

HOUSING
JUSTICE, ACCESS
TO LAND AND TO
PUBLIC INFRA-
STRUCTURE

**This is
the right
to the city.**

Territorial justice

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ACCESS TO LAND
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This is the right to the city.

InstitutoPólis

Ensuring full and equitable access to land, appropriate housing, urban services, infrastructure, and quality public equipment is essential for a decent life. Governments are constitutionally obliged to ensure these accesses and funnel investments, leaving other territories, which receive come population, in a long-standing demand in the struggle for the right to the city, as it allows people to live closer to job and income opportunities, also expanding the access to public services, by using underused land or vacant buildings that should fulfill their social function. Official data show that, for decades, the number of vacant properties is the same or even higher than the Brazilian housing shortage. This contradiction becomes even more serious considering the growing number of homeless people living on the streets, in tenements, and squatted buildings.

Access to housing for low-income families in good locations is a long-standing demand in the struggle for the right to the city, as it allows people to live closer to job and income opportunities, also expanding the access to public services, by using underused land or vacant buildings that should fulfill their social function. Official data show that, for decades, the number of vacant properties is the same or even higher than the Brazilian housing shortage. This contradiction becomes even more serious considering the growing number of homeless people living on the streets, in tenements, and squatted buildings.

Pólis has been working with a network of partners to defend youth rights, producing knowledge to influence the public agenda and articulate the demands and challenges of the new generation. The goal is to advance in the **diagnosis of youths living on urban outskirts to provide inputs for policy making** comprehending the multiple dimensions of inequalities that affect this demographic, considering the role of their territories in health care conditions, job opportunities, and the exercise of the right to the city.

As socio-territorial inequalities have become deeper during the pandemic and as a result of climate change, vulnerable conditions increasingly and disproportionately impact the poor, Black people, and women-headed households. Studies with territorial analyses use race, class, and gender markers to identify – from an intersectional perspective – the most vulnerable groups and conditions in different urban contexts, producing consistent diagnosis to influence policy making with potential to change this reality.

In the pandemic context, a number of space-focused studies and readings on COVID-19 in the city of São Paulo showed its territorially unequal characteristics and impacts, demonstrating inequities in the access to health care and pointing to strategies to prevent and fight health crises, including territory-based immunization campaign planning. Regarding the climate change context, studies produced by Pólis aim to demonstrate the urban dimension of environmental racism, as well as the key role played by cities in climate mitigation and adaptation, whether reviewing policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reducing heat islands through a more rational use of the urban soil, or influencing the territory-based legal system to equate risk-prone situations with a more equitable distribution of resources and services.

Housing in central areas

RIGHT TO HOUSING

Demanding housing in central areas is also a strategy for climate change mitigation, because it allows occupying urban areas that already have infrastructure, controlling the expansion to environmentally fragile areas, and reducing the demand for long greenhouse-gas-emitting commutes.

Pólis has undertaken initiatives in this sense with housing-related projects in central areas in seven Brazilian capital cities, systematically data and integrating movements, entities, and public agencies around the debate about existing policies efforts, working with public agencies, and producing data to inform and qualify society, as well as to contribute to public debates and engage in political advocacy in favor of inclusive public policies.

Initiatives by Pólis aim to engage and mobilize young people from the outskirts of Maceió, Alagoas, around topics related to the right to the city, conducting education-communication actions to think about and tell their own stories and experiences in their territories. Also in Alagoas state, a local public policy assessment and improvement process aimed to provide new perspectives for state government actions, acknowledging potentials and establishing participatory processes in programs mostly dedicated to young audiences. Meanwhile, in the capital city of São Paulo, one of our projects aims to instrumentalize the youth from the Fazenda da Juta neighborhood, which has its history now endangered as real estate speculation advances. This initiative is expected to lead to a bill to protect this territory's characteristic memories, cultures, and cityscapes.

NEARLY 280,000 PEOPLE (263 COMMUNITIES) HAVE BEEN PROTECTED FROM FORCED EVICTIONS THROUGH ADPF (ACTION AGAINST THE VIOLATION OF A CONSTITUTIONAL FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT).

Source: Zero Eviction Campaign

281,000 PEOPLE ARE HOMELESS IN BRAZIL. This number has increased by 211% in the past ten years.

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Urban land conflicts involve serious violations of the right to housing in Brazil. The situation has become worse since the beginning of the pandemic, as more than 39,000 Brazilian families have been evicted, deprived from the right to remain in their homes while the most important recommendation then was to stay at home to protect themselves. Pólis has come together with hundreds of other civil society organizations and grassroots movements, as a supporter and facilitator of a national front to fight evictions and forced displacements, which led to the approval of ADPF (Action Against the Violation of a Constitutional Fundamental Right) 828, a legal measure that suspended evictions until the end of 2022. Now the campaign is demanding that the Brazilian state set up committees to mediate land conflicts and aiming to implement a national platform to monitor urban land conflicts to qualify the data on eviction threats. These data are currently collected collaboratively by the campaign itself to support denunciations of violations and provide inputs for appropriate public policy making. Moreover, the campaign also carries out denouncement-missions to identify violations of rights in situations of eviction threats and after socio-environmental tragedies.

Fighting evictions

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25% of Brazilians who live in capital cities spend more than 2 hours commuting every day.

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Source: 2022 Urban Mobility Survey (CNDL/SPC Brasil)