, being modern has a price. What is not clear is how much we are willing to pay.

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I. Introduction

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We own a malformed and deformed democracy, which surely is not a value for most of the population that – because their citizenship is incomplete – do not benefit from the democratic order.

Brazilian civilization reconciles a technologized society with access to high culture and science, side by side with pockets ruled by extreme incivility, expressed by violence and – not only material – poverty.

Our penury is not concentrated in one single region; rather, it is spread and contaminates the whole social fabric. Undeniably, the country has huge regional disparities in economic and cultural terms. However, as noticed by Salil Shetty, secretary-general of Amnesty International, in Brazil, the slums that surround the big Brazilian metropoles and the indigenous communities would be true "free trade zones" for human rights.

"It is as if these people were not in Brazil. There are different rules there. [These people] live in warzones, and all human rights are suspended"[1].

II. The Roots of Archaism

Any conservative cultural practice cutout will reveal aspects of the modern/archaic dichotomy, a dissonance between rhetoric and action, advances, and regression. However, if there is a theme that provides a privileged view of such fierce contradiction is the condition of Brazilian women, their citizenship, or pseudo citizen women.

In "*Roots of Brazil* (2012), we learn that it is impossible to reconcile that which is irreconcilable and preclusive: conjugating patriarchalism and liberalism is unfeasible.

Also, Max Weber (1964) comprehends patriarchalism as solid and stable domination, rooted in the predominant tradition of collective consciousness in specific cultural substrata.

> "The feminists considered modern patriarchalism as a […] situation in which, within an association, most times fundamentally economic and familiar, domination is exerted (normally) by one single person, according to specific hereditary fixed rules" (Weber, 1964, p.184).

It is this power division founded on sexual difference that promotes scarce citizenship, inequality, and hierarchy across genders. Such split starts in the private sphere, where decisions are made by one single person or someone who has a greater weight within the family, one non-democratic and much less egalitarian entity. Such inequality, of intramural origins, surpasses the boundaries of the private sphere to disseminate across the public sphere.

Families with non-democratic characteristics and family relations closed in themselves, still greatly present in more isolated regions and the country's vulnerability zones contaminates the models of social interaction, and limits the set of social relations. We are talking of a family organization with clan-like elements, which values fidelity over ethics and compromises the interaction with non-family groups, generating a type of

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[1] *Não há direitos humanos em favelas e tribos indígenas do Brasil, diz Anistia* [There are no humanrights in Brasilslums and indigenoustribes, saysAmnesty] http://www.bbc.com/portuguese/noticias/2013/08/130810_anistia_favelas_dg. August 10, 2013.

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isolation that jeopardizes the cooperation between groups, solidarity, and trade. At the same time, it compromises the ability to propagate new ideas, values, and practices as it provokes little intergroup friction.

In non-democratic contexts, women's citizenship is compromised or incomplete due to laws or practices that date back to the times of slave masters, or, worse still, of slaves, always vivid and present in front of postmodernity which we have already addressed.

Brazil is not a sexual democracy but, rather, a sexist country.

> "[T]he predominance of the 'ass-orientation' comes from Brazil itself. This picture of asses and carnival is the image that Brazil loves to sell abroad […] to foreigners who come to Brazil due to the soccer-asses-carnival stereotype" (Ventura, 2009, p.132).

III. Be a Woman under the Law

It is a fact that, when it comes to women's rights, Brazilian legislation has advanced notably since the 1988 Constitution. In 2005, Law no. 11.106/2005 changed the legislation of 1940, thus eliminating the figure of the honest woman. Passing this law also corrected a despicable misconception: before that, a rapist was free from punishment if he agreed to marry his victim; the change also imposed tougher sentences in the case of minor abuse. In the following year, Law Maria da Penha was promulgated to protect women from multiple forms of violence and, finally, in 2015, the Femicide Law determined that a homicide motivated by gender is to be treated a heinous crime[2].

This legal framework undeniably advances the guarantee of women's citizenship. Nevertheless, the legislation limits women's right to decide about their own body, a fundamental right that cannot be clouded by the aforementioned advances.

John Locke (1689) considered that the natural right to liberty was an elementary assumption to any form of citizenship. One of the basic premises of political liberalism is to bind liberty to the right to property, considering that one's body is his/her first property. As such, Locke attracted modern feminists such as Carole Pateman, who brought this discussion to date. This doctrine is opposite to slavery because, to be free, individuals must be their proprietors, have full control over their own bodies, which allows them to appropriate the things in the world.

> "Though the Earth, and all inferior creatures be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person. This nobody has any right to but himself". (Locke, 1978:45).

Despite the evolution the concept of citizenship has had since the 17th century, it is still impossible to conceive it without guarantees of individuals' rights over their bodies. An enslaved being is not a citizen. But how does this work when the individual is a free woman?

We may state that up to the second decade of the 21st century, in practice, the liberal premise has not materialized, in Brazil for so many liberties of women are compromised by cultural practices that limit their choices and decisions about their own existence.

However, despite the culture and customs that act against women, in the aspect of laws, discrimination also exists as women's bodies are controlled and women lack the status of the full proprietor of their own bodies due to the prohibition of abortion. When it is the institutions that determine what can and cannot be done with one's body, individuals have no autonomy, nor are they the proprietors of themselves; they are not free and, as a consequence, they are not fully complete citizens. To the women of Brazil, the notion of pseudo citizens is still valid.

The feminist theory addresses the right to abortion as part of a citizen's autonomy. It is up to women and only to them to decide upon contraception, abortion, fertility, and maternal control "if and when they want to." These are personal issues; they are not decisions made by politicians or legislators because "human maternity is an ethical choice and not a genetic obligation" (Rosado, 2006).

If reproduction rights are guaranteed, women overcome limited citizenship, abandon the condition of "civil minor", and acquire the "conditions to construct their political individuality as any other political minority" (Ardaillon, 1997, p.4).

Citizenship is not complete without the confirmation of the sexual and reproductive rights according to the guidelines of the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994), and, later, the World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), which framed the criminalization of abortion as a violation of human dignity.

The inefficacy of the prohibition of abortion is clear in the data raised by the Guttmacher Institute[3] between 1995 and 2008, which demonstrate that the highest rates of abortion occur in regions where the legislation is more restrictive. It is the case, for example, of Latin America, where most of the countries prohibit abortion, which has the highest rate of abortions in the world: in 2015-19, there were 32 abortions per 1,000 women aged 15 to 44 years old. On the other hand, in countries where abortion is legal, such as in Western

[2] According to the Juridical Dictionary, a *crime hediondo,* in Portuguese, is a crime believed to be extremely serious. As a consequence, it is treated differently and more severely than other crimes. Those who commit such crimes have no right to bail, grace, amnesty or pardon.

[3] GuttmacherInstitute. *Aborto Induzido: Incidência e Tendências Globais* [InducedAbortion: Incidence and Global Trends]. February 2012.

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Europe, the rate of abortions is down to 17 per 1,000 women.

Cultural practices and profound religiousness hinder the adoption of public policies and rational actions to deal with public health issues, while they also compromise women's full citizenship. We favor looks while abortions are still being done in dangerous circumstances, we refuse to adopt efficient measures to handle the issue; we prefer to hide it all under the carpet and condemn such practice as a crime and a sin and, naturally, condemn women.

IV. Woman's Role in Economic Development

The archaism that impregnates the cultural standards charges a high price from development and economic growth as it insists on treating women as subordinates.

How does the position of women in society affect the economy and development of a country? The connection between women's condition and economic and social development has been the object of studies since the 1970s. Inspired by the pioneering work of Boserup (1970), several researches have evidenced that the lack of gender equality is an obstacle to economic growth, the end of poverty, and that, since the 1990s, it is a factor that compromises the implementation of projects for sustainable development.

Research and reports produced by institutions such as the World Bank demonstrate that a high level of gender equality has a direct and positive correlation with a high Gross Domestic Product per capita, suggesting that, by creating new opportunities for women, economic growth is also incremented.

While directing UN Women (2010/2013), Michelle Bachelet stated that it was not possible to think about long-lasting solutions for the world's principal problems without fully empowering women and making way for their participation in politics and the economy. The lack of gender equality affects democracy and justice, compromises equal rights, and limits building free and democratic societies.

That is also the conclusion of the report "World employment and social outlook: trends for women 2017". Analyzing the data of the ILO (International Labor Organization), it can be implied that getting more women into the global job market would add US$5 trillion to the world economy.

By reducing gender difference in the job market by 25%, which means an additional 3.9% of women labor in the productive sector (203.9 million workers), there would be a growth of US$5.76 trillion in the world's Gross Domestic Product by 2025.

In the case of Brazil, the gender gap in the job market affects 22.1%, while in developed countries, this gap is 16.15%. In Brazil, 78 percent of men hold paid jobs, compared with only 56 percent of women, based on International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates. Men's participation in the job market is up to 78.2%, which is greater than the 76.1% world average. According to projections of the ILO for the country, raising women labor by 3.3% by 2025, meaning 5.1 million more women at work, would add US$116.7 billion to Brazil's GDP, which would have a positive effect due to a rise in consumption and tax payment.

To reduce gender difference in the rate of labor participation, the ILO recommends that countries adopt policies that foster the balance between personal life and work, the elimination of gender discrimination, and the creation of quality jobs in the health sector. The reports say:

> "Gender gaps are one of the most pressing challenges facing the world of work today […]".

A vast literature demonstrates that an amazing percentage of women (31%), compared to men (8%), take greater vulnerability in the market. They are domestic or unpaid workers, 74% of which are not registered workers; 96% are paid up to 2 times the minimum wage.

As stated before, incomplete citizenship produced by sexual discrimination acts as an obstacle in all spheres of life, and this is also valid for economic and social development. This represents a loss to women and society at large.

V. Women's Power

When it comes to women in the Parliament, Brazil stands in 115th in the world ranking, out of 138 countries analyzed by the Inspirational Women Project (IWP) on data supplied by the World Bank (Bird). This list is topped by Ruanda (61.3%), followed by Bolivia (51,3). In the Brazilian Parliament – while 51,5% of the country's population are women – only 15% of the representatives are women. Down in the countries' ranking, our situation places us below Algeria and Tunisia and even traditional Islamic countries, such as Syria and Egypt.

Brazil's Federal Congress registered an increase in the number of women representatives by 87% between 1990 and 2016, rising from 5.3% to 9.9% of the total, and in 2018 to 15%. In the same period, the world's average raised from 12.7% to 23%. If this pace is kept, the country will reach gender equality in political representation in 2080.

The Executive Power has the same scenario. Even after adopting a 30% quota, the national average of women candidates to major positions reaches 18.01% of the total.

When women are not taking positions of power and decision, their standpoints tend to be marginalized, misinterpreted, or even silenced. On the other hand, when they are present in such public or community

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positions of decisions, they tend to exert an influence on the policies and practices that are essential for the wellbeing and quality of life, having a positive impact on society as a whole.

Currently, in Brazil, 43% of the women are breadwinners, which indicates a potential capable of elevating women's participation in the political system when they set free from the impediments that put them at bay. They may dedicate themselves to community issues. The new protagonist women will contribute innovative ways of making politics, and this is a positive impact on the entire community.

The constraints that women face to take up public positions go from the existence of laws that discriminate against them and hinder their participation, beliefs that question their skills to act as leaders, and cultural practices bound to the gender roles. Also, people are still resistant to a "women's style" of leadership (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001), they insistently reproduce gender stereotypes that, very often, keep women out of public life. The gender unbalance among world leaders indicates that there is still a lot to be done to shatter the glass roof even in countries that experienced great advances due of feminist movements, which helped reduce gender inequality significantly.

Women, especially those with fewer resources, have difficulty participating in public life; countless factors limit their activities outside of home. Namely, domestic workload or the control and resistance they get from their parents or husbands. However, nothing compares to the discomfort they feel when they are part of a predominantly male atmosphere, hostile to their presence, which does not take in new women agents, but, rather, insist on intimidating them or including, harassing them. Until the political arena becomes inclusive, bridging the gender gap will be compromised. The same will happen to the other underrepresented – whether in terms of adequacy or number – minorities.

The presence of women in positions of power influences future activism and promotes the leadership of younger generations. However, when women's presence in politics is perceived as an appropriation of men's style, a poor copy or reproduction of the traditional behavior without innovation, if the presence of new characters does not foster the creation of their way of doing approach public things, this "men's way" of making politics tends to drive young girls away from such arena that is strange to them, in which they cannot control the discourse or scene play. The image of the "bossy female manager" repels more than attracts young girls because it evokes political activity and everything that involves power as a "men's thing."

Finally, it is necessary to consider that leadership is not typical of all individuals, rather; it is the result of developing skills over time. Providing opportunities to practice leadership is important when training young women to occupy positions of power and decision. They will have to break huge barriers and face challenges to take their place in the public space.

VI. Violence and Femicide in Daily Basis

Brazilian society is under the constant threat of several forms of violence. Besides living around the violence that afflicts all, women fear their sort of danger: femicide.

Brazil is a top 25 country in the world when it comes to femicide. At a rate of 4.4, Brazil is part of the group of countries with a high rate of murdered women – from 3 to 6 homicides per 100 thousand women. In the group including the highest femicide rates globally, Brazil is only below El Salvador, Colombia, Guatemala, and the Russian Federation. During the pandemic in 2020, the numbers of femicide increase 22%.

Small Arms Survey connects the high femicide rates with high levels of violence in such countries. Women 'are more frequently attacked in the public sphere; in this context, femicides often take place in a general climate of indifference and impunity'. However, this rule cannot be generalized because both in Eastern Europe and Russia, femicide rates are 'disproportionately high' when compared to the homicides total. That is, high rates of violence or naturalized violence lead to increase femicide. Nevertheless, there is no direct relation between the two phenomena.

Although Law Maria da Penha represents an advance and has brought more rigor to crimes against women, since 2006, when it came into force, there was an increase of 18.4% in the cases of violence in the country. The effectiveness of laws to protect women is fragilized when their juridical definition is uncertain, when their application is poor amid a culture of impunity, when the state fails to be diligent, and when those responsible for upholding such laws are either resistant or incompetent.

Not having a service to protect and report crimes against women generates a culture of fear and impunity that fosters the cycle of violence and hurts the efforts to prevent such crimes and create a safe environment.

Another important aspect of the survey is the age difference in cases of homicide in the country. While the killing of both genders has little or no incidence up to age 10, it grows steeply up to 18/19 years old and decreases slowly up to old age; however, in the case of femicide, the age curve is different.

Femicide is marked by two specificities: a high incidence of women victims in crimes against children (infanticide); the femicide line stabilizes horizontally within the group between 18 and 30 years old. Another specificity of the crime against women refers to the aggressor: girls from 12 to 17 years old are most usually attacked by their fathers (26.5%) and partners/ex-

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partners (23.2%), while in the case of young adults and adults, from 18 to 59 years old, the principal aggressor is their partner/ex-partner in half the reported cases. Such data reinforce the feminists' theory when they alert that, to women, their home can be more dangerous than the streets.

Preventing violence implies a change of attitude; it requires challenging stereotypes, empowering women, and an intense and immense training effort in communities for everybody to join forces with women in the fight against gender violence.

VII. Young Lives Meat Grinder

Of all inequalities imposed by gender difference, whether in the job market or participation in politics, figures of violence, nothing compares to the young women and adolescents that the country is putting to waste.

Just like gender, age is a power relation system that is both natural and socially constructed. Can we think about gender without the reference of time? Or can we consider genderized individuals without observing their development over time? Age modulates women's life experiences, their social perception of sexuality, the rules they are subject to, and the choices and behaviors suitable for each phase of their lives. Affected by age, gender defines the relation of women and society.

Banishing behaviors and values that are against women requires preventing new generations from reproducing them. Given the precarious economic conditions that affect all, the array of opportunities will be more reduced for young women since cultural practices and prejudice affect them.

In today's world, people under age 25 are 43% of the population and 60% live in developing countries. We have the biggest groups of adolescents in history, and it is expected to reach its peak within the next decade. Creating effective conditions for this young population to develop is imperative for development. Besides, it is a must if we want to make human rights effective.

Adolescents and the young are part of the population in expansion. This demographic trend creates a tremendous potential for accelerating the development in low-income and average-income countries. This would be a favorable moment to assure the political measures and the necessary resources to prepare youngsters and involve them in development projects that aim at transforming society.

For this reason, it is extremely important to invest in this group because having opportunities and choices will allow adolescents to grow to be empowered and active adult citizens. With adequate opportunities and skills, young girls are more likely to invest in themselves and generate a gain for their families and communities.

Has there been any advance? Are we preventing prejudice and discrimination from being passed down to new generations? Do we produce new cultural practices capable of promoting the women´s image as equal and independent to dismantle subalternity? Do we allow young women to grow and develop in a context that values women? Do we manage to break the old gender standards in favor of equity?

It seems that the answer to all these questions is "no". Although women manage to crack the glass roof, penetrating the positions of power and decision, in universities, in "men's jobs" very successfully, society has not added the necessary value to the image of women to subvert their traditional role; quite the opposite, women's portrait is still degraded and, to a great extent, affects young women.

NGO named *Énois - InteligênciaJovem*, in 2015, interviewed 2,300 girlsfrom 14 to 24 years old, in 370 cities. The result of this survey exposes the scenario of violence and sexismyoung girls in Brazillive in:

82% of the interviewees said they were prejudiced against;

94% were victims of verbal harassment;

84% verbal aggressiveness;

74% sexual harassment;

41% assault –83% of these were victimized by people they knew.

94% did not do something they wanted to do due to fear of violence (e.g., wear a mini skirt, go out at night, respond to provocations, etc.).

74% said they felt they were treated differently because they were a girl.

77% believe that living in a male chauvinist environment affects their development.

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In "The Second Sex," Simone de Beauvoir (1949) suggests that it is during adolescence that girls realize that men have more power than themselves and that their only power resides in consenting to become an object of worship and passive desires.

As Betty Friedan talks about the condition of recluse women at home (1972:181) in "The Feminine Mystique," she affirms that we need to design a new life plan for women so that girls "want to become women" (1972: 331).

Becoming a woman within sexist standards is a challenge that becomes even bigger in a country that is the world's 4th place in the ranking of marriages involving children. Data like these smash our illusions about becoming a modern or civilized country.

Maintaining the sexist cultural standards and objectifying women contribute and incite early sexuality. This practice is accountable for the endless cycle of poverty reproduction as it produces a multitude of young unprepared and unassisted mothers and children who come into this world in a situation of disadvantage.

The impact of around 16 million early pregnancies in the world a year has been broadly studied, focusing not only on the risks it generates to rights and health, on the likelihood of a pregnant girl to quit school but also on how pregnancy compromises the development of young women's potential.

Teenage pregnancy is not only a question of public health, but it also becomes a hindrance to development. We are facing a product of poverty, gender inequality, power unbalance, and precarious education. All this sheds light on the failure of institutions that should protect these young women's rights.

In underdeveloped countries, 1 out of 3 weddings involves brides under 18 years old. Among young brides, one out of nine will get married before turning 15. Most of them are poor, with few years of formal education, live in rural or isolated areas, and have little social support; they are also more vulnerable to physical and sexual assault.

Research demonstrates that educated young women tend to marry later, have fewer kids and guarantee their children's school education. Educated mothers reduce the levels of child mortality because they can provide suitable hygiene and health care; this does not happen with unprepared and uneducated adolescent mothers.

Guaranteeing the right of young women to develop their potentials is an important step towards ending poverty and stabilizing population growth. When empowered and not coerced, women can choose the number of kids they will have, the right moment to have them, and how long they will wait to have another child.

Despite the importance and value of education, it is necessary to highlight that going to school is not enough for a girl to be empowered. It is necessary to question the supposed direct relation between education and empowerment (Cobbett, 2014).

The central idea is that school offers girls the chance to become a professional, an entrepreneur, to take a leading position in communities. Also, in school, girls are protected from violence, sexually transmitted diseases, and early pregnancy. Without access to education, all the potential could be lost due to traditions and customs that constringe women, prevent them from westernizing, make them take up domestic tasks, marry and have children early.

However, UNIFEM studies conclude that the advance of formal education did not lead to gender equality. In Latin America and in countries where girls have outnumbered boys in school, this did not lead to equality in the job market or socioeconomic status; neither did it help eliminate violence against women.

In Brazil, quality education would help break the poverty cycle. Still a system in which young women finish school without knowing elementary mathematical operations or how to read and interpret texts only produces functional illiterates. School is not attractive enough to keep girls in long if it does not work to strengthen them, nor is it committed to eliminating gender inequality.

If we do not get to achieve an empowering education to equip young women with the skills to challenge discrimination they will face in society; the gender gap will remain.

An inefficient education system does not help introduce new values compatible with modern and democratic society. We understand that education that values gender and ethnicity protects against and prevents violence and other harmful practices. Then, education will be an essential instrument of empowerment and a vehicle to realize girls' full potential.

The goal is to change the cultural standards and acknowledge the value of young women for the social system, to have young women leaders in advocacy and community mobilization to end violent and discriminatory practices.

In the context of globalization, once barriers are broken, young women may participate actively in the solution of problems experienced in daily life, which involve the use of land, rivers, forests, and the search for innovative solutions for the economy and models of more equal and sustainable societies.

VIII. What About the Boys?

According to Kehily (2008), late modernity is painted rose and fuchsia, and this is the Zeitgeist that allows young women to be assertive agents, and to become visible. In the post-industrial era, they have gained visibility in the public space, and this must be used for their empowerment.

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The concept of empowerment came up in the social movement of the 1960s in the USA, in the bosom of counterculture, in the fight against oppressive systems. Empowerment allows building alternatives, bringing utopias to life and creating new social relations.

Empowerment can also be interpreted as a development of (individual or collective) self-confidence, a belief in the capacity of individuals or communities (Deere; León, 2002). On any of these meanings, the term suggests that empowerment is a mechanism acting over individuals, groups and communities, which allows taking control over their lives because they are aware of their skills and competencies.

To Deere and Leon (2002), the empowerment of women starts with their awareness of gender discrimination in a sexist society. Empowerment is what makes women let go of negative perception about themselves, tirelessly transmitted by society, to acknowledge their value and force, to be capable of fighting for their place and create new rights.

Zapata (2003) lists the factors that drive empowerment: economic autonomy, participation in social networks, access to formal education and information; self-confidence, and self-esteem; development of leadership skills. However, the author claims it is necessary to overcome the factors of disempowerment that she spots in domestic responsibilities, oppression, economic dependence, lack of support, training and participation in decisions of both private and public spheres (Zapata, 2003, p. 225-249).

It is through empowerment that we will achieve freedom of speech and decision power to build the political strategies that lead to the objectives we want to accomplish.

The current moment of globalization, known as late modernity, is considered a favorable time for the empowerment of women, especially young women.

In these times of late modernity, the potential of youth is under the spotlight; young women have gained the status of "ideal subjects" for the neoliberal and post-industrial times (Epstein et al. 1998; Aapola et al. 2005; Harris 2004). It is the young women who take the stage, in a time of reconfiguration of the models of work, consumption and gender roles under the form of a new economically independent female subject, free from domestic confinement and capable of deciding, and doing it all with the help of reproduction technologies.

The current moment promotes new femininities appealing to individualized subjects, agents who control their own destiny (Giddens, 1991). The discourse that created feminism in the 1960s focusing on complaints and victimization does not echo in today's world; quite the opposite; the movement loses the power of renovation, it gets old when it is repelled by new generations because young women do not want to play the victim role, rather, they want to be empowered.

Likewise, the postindustrial era produces new models of men, that is, new actors that have an active role in social changes. The Australian sociologist Michael Floor (2005) notes that men are a minority in feminist political actions or groups that fight for gender equality. However, when men are engaged in such discussions, this leads to a change in the feminist cause. As they join such movements, men widen their view and comprehension of gender issues. On a sharper perception, they become great supporters of feminist causes and increase their involvement with anti-sexist activism.

In Brazil, the discussion about the role of men in supporting feminism and the new versions of masculinity are still incipient, and they occur, mainly around the topic of violence against women or queer studies.

It is necessary to acknowledge that the Brazilian culture is impregnated with machoism, which segregates, exclude and oppresses women. We urgently need to corrode and undermine the bases to advance towards any kind of modernity. Without it, with half the population still living as pseudo citizens, we will not accomplish the wish to leave backwardness behind. We will continue to reproduce it on, and on throughout the new generations. We need to decide if our country will remain to look forward to the future as it continues to move backward.

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