

**Gender, mobility and perception of safety: the triad of female walkability**

**Ana Gomes Negrão**

Professor, UFPB, Brazil  
agnegrao@hotmail.com

**José Augusto Ribeiro da Silveira**

Professor, UFPB, Brazil  
ct.laurbe@gmail.com

**Luana Stephanie de Medeiros**

Master's student PPGAU/UFPB, Professor IFPE, Brazil  
luana1809@hotmail.com

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**ABSTRACT**

Making visible the processes of subordination to which women are subjected leads us to look at the different nuances that condition their movements in the city, according to values and roles that are perpetuated in society, symbolically and consistently - the space created by/for men “determines” a supposed affirmation of superiority/priority; that destined for women, a “condition” of subordination/inferiority. Thus, based on a theoretical framework, this study aims to reflect on what aspects reveal the experience of women walking through the city. The paper begins with a discussion of the concepts of gender and intersectionality; proceeds with the argument that the city is gendered; and finally presents an approach to the relationship between gender, mobility, and perceptions of safety - presented here as the triad of female walkability.

**KEYWORDS:** Walkability. Gender. Perception of Safety.

**INTRODUCTION**

Architects and urban planners, geographers, sociologists, and other professionals see walking not only as an incentive to commute but also as a premise for a more humane and sustainable development of cities.

Since the turn of the 20th century, with urban sprawl and the disorganized growth of cities, the street culture has prioritized motorized modes of travel, relegating sidewalks, in many cases, to the least important part of management/planning. The adoption of these policies has stimulated pedestrian movement, bringing benefits not only to the recovery of the urban environment but also to the appreciation of the city and its public spaces, as well as increasing urban vitality and safety on the streets, which ultimately provides a better quality of life for the population (GHIDINI, 2011).

The author above also points out that this planning model has drawn the attention of researchers to observe the predispositions that lead individuals to opt for walking in their daily commute, encouraging the development of methods and techniques that assess the quality of urban space in terms of stimulating walking; this concept has been called walkability, a property that measures the quality of urban space based on various indicators that assess the conditions and characteristics of this space.

These indicators generally address the size and condition of sidewalks and intersections, the attractiveness of routes, neighborhood density, perceptions of public safety, road safety conditions, and any other characteristics that influence people's motivation to choose certain routes (ITDP, 2018).

But it's important to consider that some of these factors are not necessarily related to the built environment, but can be intertwined with issues that involve the individual themselves. And one of them is undoubtedly gender. Until the 1960s, urban planners/researchers did not recognize the differences in the way men and women moved around the city, because, until then, individuals were seen in a universal, homogeneous, and “non-sexual” way.

Although the term “non-sexual” is used here in a didactic way, scientific literature certifies that sex, or rather gender, is one of the defining nuances of the social roles that define the appropriation of space, depending on whether the individual is a man or a woman, and also marks displacements: the spaces reserved for men (public space) and production are generally far from the residential area; those reserved for women (private space) and reproduction end up being included as extensions of the home itself, in domestic and reproductive activities, especially care activities. This shows that the city is unequal and, when it comes to women, it forms a relationship of not belonging, of not belonging (CALIÓ, 1992).

The definitions of public and private, male and female, are therefore manifested in patterns of what is “allowed” and “not allowed” for each gender and are constantly marked by correlations of fear and insecurity, especially for women, who are spatialized according to conditions “imposed” by society in routine dynamics, routes, schedules and/or specific characteristics of the urban form (GAMRANI; TRIBOUILLARD, 2021).

However, research on mobility generally considers the perception of a “standard”, “neutral” user, read as a male, white, heterosexual, and from the dominant class, which ends up disregarding a large part of non-priority social groups. In particular, this observation makes even more visible the process of domination to which women are subjected, suggesting the perception that this also affects their displacement.

Este trabalho apresenta um recorte de uma pesquisa que parte do pressuposto/hipótese de que a visibilização dos processos de subordinação, a que as mulheres estão submetidas, direciona o olhar para diferentes nuances que condicionam o deslocamento na cidade, segundo valores e papéis que se perpetuam em sociedade, simbólica e consistentemente – o espaço criado pelo/para o homem “determina” uma suposta afirmação de superioridade/prioridade; o destinado à mulher, uma “condição” de subordinação/inferioridade (SOUZA, 2019).

This paper presents an excerpt from a research project based on the assumption/hypothesis that making visible the processes of subordination to which women are subjected directs the gaze to different nuances that condition movement in the city, according to values and roles that are perpetuated in society, symbolically and consistently - the space created by/for men “determines” a supposed affirmation of superiority/priority; that destined for women, a “condition” of subordination/inferiority (SOUZA, 2019).

Nesse contexto, estudos alertam que a percepção de segurança é o principal fator que influencia na mobilidade pedonal da mulher na cidade. Desta forma, estudar esta temática sob este viés é imperativo, de modo a perceber quais aspectos devem ser avaliados para transmitir/elucidar a experiência da mulher caminhante. Portanto, é importante se perguntar: Quais aspectos tendem a limitar o deslocamento pedonal de mulheres na cidade?

In this context, studies show that the perception of safety is the main factor influencing women's pedestrian mobility in the city. Therefore, it is imperative to study this issue from this point of view, to understand which aspects should be evaluated to convey/elucidate the experience of women pedestrians. It is therefore important to ask: What aspects tend to limit women's pedestrian mobility in the city?

Therefore, this study aims to reflect, based on a theoretical framework, which aspects reveal the experience of women who walk through the city; to this end, the research applied the Problematization Methodology (Berbel and Gamboa, 2011), under the Maguerez Arc approach, which includes stages of observation, problem definition, extraction of key concepts and contextual theorization. The work begins with a discussion of the concepts of gender and intersectionality; continues with the argument that the city is gendered; and finally, presents an approach to the relationship between the aspects and elements that make up urban design, and the concepts of gender, mobility and perceived safety - here placed as the triad of female walkability.

## 1 GENDER, A NECESSARY REFLECTION

Before we look at how gender impacts on women's walkability, we need to discuss the fact that gender is not the same thing as sex (the biological); gender is a social construction.

The first theorist to conceive of this idea was Simone de Beauvoir, in 1949, with *The Second Sex*, based on the statement that “no one is born a woman: they become one. No biological, psychic or economic destiny determines the form that the human female takes within society; it is the whole of civilization that elaborates this product [...] which they call feminine” (BEAUVOIR, 1980, p. 09 -10).

By stating that no one is born a woman, Beauvoir (1980) opens the discussion to the systems of domination to which women are subjected, above all to maintain the powers that shape society. To this end, she presents a series of circumstances imposed on women to express their “natural identity”, which ends up conforming to standards of adornment, dress, posture, behavior, etc., that associate women with the “feminine role” (BEAUVOIR, 1980, p. 299).

Based on the understanding that no essence precedes existence, the author states that men and women are socially constructed, and therefore "becoming a woman" is revealed as an effort by the environment and culture to determine the gender that is affirmed in society.

Agora, tomando-se como base de que o gênero é uma construção social, e que esta construção categoriza pessoas, papéis, direitos e oportunidades, percebe-se que a definição biologizante entre homem *versus* mulher é, na verdade, uma definição

hierárquica de poder, permitindo a percepção de que os corpos são *gendrados*, ou seja, formatados segundo “normas” do que é ser homem e ser mulher na sociedade.

Now, assuming that gender is a social construction and that this construction categorizes people, roles, rights, and opportunities, we can see that the biologizing definition of man versus woman is, in fact, a hierarchical definition of power, allowing the perception that bodies are gendered, that is, shaped according to “norms” of what it means to be a man and a woman in society.

To better understand the scope of this statement, another concept is brought to light: patriarchy. Hartmann (1979), quoted by Safiotti (2004), defines patriarchy as a male pact that guarantees the oppression of women. This oppression allows men to establish domination, control, and fear over women, imposing on them a subjugation characterized by the provision of sexual services, procreation, and the exploitation of their labor power, especially in the family sphere.

Considering that patriarchy is a social construction and involves the production of subjectivities, it can be said that relations between men and women are characterized by a process of domination-exploitation, in which bodies are objectified “by control and dependence, and bound to their own identity by a consciousness or self-knowledge” (FOUCAULT, 2011, p. 235).

The reflection of this ends up characterizing subjects who induce, coerce, divert, limit, and subjugate other beings; in this sense, the perception of patriarchy represents not only the visibility of a context of the domination of intimate structures but also the acceptance of the civil social hierarchy, which widely invades spaces and relationships; it, therefore, conceives of a structure that supports ideological and symbolic practices that condone phenomena of physical, sexual, emotional and moral violence, that are widely “accepted” and conform to the condition of “submission”, in this case, of women.

É nisto que se funda a divisão sexual do trabalho, uma relação que preconiza à mulher o papel de reprodução (trabalho doméstico e não remunerado) e ao homem, o papel de produção (trabalho remunerado) (KERGOAT, 2009). Até 1962, no Brasil, as mulheres não tinham o direito de exercer atividade remunerada sem o consentimento de seu marido; isto quer dizer que ela era fundamentalmente controlada, reprimida e tutelada por seu cônjuge quanto aos seus próprios direitos e liberdades civis, o que termina por evidenciar um sistema cruel que as subordinava e objetificava.

This is the foundation of the sexual division of labor, a relationship that assigns women the role of reproduction (domestic and unpaid work) and men the role of production (paid work) (KERGOAT, 2009). Until 1962, women in Brazil did not have the right to engage in paid work without the consent of their husbands; this means that they were fundamentally controlled, repressed, and protected by their spouses in terms of their own rights and civil liberties, which ended up highlighting a cruel system that subordinated and objectified them.

From a theoretical point of view, this condition falls under the Foucauldian concept of biopower, in which the biological characteristics of individuals are used to regulate their social position. For Foucault (2011), women undergo a process of “disciplinarization of bodies”, in which their social function is justified by the maintenance of political control aimed at domination.

This condition is reminiscent of the image of the Panopticon - Foucault, studying the history of violence in prisons in *Surveillance and Punishment*, brings up the image of a circular prison where a single guard is enough to keep an eye on all the prisoners, without them knowing exactly when they are being watched - and this “must be understood as a generalizable model of operation; a way of defining the relations of power with the everyday lives of men” (FOUCAULT, 2011, p. 194).

For Safiotti (2004), the configuration of the Panopticon fits the description of the social surveillance imposed on women within society and the relations of domination-exploitation to which they are subjected, comprising a production of subjectivities that ends up determining behaviors such as what kind of clothes they should wear, who they should walk with, where they should go, what time they can do it, and so on. This means that from childhood, women are subjected to restrictions, segregation, and a violation of their universal right: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, Article 1, 1948).

Understanding that this violation does not imply a single component of marginalization (in the sense of being on the margins, vulnerable), being a woman, as a category of analysis, is imbricated with multiple markers that give it oppression and difference - and this has been called intersectionality (CRENSHAW, 2004).

## 2 INTERSECTIONALITY, THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF SUBORDINATION

O conceito de interseccionalidade foi cunhado pela primeira vez pela feminista negra norte-americana Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), no artigo *Demarginalizing the*

The concept of intersectionality was first coined by black American feminist Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), in the article *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. It is, therefore, a methodological component that allows us to see different kinds of subordination, on an individual and/or collective scale, making visible axes that interpose inequality between individuals, whether by color, social class, ethnicity, sexuality, schooling, or age, among other factors.

It is thus clear that the mere biologizing definition between man and woman is insufficient to understand/make visible the demands of oppression, exploitation and violence experienced by certain groups of women and, as such, gender inequalities are the result of “crossed and multi-causal” discrimination (GAMRANI and TRIBOUILLARD,



2021, p.6 ) between the social markers of difference, and can more poignantly affect people who share more than one marker, such as women who are simultaneously black, lesbian and from the periphery - which also ends up having repercussions on their experience of the city - than if they were white, heterosexual and from the dominant class.

The contributions of intersectionality bring to light the perception of how different profiles of women experience the dynamic interactions that lead to their subordination/domination. By naming these oppressions, it is possible to better understand the division created by an unequal society, in order to combat the social structure that determines, for specific groups of women, greater situations of violence and vulnerability.

Among the main contexts of violence in the gender sphere, physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence stand out, imbricated to a greater or lesser degree by the intersectional criteria of difference. By way of contextualization, this work uses the concept of gender-based violence promulgated by the Belém do Pará Convention (1994), according to which Chapter 1, Article 1, without page, states: "Violence against women means any act or conduct based on gender that causes death, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, whether in the public or private sphere".

This violence, which is perpetrated with the connivance of the State, and above all society, has serious consequences for the development of the individual, in the broadest sense, especially in terms of the right to come and go and/or to frequent certain spaces (i.e. in a fair and equal manner). The naturalization of the phenomenon and the impunity of aggressors not only point to the lack of public discussion on the subject but also cover up a kind of complacency towards the phenomenon. In a 2016 survey by the Brazilian Public Security Forum (FBSP), it was found that 43% of men over the age of 16 believed that "women who don't respect themselves deserve to be raped".

When we bring the discussion to the context of typified violence, purposely excluding the domestic and family context - the largest representative of male aggression modalities, as it is not the object of study of this work - the Brazilian Public Security Forum (2021) counted that 22% of femicides recorded in Brazil that year took place in the street; in non-lethal contexts, 60% of aggressions were perpetrated by acquaintances, such as spouses and ex-spouses, and were more frequent among black women than among white women.

A survey by Actionaid (2017) revealed that 86% of Brazilian women have already been sexually/morally harassed in public spaces, while another survey, commissioned by the Patrícia Galvão and Vladimir Herzog Institutes (2015), found that 90% of women, aged between 14 and 24 and living in the outskirts of Brazilian cities, have "stopped" going to the streets and wearing certain clothes for fear of violence (ACTIONAID, 2017).

### 3 A GENERIFIED CITY

Evaluating the different uses that men and women make of the city, Montaner and Muxí (2014) point out that, historically, women's participation in urban life has mostly taken place in the private sphere. For the authors, the social construction of the genders determines this exclusion: women, silenced and excluded from the manifestations of urban life, have remained "imprisoned" within the home, while men have not been deprived of the public space. This segregation, especially for women, has resulted in a denial of urbanity, from which they are "attributed" the terms: woman of life, woman of the street.

It is clear, therefore, that the paradigm of the sexual division of space cultivated the idea that the city was populated by "shining men" and "dark women", who were duly confined to their homes. Those who escaped the order of confinement were commonly referred to as prostitutes. Here, it's worth opening a parenthesis to reflect on the term prostitute. According to the Portuguese language dictionary, the word prostitute is defined as a woman who engages in prostitution by offering sexual services; now, if we take its synonyms, we can see the names: street woman, lost woman, and public woman.

It should be noted here that the duality of public versus private and, therefore of male versus female, ratifies the patriarchal culture that assigns women to the home and excludes them from public life and the full experience of the city. For them, what is public is beyond their reach, since this condition condemns them to "perdition", to scum, to the folly of a life of misery and unhappiness. It is also worth pointing out that the separation between what is public, and therefore male-dominated (productive and paid work), and what is private, and female-dominated (reproductive/domestic and unpaid work), reinforces the hierarchies of subordination around the labor functions that sustain the economy, politics and society itself.

The division between the sexes seems to be in the order of things, as is sometimes said to speak of what is normal, natural, to the point of being inevitable: it is present, at the same time, in an objectified state in things and in the entire social world and, in an incorporated state, in the corpus and habitus of agents, functioning as systems of schemes, perception, thought, and action. [...] it is the social division of labor, a rather strict distribution of the activities assigned to each of the two sexes, their place, their time, their instruments; it is the structure of space, between the place of assembly or the market, reserved for men, and the house, reserved for women; or, within it, between the male part, with the hall, and the female part, with the stable, the water and the vegetables (BOURDIEU, 2002, p. 17-18).

From the perspective that the primitive accumulation of capital is partly a framework to hide women's work, it can be seen that the patriarchal system also places



women's work as inferior and therefore without economic value; this creates the backbone of the modern capitalist family: man provider, woman housewife - even if she works, her participation will be seen as "supporting" that of her partner (FEDERICI, 2017).

In this way, the pillars of the "traditional family" are preserved. While the man is the basis of marriage, as a civic institution, the woman occupies the role of wife and mother, solely responsible for caring duties which, once again, determines the structure of differentiation in the appropriation of spaces.

This will further accentuate the impact of the sexual division of labor on the urban space, trapping women in certain places, mainly through the substantial separation and hierarchization of commercial, industrial, and residential areas (Silva, 2003). This situation is even more extreme in the case of women, who do not enjoy the centralized areas at all because they are excluded from productive activities and the public space and still suffer daily from the precariousness of these distant, monofunctional places, with absent or insufficient urban infrastructure and public facilities (HELENE, 2019, p.961).

It is important to note here that the effects of this system alter not only the spatial configuration of the city but also mobility itself. With longer, commuter journeys - characteristic of productive (read: male) activities - men commute home versus work; with shorter, polygonal journeys - characteristic of reproductive (read: female) activities - women carry out care functions, especially with the help of family members: husband, children, father-in-law, mother-in-law, father, mother, relatives, etc., creating their own mobility network (SAMPAPÉ, 2019).

Thus, the city can be said to be generified, that is, marked by relationships that alter, shape, and organize places according to the social roles of each individual (McDOWELL, 2000); In other words, space projects/mirrors male and female functions expressed in the public/private dichotomy, determining patterns that differentiate their experiences, including commuting.

That said, it can be inferred that the conquest of public space is, from a gender perspective, a struggle of advances and setbacks, of domination and subordination, marked by asymmetrical power relations. Although progress has been made, the binary division of individuals remains discriminatory, and promotes violence and invisibility; in this way, it can be said that the perception of walkability is relative since human movements are marked by pre-established functions, thus contributing to the perpetuation of a pattern that subjugates women (in all their spheres), as well as not differentiating the movements that each one, in their full sense, can have and make in the city.

#### 4 GENDER, MOBILITY AND PERCEPTION OF SAFETY

Com o avanço do movimento feminista e a conquista de direitos pelas mulheres, a perspectiva de gênero começou a fazer parte dos estudos urbanos na década de 1980, embora, somente há 10 anos, tenha ganhado força e visibilidade, com repercussões que correlacionam diretamente as variáveis gênero e mobilidade (SOUZA, 2019).

With the advance of the feminist movement and the conquest of women's rights, the gender perspective began to be part of urban studies in the 1980s, although it only gained strength and visibility 10 years ago, with repercussions that directly correlate the variables of gender and mobility (SOUZA, 2019).

It should be emphasized here that thinking about urban mobility is not only about circulation per se, but above all about reflecting on the socio-spatial dynamics that predispose mobility, and among these is the perception of safety.

The relationship between fear, violence, and public space is not new. Since the Chicago School, in the 1920s, there has been a notion that the architectural/urban design of space can determine the occurrence of crime; however, it was only in the 1960s that studies gained notoriety, relating the characteristics of the built environment to the occurrence of crimes (SIQUEIRA, 2015).

Três correntes de pensamento ganham força neste momento: *Os olhos da rua*, de Jane Jacobs (1961); o *Espaço defensável*, de Oscar Newman (1972); e a *Prevenção do crime através do desenho ambiental* (do inglês, *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design – CPED*), de Ray Jeffery (1971).

Three currents of thought gained strength at this time: Jane Jacobs' *Eyes on the Street* (1961); Oscar Newman's *Defensible Space* (1972); and Ray Jeffery's *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPED) (1971).

Jacobs (2009 [1961]), in *Death and Life of Great Cities*, points out that public space plays an important role in the perception of security. For her, it's not just a matter of policing, but of an “intricate, almost unconscious network of spontaneous controls and patterns of behavior, present among the people themselves and enforced by them” (JACOBS, 2009, p. 32). The author suggests that urban security is not determined by police presence alone, but essentially by the control network of users who live in and/or pass through the neighborhood, determining what she calls natural (informal) surveillance - the “eyes of the street”.

From the author's perspective, urban vitality is a crucial factor in the perception of safety and the idea of “space occupation” seems to be linked to the diversity of land use, which guarantees greater urban integration as users move through the streets at different times of the day, especially at night.

The presence of stores, restaurants, bars and social spaces allows for what she calls a “ballet of the streets”; on the other hand, the adoption of windows facing the

public space helps with the feeling of surveillance, which ends up being associated with a greater perception of security.

Another interesting point made by the author concerns the need for street lighting, as well as shorter blocks in the design of the city - lighting ensures less obscure routes, favoring the visualization of possible “hiding places”, while shorter blocks offer the greater possibility of escape and/or alternative routes in the midst of crime opportunities (JACOBS, 2009).

Uma década depois, Newman (1972), em *Espaços Defensáveis*, apresenta uma reflexão sobre o controle de espaços residenciais a partir da percepção de segurança. O autor parte do princípio de que o ambiente construído pode favorecer a prática criminosa quando da combinação de três fatores: a existência de um delinquente, a percepção de uma vítima (em potencial) e a ausência de impedimentos que possam gerar o delito – fator este que se relaciona diretamente aos aspectos da forma urbana.

A decade later, Newman (1972), in *Defensible Spaces*, presents a reflection on the control of residential spaces based on the perception of security. The author starts from the principle that the built environment can favor criminal activity when there is a combination of three factors: the existence of an offender, the perception of a (potential) victim, and the absence of impediments that could lead to crime - a factor that is directly related to aspects of urban form.

Newman's (1972) proposal focuses on the visibility of the vigilante, i.e. the local resident who, by taking possession of the physical space, develops a sense of “belonging”, of defense against strangers. This approach includes the structuring of tactics that include physical or symbolic barriers and a clearer definition of spaces (public, semi-public, private, and semi-private), as well as the presence of natural surveillance - the same “eyes of the street” as Jane Jacobs (2009 [1961]).

For the author, urban security is based on four pillars: territoriality, image, surveillance, and safe zones; these characteristics are associated, respectively, with the control of the place, the appearance of physical space, the feeling of seeing and being seen, and the formation of safe areas, protected by well-defined physical or symbolic barriers: public-private spaces.

From the point of view of the previous theory, the author clashes with Jacobs (2009 [1961]) in the perception of social interaction, proposing a segregationist structure that treats “strangers” as potential enemies. On the other hand, the need for windows and access to the street ends up promoting more informal surveillance of the space, the aforementioned “eyes of the street” (JACOBS, 2009).

Jeffery (1971), in his book *Criminal Behavior and the Physical Environment*, coined the expression Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design - CPTED. (Crime

prevention through environmental design – own translation) pointing out strategies that can reduce the occurrence of crime in the city environment.

Based on the assumption that the occurrence of crime is made possible by favorable characteristics of the urban environment, the first generation of CPTED considered four basic principles: natural control of access, natural surveillance, maintenance of urban spaces, and territorial reinforcement, focusing on a situational view of crime (JEFFERY, 1971).

With the evolution of studies and the new associations between urban space and the perception of safety, Crowe (2000) presents a second generation of principles, proposing the inclusion of the social dimension as a measure to protect space. The author reinforces the legacy of Jacobs (2009 [1961]) with strategies that allow for greater appropriation, sociability, and natural surveillance of enclosures, encouraging tactics of social cohesion, appreciation of cultural identity, connectivity, and control in the use of spaces.

According to critics, the CPTED, as it was conceived, is limited by not considering the issues of gender, race, sexual orientation, class, age, accessibility, etc. of individuals - the intersectional components of difference - and thus derives a partial view of the perception of security in the urban environment (TRAMLAB, 2020); however, the most recent literature considers that it is from these characteristics that the sociability of crime can be mapped, avoiding the error of marginalizing certain spaces and populations.

No Brasil, as estratégias do CPTED vêm sendo incorporadas como forma de prevenção à violência nos espaços públicos das grandes cidades. Algumas dessas medidas podem ser vistas no Programa Nacional de Segurança Pública com Cidadania (Pronasci), do Governo Federal, no Plano Estadual de Segurança Pública do Estado de Pernambuco e no projeto Dias Melhores, da Bahia (SIQUEIRA, 2015).

In Brazil, CPTED strategies have been incorporated as a way of preventing violence in the public spaces of large cities. Some of these measures can be seen in the Federal Government's National Program for Public Safety with Citizenship (Pronasci), the State Plan for Public Safety in the state of Pernambuco, and the Dias Melhores project in Bahia (SIQUEIRA, 2015).

In this sense, it can be seen that some municipalities have invested in urban regeneration, with measures that incorporate CPTED, intending to achieve safer spaces for society, especially for women, with the indication of a series of measures to apply these principles, such as the adoption of urban furniture, openings facing the street (doors and windows), public lighting at night, promoting diversity in land use, etc.

In light of the above, it is clear that fear and insecurity in the public space have a significant impact on active travel in the city, especially for women, but the way in which this perception is imposed on each user is different, in terms of aspects related to each

individual, especially the intersectional issues of difference. Therefore, it can be seen concluded that each gender experiences the perception of security in an individualized way: “Their fear is related to their physical integrity, armed robbery and murder. Men are more afraid of crimes related to property, the breaking and entering of homes” (SIQUEIRA, 2015, p. 24).

It's worth remembering that, in terms of gender dynamics, women's displacement is mostly related to intimate relationships, assumed in the private sphere, putting the activities of family life, and therefore reproductive activities, first, such as: paying the bills, providing food, taking the children to school, the doctor, leisure activities, and so on.

Now, the question must be asked: if men and women are spatialized differently, how does gender mobility impact on the perception of safety? In the opinion of Lizárraga et al. (2022), the physical and psychological integrity of the passer-by is a preponderant factor in choosing the most attractive mode of travel, since the chances of a woman choosing to walk are twice as low as those of a man.

For the authors, women are inserted in a social context that restricts them, limiting not only the experiences of those who have been victims of violence, but of all women, even those who have not experienced the context directly, increasing the perception of fear and insecurity due to the possibility of the crime they fear most: sexual violation.

Research such as Valentine (1989); Taylor (2011); Mihinjac (2022), Loukaitou-Siders (2004), Lizárraga et al. (2022), Silva (2022), and ITDP Brasil (2019) confirm these findings and discuss the perception of insecurity experienced by women daily in public spaces.

Valentine (1989), in her study *The geography of women's fear*, categorically states that women's fear stems from the sexual vulnerability to which they are exposed. For the author, women have the sensation of having their bodies and spaces are being invaded as they move around the city (especially on foot), since, for her, the notion of a safe environment is a private space.

The author points out that, when women experience vulnerability, women come up with “coping strategies”, that is, alternative behaviors that try to preserve their integrity: physically, psychologically, sexually, and morally, especially at night - which, in short, is a factor that limits their access to the city (SIQUEIRA, 2015).

The research “*Women and the City: Examining the Impacts of Gender, Violence and Urbanization*”, conducted by Alice Taylor for ActionAid (2011), confirms these findings. The study investigated women's freedom and the risks to their urban safety, depending on the infrastructure of the space, the services offered, and the urban planning measures observed. According to the author, women suffer two types of violence, which are simultaneously intersected: gender-based violence in itself, and

violence generated by the space. The author affirms that the context of violence mostly affects women who are in a more vulnerable situation.

Violence against women in public spaces particularly affects the most marginalized, as they have fewer choices about the spaces they frequent. Women's roles and the differences between women by race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, disabilities, marital or maternal status, and socioeconomic status, directly influence the way women move through cities on a daily basis (TAYLOR, 2011, p. 09).

Another issue mentioned in the study is that gender-based violence is a normalized condition, in other words, it is allowed and justified by different actors, which ends up imposing on the victims the quality of being responsible for the crime - an insult to their existence and dignity. For the author, the element with the greatest impact on the perception of urban safety was public lighting - the absence or precariousness of this lighting was the most relevant factor for the manifestation of fear in the interviewees.

Therefore, fear and insecurity are factors that have an impact on urban mobility, especially for women, who have to readjust their routes, schedules, routes and behaviors according to "standards" of greater security, such as: the type of clothing they should wear, the modes of transport they should adopt, routines with less daily exposure, schedules with greater security, being accompanied on their journeys (preferably by men), among other social impositions.

The research Jornada sobre la prevenció de les violències masclistes mitjançant el disseny ambiental (Conference on the prevention of sexist violence through environmental design), by Mateja Mihinjac (2022), confirms these findings. According to the analysis, the perception of safety differs between the sexes, revealing that women's fear, especially at night, is almost four times greater than that of men in the same situation.

Loukaitou-Siders (2004) relates the data to the deteriorating condition of urban areas. The researcher considered that, in the face of deterioration, the perception of safety is associated with the concept of the "broken window syndrome" (KELLING AND COLES, 1997), determining that certain areas are potential "hot spots of crime" (BUERGER; COHN; PETROSINO, 1995).

From this point of view, it can be seen that the perception of safety is combined with characteristics such as: lack of public lighting, lack of maintenance of spaces, vacant lots, underused or abandoned buildings, broken doors, and windows, presence of garbage, etc., giving the feeling that the public space is a "no man's land", "outside the law"; therefore, criminal actions are unlikely to be noticed or reported (LOUKAITOU-SIDERIS, 2022; LIZÁRRAGA, et al., 2022).

Silva (2022) confirms this perception by stating that deserted urban areas, facades without visual permeability, lack of road maintenance, signs of vandalism,



graffiti and/or the presence of litter generally affect women's perceptions of safety. Lizárraga et al. (2022) recognize that these elements are environmental markers of crime and decrease the likelihood of women, in particular, taking up walking. The authors also point out that the occurrence of enclosed spaces, limited escape routes, remote public transport stops, empty urban parks, and public roads with a considerable number of abandoned or underused buildings are points that generate female insecurity.

A study proposed by ITDP Brasil (2018), in line with the National Urban Mobility Policy and the City Statute, proposed indicators that can contribute to monitoring and evaluating public mobility policies from a gender perspective, taking into account the provisions of the United Nations' New Urban Agenda (UN, 2016) - Habitat III: Housing and Sustainable Urban Development.

With the Brazilian context as a reference, ITDP conducted a case study in the city of Recife, in Pernambuco, to understand how these issues impact on women's lives and access to the city. The research revealed that walking is seen as the most unsafe mode of transport for women, and is associated with fear of sexual victimization, especially in contexts where there is little movement of people and at specific times of the day, mostly at night.

The research showed that streets without movement do not encourage diversity and a mix of uses, which are essential to the perception of safety in pedestrian movement - as Jacobs (2009 [1961]) has already pointed out. Bus stops, alleys, public roads, and squares were considered to be the most unsafe places for women, as they provide a greater opportunity for sexual assault - to protect themselves from this type of crime, women adopted defensive behaviors, such as: changing routes, avoiding poorly lit areas, asking for company, avoiding public transport, etc.

Recognizing that this discussion is inseparable from the dynamics of urban life, collectives, NGOs, public institutions, events, advertising campaigns and documentaries around the world have provoked debates to demonstrate the gap between systems of domination (i.e. male) and the reality of women in the city.

Obviously, this is not just a spatial issue, but one that converges with a sociological and structural demand that needs attention. Making these issues visible provides a means of not only promoting greater safety for women, but also facilitating access to the city and to movement, since it must be remembered that "cities are not the same for women and men", especially contemporary cities, which are "less accessible, less decipherable, more unknown and therefore a source of fears and differences that seem irreconcilable" (SEGOVIA, 2007, p. 16 apud FALÚ, 2009, p.15).

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

O artigo abordou a caminhabilidade direcionada a um dos matizes de definição dos papéis sociais que estruturam a sociedade: de homem e mulher; e, sua relação de significância e significado no deslocamento a pé na cidade. A partir da investigação foi possível atestar que inúmeros fatores – fora da ótica do espaço – compactuam para as decisões de deslocamento de ambos os gêneros, revelando como a ótica social tem correlação com os atributos construtivos e de projeto presentes na urbe.

The article looked at walkability in relation to one of the shades of definition of the social roles that structure society: men and women and their relationship of significance and meaning in walking in the city. Based on the research, it was possible to prove that numerous factors - outside of space - play a role in the commuting decisions of both genders, revealing how the social perspective correlates with the constructive and design attributes present in the city.

It should also be pointed out that intersectionality is a determining methodological factor which, in addition to making it possible to measure different types of subordination, on an individual and/or collective scale, highlights the inequalities between individuals, whether based on skin color, social class, ethnicity, sexuality, schooling, age, among others.

In this context, it was possible to verify that the state of security and fear has a significant impact on women's journeys on foot, making it clear, therefore, that the choice of certain modes and routes, and the possibility of crime, mediate the perception of fear and insecurity in public spaces, drastically reducing the chances of women adopting walking, especially, as pointed out by Loukaitou-Sideris, 2022 and Lizárraga, et al., 2022.

Thus, it can be inferred that fear and violence limit women's use of and access to the city, whether through a sense of insecurity or sexual victimization, and are related to a whole history of social construction that has directed women's participation in urban life mostly toward the private sphere.

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