

Brazilian women: a struggle to be heard

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Abstract

Outsiders may wonder what Brazilian women's lives are like here and who the women activists influencing human rights, female empowerment, and social change are. As in other countries, during the past few decades Brazilian women have revolted against patriarchy by raising their voices and creating social impact. This qualitative study, using secondary research, identifies Marielle Franco, Zilda Arns, Maria da Penha, Marta Vieira da Silva, and Dilma Rousseff as five empowered Brazilian women.

Most came from humble origins - families that were examples of charity and struggled for rights, but all obtained degrees either in higher education or in their specialization. However, their origins did not determine social action. The driving force was their suffering from discrimination, specifically because they were women and, furthermore, because they occupied places that were previously reserved for white men. Almost all were persecuted, while others also suffered discrimination because of their skin color and ethnicity. Even so, being wives and mothers, all were excellent professionals, searching for success and achieving progress in their dedicated areas by creating social changes, especially in human rights for children and women. Those who are still alive continue the battle against the entrenched patriarchy in a predominantly macho society as they continue their strife for more progress.

Finally, those committed to building an evolved, modern, inclusive, and respectful Brazilian society perceive the macho practices that prevail as inadequate and detrimental to women. As more and more women carry on in the fight for human rights, society will evolve.

Keywords: Brazilian women, human rights, discrimination, women's rights