



## Cities, women and 20 years of the City Statute

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Brazilian cities reflect the use and occupation shaped by the male-dominated world. Our cities have been designed and built from a perspective that ignores or disregards women's presence in decisions about the form, function and mode of access to public spaces. As French sociologist Henri Lefebvre noted, the city is the projection of society. Given the countless roles women play across all areas of life, it is critical to understand how urban functionality interacts with their presence. Yet women remain overwhelmingly burdened by the roles imposed by a patriarchal society. Despite legal advancements, cities continue to deny women safe spaces to exist, belong, and thrive.

For women, the city remains inhospitable territory, no matter how many roles we perform under capitalism's demands. The space for social coexistence - which promises human development, access to leisure, housing, services, work and movement - should include all social groups in their formal conception. Unfortunately, this vision is impossible without foundations of social justice, gender equality, race equality and equal opportunities for all.

As sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos argues, the Covid-19 pandemic and deepening crises have made debates on social relations, gender, race, and the state's role central to humanity's challenges. For Brazil, achieving a balanced standard of



living requires broad participation in public policy discussions—especially ensuring women’s decisive voice in shaping urban spaces.

Women’s inclusion in urban decisions is not just about safety and bodily autonomy but also about strengthening democracy and the republican state. The right to the city demands recognizing diversity as central to achieving the common good.

[According to IBGE data](#), Brazilian women are responsible for supporting 37.3% of families, make up 51.4% of the current Brazilian population and have a life expectancy of 77 years. Women dominate Brazil’s economic and voter demographics, yet their absence from political decision-making weakens prospects for social well-being and dignified collective life.

[Women are also the majority of voters](#) and, From the perspective of democracy by the quantitative method of participation, the explanation for the absence of women in political spaces – sharing in the debate about the city and what it should and can offer – does not hold up, weakening the possibility of a future of social well-being and dignified collective life.

Democratic governance is unsustainable when poor and Black women face compounded exclusion. The right to the city for women hinges on three pillars: political, symbolic, and material equity. Tackling gender inequality requires collective action to reimagine cities as inclusive, welcoming spaces. From this perspective, the guarantee of participation and a seat in decision-making spaces is one of the main demands for women.

The debate on the right to the city for women includes several dimensions, the same ones that are the pillars supporting the right to the city: the political, symbolic and material dimensions. From this perspective, it is important to point out that gender issues need to be tackled by everyone so that a change in mentality can guarantee the production of more welcoming urban spaces.

In view of the City Statute, it is important to point out that the provision of adequate housing for women continues to be neglected. The fight for housing for those who are left to do unpaid domestic work is urgent, both to guarantee a better life and to enable progress in the stages of civic empowerment and autonomy. The accessibility of public services, transportation and the provision of crèches cannot be treated by the public authorities as a number related to the number of units made available to society, when it is known that women are the main victims of the absence of these services.

Safe and sustainable cities require the guarantee of women’s active participation in the construction and development of this debate, as well as, of course, confronting macho culture, without which there can be no progress. The set of urban public policies, in the light of the anniversary statute, must be truly reparative and protective. As we blow out the candles, I hope that our task in confronting capitalist



patriarchy takes into account that promoting the right to the city involves not only making services and rights effective, but also preventing the violations and deprivations to which women are subjected throughout the urban territory.

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