








Review

# Thematic Review on Women's Perception of Safety While Walking in Public Space: The STEP UP Project

Lily Scarponi <sup>1</sup>, Lamia Abdelfattah <sup>1</sup>, Andrea Gorrini <sup>1</sup>, Catalina Valenzuela Cortés <sup>1</sup>, Gerardo Carpentieri <sup>2</sup>, Carmen Guida <sup>2</sup>, Floriana Zucaro <sup>2</sup>, Florencia Andreola <sup>3</sup>, Azzurra Muzzonigro <sup>3</sup>, Laura Da Re <sup>3</sup>, Eleonora Gargiulo <sup>4</sup>, Carlos Cañas <sup>4</sup>, Jim Walker <sup>4</sup> and Rawad Choubassi <sup>1,\*</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Fondazione Transform Transport ETS, Via Lovanio 8, 20121 Milan, Italy; l.scarponi@transformtransport.org (L.S.); a.gorrini@transformtransport.org (A.G.)  
<sup>2</sup> TeMA Lab, Dipartimento di Ingegneria Civile, Edile e Ambientale, Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II, Piazzale Tecchio, 80, 80125 Naples, Italy  
<sup>3</sup> Sex and the City APS, Via della Moscova 58, 20121 Milan, Italy  
<sup>4</sup> Walk21 Foundation, 24 Moorend Road, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL530HD, UK  
\* Correspondence: r.choubassi@transformtransport.org

**Abstract:** The contributions of this paper are the result of a thematic review conducted on some of the most relevant scientific contributions and policy guidelines about women's perception of safety while walking in public spaces. The first part of the review focused on 23 scientific references revolving around the keywords "gender", "safety" and "walkability". This led to the establishment of three main Safety Factors: (i) Spatial Features (space characteristics/morphological features); (ii) City Use (traces of behavior and presence of city users); and (iii) Hotspots (safe havens and no-go areas); further resulting in 19 sub-factors. The second part of the review covered a collection of 20 reports and 10 guidelines focused on diverse geographical scales, areas of interest and target audiences, as well as data collection methods. This involved the selection of multiple case studies, which are also presented, thus maintaining a geographically diverse sample. As part of the scientific research project "STEP UP—Walkability for Women in Milan", the outputs of the proposed thematic review will be exploited to help identify challenging areas of Milan (Italy), as samples of analysis to develop a set of policy recommendations to enhance the level of walkability for women.

**Keywords:** walkability; gender; safety factors; inequality; STEP UP project



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## 1. Introduction

Advanced urban and transport planning activities are shifting towards sustainable urban mobility solutions, focusing on walkability [1–3]. Walkability is generally defined as the level of friendliness the urban environment is for walking in terms of service availability and proximity (i.e., 15-min city), street connectivity, comfort of public spaces, and road safety. Although traditional approaches tend to focus on the spatial dimension [4], individual characteristics of city users are also found to have a significant impact on the perceived level of walkability of streets and public spaces. This includes demographics, travel purposes, mobility preferences, etc. Standardized methods of measuring walkability tend to implicitly exclude underrepresented population groups, such as women (i.e., Sustainable Development Goals 11.2-Sustainable Transport for All) [5].

According to the contributions of Manaugh and El-Geneidy [6], Speck [3], and Rani et al. [7], as well as previous works carried out by the members of the consortium [8–11], the assessment of the level of walkability for women in urban environments can be defined through the following general criteria: (i) usefulness; (ii) comfort; (iii) safety; (iv) attractiveness. These criteria are applied through a gendered lens that considers gender-based dynamics such as mobility patterns (i.e., trip chaining) or social roles that influence individual behavior in urban space (i.e., care duties).

Moreover, the works of Lecompte and Pablo [12], Pollard and Wagnild [13], Golan et al. [14], Kinkaid [15], Andersdotter Fabre et al. [16], and Sethi and Velez-Duque [17] highlight that women experience the city differently than men, in part because they are more concerned with safety issues related to aggression and harassment [14]. These constraints lead to precautionary or avoidance behaviors due to fear of violence, perception of risk, and a sense of vulnerability as major inhibitors of mobility for women in public spaces [18–22].

In this framework, the scientific research project “STEP UP—Walkability for Women in Milan” (Available at: <http://www.stepup-milan.it/>, accessed on 28 October 2023) focuses on the needs and expectations of women while walking, with the specific aim to study women’s perceived level of safety (Safety was further divided into three macro categories of safety: (i) safety from vehicular traffic hazard; (ii) risk of injury; (iii) and safety from aggression, harassment and violence (physical and verbal). The latter was of main interest within the gender-based framework proposed by the STEP UP project.) while walking alone at night. To that end, a thematic literature review was conducted on the most recent relevant scientific contributions and policy guidelines about this topic.

The review is divided into two components: the first is a structured review of academic literature and scientific papers (see Section 2), and the second is composed of an examination of existing guidelines, reports and case studies on the topic (see Section 3). The results of the thematic literature review will be used to guide a geospatial analysis of the city of Milan, with the ultimate aim of identifying challenging areas or neighborhoods. This will be used to develop a set of policy recommendations to enhance the level of walkability of these areas through policy guidelines and tactical urbanism interventions.

### 1.1. Intersectional Approach

In order to address the complexity of the research project “STEP UP—Walkability for Women in Milan”, the paper aims to study the topic of walkability for women using an intersectional approach. Intersectionality is a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw [23] to recognize the compounded inequalities due to intersecting dimensions of a person’s identity, and has been more recently described as “a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other” [24]. Following this framework, an intersectional approach aims to tackle the complex system of multiple spheres of inequalities as a whole. In the context of this research, it is important to remember that the criteria of walkability are not universally valued but depend on the individual perception of the urban environment.

The intersectional approach identifies gender as one of the key elements of the multi-layered fabric of discrimination influencing human experience in the urban environment [18]. Despite ongoing debate about the role and shape of gender as a social construct in societies, gender classifications undoubtedly play a major role in shaping people’s everyday experiences in a city. In the framework of this research, the term ‘women’ refers to individuals who identify as women, within the knowledge that women’s experiences and challenges are diverse and shaped by multiple dimensions of identity. The definition of ‘women and girls’ used herein is also inclusive of those who are trans, gender fluid, non-binary or prefer to self-describe [25].

Interest in and endorsements of the intersectional approach is growing in global discourse around city development. The European Charter for Inequality (Available at: <https://charter-equality.eu/>, accessed on 28 October 2023) provides a guide for regional and local governments breaking down intersectionality into a practical approach that can be tailored to local needs and integrated into local equality policies [26]. An intersectional perspective is also included in the European Commission’s 2020–2025 Gender Equality Strategy and constitutes one of its six main pillars [27].

The drive towards equality in public spaces must start by acknowledging the standard default through which cities have been designed up to this day, which focuses on a singular target user that is male, white and able-bodied [28]. This creates urban environments that

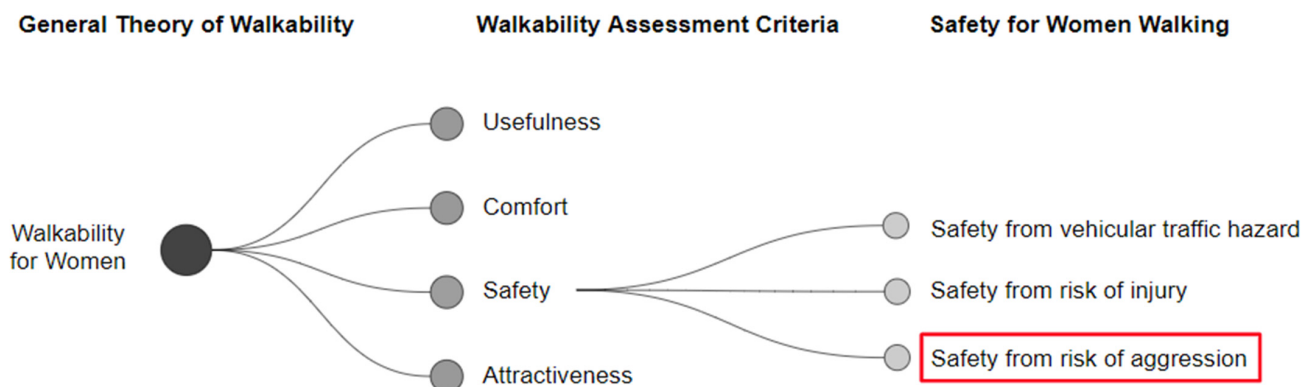
are not neutral, which, consequently, lead to dissimilar outcomes for different user groups. Within this context, the concept of fairness must be extended beyond notions of equal treatment to acknowledge and encompass the multitude of interdependencies and layers of discrimination [29].

### 1.2. Scope Definition: From Walkability to Safety for Women While Walking

The theme of walkability has gained popular attention due to the current shift towards sustainable mobility, particularly in urban environments. The attention began in 1988 with the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights issued by the European Parliament, which focused on the need to ensure comfort and safety for pedestrians in urban areas. In 2006, the Walk21 Foundation created the International Charter for Walking, identifying eight principles and 32 indicative actions for cities to improve walkability (Available at: <https://walk21.com/resources/international-charter-for-walking/>, accessed on 28 October 2023). More recently, the General Theory of Walkability proposed by Jeff Speck [3] attempted to provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating the level of walkability of urban environments.

Walkability, the perceived level of pedestrian friendliness in urban spaces, is influenced by spatial characteristics of the urban environment and by individual characteristics of city users. When referring to walkability for women, we address the complex experience of walkability related to identifying oneself as a woman. As highlighted by Golan et al. [14], Andersotter Fabre et al. [16], and Sethi and Velez-Duque [30], women experience the city differently than men due to factors such as concern with security issues related to aggression and harassment. This leads to a major inhibition of mobility for women in public spaces, especially at night time [31]. Although there are several factors that distinguish women's walkability from that of men, the safety factor is the one that proves to be the most relevant [14].

Under the theme of walkability, the current paper is focused on addressing the issue of perception of safety for people who identify as women, which is particularly related to the risk of aggression as shown in Figure 1. Women's perception of safety in public spaces is well covered by the literature [18,20,32]. It is shaped both by features of the urban environment and personal attributes. Public space does not exist in a vacuum and is constantly shaped and reshaped by the bodies that inhabit and experience it. To give two examples from the field of environmental psychology, the prospect-refuge theory analyzes the influence of geometric characteristics of space on a user's sense of vulnerability [33], whereas the Broken Window Theory [34] states that a heightened perception of disorder and neglect in an area increases fear of crime.



**Figure 1.** Relationship between walkability for women and safety for women walking.

Perception of safety is also shaped by people's past personal experiences and personal background and is influenced by social interactions, cultural factors and individual characteristics. Thus, the perception of safety is directly linked to one's social identity and its many layers, including age, gender, status, etc. [32].

## 2. Review of Scientific Literature

The proposed scoping review of scientific literature focused on identifying pertinent issues and challenges regarding women’s mobility experiences as pedestrians. The aim was to provide a comprehensive overview and mapping of existing literature. The review was conducted through several academic databases (i.e., Web of Science, Scopus, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate), focusing on the most recent and relevant scientific contributions about this topic, organized in a tabular structure. This contained a list of twenty-three scientific references, which were selected through keywords (i.e., gender, safety and walkability). The papers date from 1999 to 2022 and encompass a balanced distribution over said timeline with a focus on the most recent contributions after 2015, which make up over half the sample.

The selected bibliographic database was then reviewed and the summary of the findings was organized by (i) bibliographic information (Author, Year and reference); (ii) gender approach (none, binary, non-binary); (iii) timeframe (undefined, daytime, night); (iv) Safety Factors (i.e., SFs\_L1, SFs\_L2); (v) methodological approach; (vi) key findings of each reference. This led to the identification and analysis of relevant factors influencing the perception of women’s safety within existing literature. The analysis started from the collection of individual factors of safety as they appear and are discussed in the literature, resulting in a total of 17 factors of safety. In order to provide a synthetic classification, the identified factors (SFs\_L2) were grouped into three main categories (SFs\_L1) (see Figure 2 and Table 1): (i) Spatial Features (space characteristics/morphological features); (ii) City Use (traces of behavior and presence of other city users); and (iii) Hotspots (safe havens and no-go areas). The resulting list was then validated through a two-hour workshop organized by the Consortium Partners of the STEP UP project in June 2023 and held in Milan. During the workshop, ten participants were asked to review the safety factors emerging from the literature review through the completion of a survey designed to understand the influence of each safety factor on people’s perception of safety. At the end of the process, nineteen sub-factors or Safety Factors—Level 2 (SFs\_L2) of positive or negative connotation were consolidated (see Figure 2).

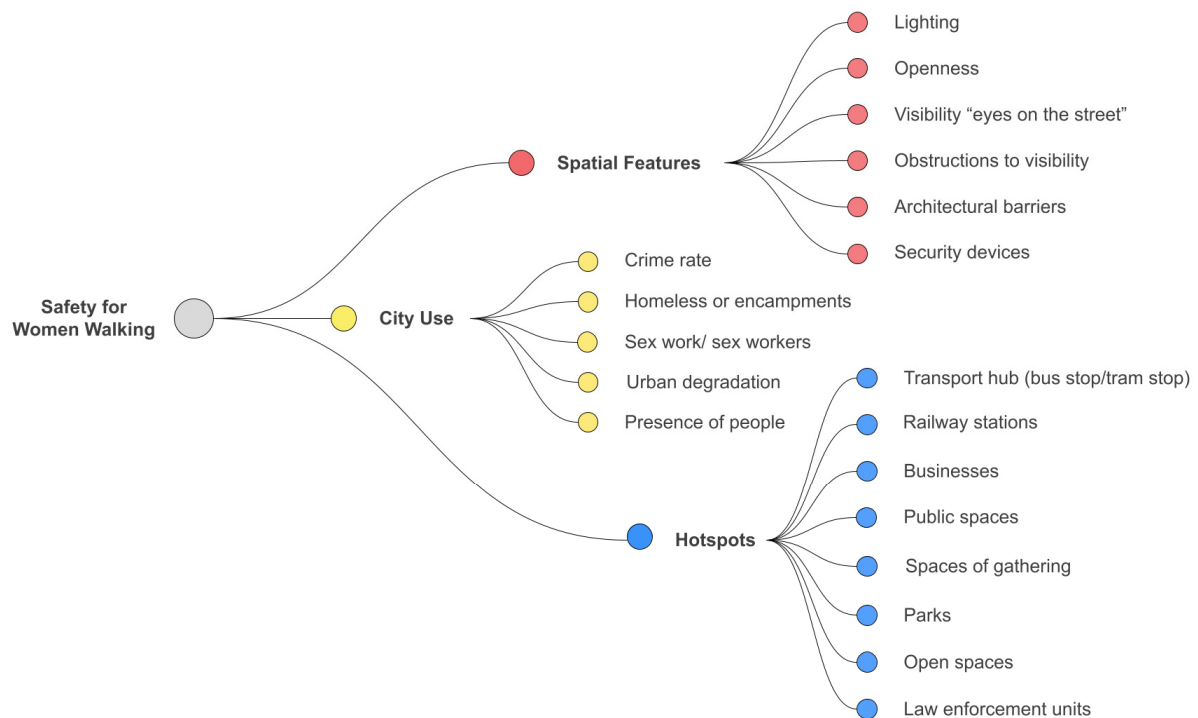


Figure 2. Safety for women walking factors SF\_L1 and SF\_L2.

**Table 1.** Results of the review of scientific literature about SF\_L1 and SF\_L2 (“•”—reference categorized based on the presence of SF\_L1 and SF\_L2).

References	Spatial Features							City Use					Hotspots						
	Lighting	Openness	Visibility “Eyes on the Street”	Obstructions to Visibility	Architectural Barriers	Security Devices	Crime Rate	Homeless or Encampments	Sex Work/Prostitution	Urban Degradation	Presence of People	Transport Hub (Bus Stop /Tram Stop)	Railway Station	Businesses	Public Space	Spaces of Gathering	Parks	Open Spaces	Law Enforcement Units
Ceccato et al., 2022 [35]	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•							
England & Simon, 2010 [36]	•		•	•			•					•							
Fenster, 2005 [37]		•	•												•				
Galbrun et al., 2015 [38]				•															
Golan et al., 2019 [14]			•	•	•	•				•					•	•			
Gorrini et al., 2021 [10]	•			•				•		•					•	•		•	
Grove, 2015 [39]				•				•											•
Koskela, 1999 [18]	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•			•	•			
Lebugle et al., 2017 [40]				•				•				•							
Levy, 2013 [41]												•							
Loukaitou-Sideris, 2006 [42]	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•
Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014 [20]	•	•		•				•	•	•	•	•					•		•
Pain, 2000 [19]	•		•	•	•	•						•			•	•			
Pain, 2001 [32]				•				•				•							
Ramirez et al., 2021 [43]								•				•							

Table 1. Cont.

References	Spatial Features				City Use					Hotspots									
Author(s), Year	Lighting	Openness	Visibility “Eyes on the Street”	Obstructions to Visibility	Architectural Barriers	Security Devices	Crime rate	Homeless or Encampments	Sex work/Prostitution	Urban Degradation	Presence of People	Transport Hub (bus Stop /Tram Stop)	Railway Station	Businesses	Public Space	Spaces of Gathering	Parks	Open Spaces	Law enforcement Units
Rossetti et al., 2019 [44]	•	•	• •			•	•				•					•			
Uteng, 2019 [45]	•						•												•
Uteng, 2021 [46]	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•							
Vasquez-Henriquez, 2020 [47]				•				•	•										
Vitrano et al., 2018 [48]	•			•			•	•			•	•							•
Whitzman et al., 2014 [49]				•					•								•		
Whitzman, 2012 [22]	•		• •					•	•								•		

### 2.1. Spatial Features

The SF\_L1 ‘Spatial Features’, namely factors related to the spatial form, is focused on the characteristics/morphological features of the urban environments which influence the perception of the safety of women while walking (e.g., lighting conditions, presence of urban furniture, etc.). The perception of space varies on parameters that range from geometry and proportion of space to details of urban design [44]. In this context, the identified Safety Factors—Level 2 include the following:

- SF\_L2 Lighting: Presence, maintenance and features of lighting systems;
- SF\_L2 Openness: Ability to see and move in all directions;
- SF\_L2 Visibility “eyes on the street”: Possibility to be seen from shops, vendors and buildings;
- SF\_L2 Obstructions to visibility: Presence of greenery and other elements as an obstacle or as harbors of hiding spaces;
- SF\_L2 Architectural Barriers: Physical impediments to free/direct movements;
- SF\_L2 Security devices: Presence of emergency buttons and/or surveillance systems.

**Lighting:** The design of streets and public spaces should include the presence and maintenance of adequate lighting systems to enhance the perception of safety while walking. Perception of safety is enhanced through increased awareness of one’s surroundings, which—at night—is contingent on the level of illumination in public spaces, streets and transport hubs. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Visibility and the SF\_L2 Security devices.

**Openness:** The geometric morphology of space can itself convey a sense of safety and control of the surrounding environment through the factor of the field of view. If the field of view is wide, the subject has a better understanding of the elements present in the surrounding space. If the field of view is narrow, the awareness of the environment becomes limited, leading to feelings of fear and anxiousness. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Visibility and the SF\_L2 Obstructions of visibility.

**Visibility “eyes on the street”:** The sense of being seen by others whilst in a public environment can be perceived as comforting. The concept of visibility entails the potential to be seen by an outside party and, thus, to receive help and support in case of distress or threat. Visibility is related to the presence of active ground-level shop fronts but also by the presence of windows of residential and other buildings, mainly on the lower floors. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Openness, SF\_L2 Lighting and SF\_L2 Obstructions of visibility.

**Obstructions to Visibility:** Obstructions to visibility are elements that are present in the urban environment, due to its design, could act as a visual obstacle and create blind spots. These elements range from transport vehicles, including parked cars or buses, to waste containers and different forms of urban greenery. While the presence of greenery is generally associated with a positive impact on the walking experience, in the context of safety, thick or impenetrable masses of greenery and shrubbery could often contribute to a perception of danger. This depends on the type of greenery, its state or condition, its location in space and the level of obstruction it causes to visibility. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Openness, SF\_L2 Visibility and SF\_L2 Barriers.

**Architectural Barriers:** Architectural barriers are present in most urban settings and are often inevitable (railways, highways, natural elements such as rivers). Barriers are spaces that often create physical divisions within the urban fabric and limit the number of exit routes. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Obstructions to visibility and SF\_L2 Security devices.

**Security Devices:** The presence of security devices in public spaces, when recognizable, could increase the perception of safety. In this case, we are referring to two kinds of devices: the first simply gives a feeling of visibility (e.g., CCTV), and the second requires an active response from the individual, such as pushing a SOS button. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Lighting and the SF\_L2 Barriers.

## 2.2. The City Use

The SF\_L1 ‘City Use’, namely the presence of city users or the traces of behavior of other city users, has a significant influence on the perception of security, particularly regarding the concept of fear of the other and the unknown. In this context, the identified Safety Factors—Level 2 include the following:

- *SF\_L2 Crime rate*: Reported crimes on streets related to assault, harassment, robbery;
- *SF\_L2 Homeless or encampments*: Presence of homeless people and encampments;
- *SF\_L2 Sex work/sex workers*: Presence of sex workers or the activity of sex work;
- *SF\_L2 Urban degradation*: Lack of upkeep of streets, sidewalks and public spaces (e.g., litter, tags, etc.);
- *SF\_L2 Presence of people*: Sense of belonging, perception of anonymity and isolation.

**Crime Rate**: Crime rate refers to the public acknowledgment that a certain area is subject to a high or low number of reported crimes, such as assault, harassment or robbery. Perception of safety, in this case, is related to the familiarity of individual persons with the area. However, it is also influenced by public media discourse and various possible sources of information [32]. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Presence of encampments, SF\_L2 Urban degradation and SF\_L2 Sex work/sex workers.

**Homeless or Encampments**: The presence of encampments in cities is problematic, primarily for those who have no other option but to live in them and those who are homeless. They are very divisive spaces both on a physical and relational level. They also affect the perception of safety of those who walk around the city [14]. This factor is related to multiple overlapping factors that involve layers of discrimination, often on the basis of economic status and racialization. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Crime rate and SF\_L2 Urban degradation.

**Sex Work or Sex Workers**: Sex work is connected to urban geography and is often associated with the outskirts of the city and areas of urban degradation—although this is not necessarily the case. The activity is consequently linked to a perception of insecurity and, in particular, the so-called “red-light districts” commonly perceived as feared places for sexual harassment. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Crime rate and SF\_L2 Urban degradation.

**Urban Degradation**: Urban degradation is often perceived as a sign of an inhospitable environment. It involves neglect of roads, pavements and squares and/or the presence of litter throughout a neighborhood or area due to poor waste management. The carelessness regarding the state of the streets is also linked to a community’s lack of interest or inability to maintain a hospitable, hygienic and livable space. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Crime rate, SF\_L2 Presence of people and SF\_L2 Sex work.

**Presence of People**: The presence of people improves the perception of security by providing the possibility of receiving support, albeit from strangers, instead of a feeling of desolation and isolation. It is necessary to point out the subjective nature of this particular aspect based on the background or demographic profile of the subject and the various people occupying the space at that time. A public square occupied by a heterogeneous group of people (e.g., children, women, elderly etc.) will feel quite different from the same square occupied exclusively with male bodies. Perception of safety with regard to women can be severely reduced in a male-dominated space. However, subjective perception could also hinge on various axes of discrimination, ranging from racial to socio-economic discrimination. This factor is related to the SF\_L2 Urban degradation.

## 2.3. Hotspots

The SF\_L1 ‘Hotspots’ are landmarks in the urban environment that have a distinct connotation and can be considered safe havens or no-go areas within the city. Hotspots are specific places that are recognizable within an urban environment. As such, they are related to all of the other factors—SF\_L1 Spatial Features and SF\_L1 City Use—in particular the SF\_L2 Presence of People. In this context, the identified Safety Factors—Level 2 include the following:



- SF\_L2 Transport hub (bus stop/tram stop): Transport infrastructures of small dimensions;
- SF\_L2 Railway stations: Transport infrastructures with a large footprint and impact on the city;
- SF\_L2 Businesses: Presence and opening of commercial activities;
- SF\_L2 Public spaces: Squares and tactical urbanism interventions;
- SF\_L2 Spaces of gathering: Cultural, social, recreational and educational centers;
- SF\_L2 Parks: Large urban green areas and parks;
- SF\_L2 Open spaces: Large parking facilities, dismissed/abandoned areas;
- SF\_L2 Law enforcement units: Police stations/patrols.

**Transport Hub (bus stop/tram stop):** A transport hub is a recognizable transport infrastructure that can represent a known place, the connection to a known place or the presence of people (such as transport users and transport sector workers). It can vary in size and attractiveness; however, it remains a landmark for those who know or don't know the city. The concept of a transport hub is quite generic and can indicate different kinds of urban elements ranging from a subway station (equipped with all the relative services and facilities) to a bus stop on the side of the road to a bus/tram stop equipped with a shelter, seating space and night lighting.

**Railway Stations:** Railway stations are some of the main landmarks within a city. They are large-scale facilities within the urban fabric that create indoor and outdoor public spaces. In addition to the function of connectivity and transit, the railway station usually contains areas for social and commercial services. Within this framework, stations can create a space of security, given the presence of people and video surveillance cameras. However, railway stations and their surrounding areas are often associated with homeless people, drug dealing and crime activity, particularly at night.

**Businesses:** The presence of open businesses can provide a point of reference, especially in abandoned or quiet neighborhoods and especially during evening and night hours. Similar to transport hubs, active businesses often improve the perception of safety through the presence of people. Some businesses are equipped to aid anyone under threat or subject to gender-based violence. However, for this mechanism to succeed, these places must be externally recognizable.

**Public Spaces:** Public spaces are intended as meeting places and are therefore equipped with urban furniture such as benches, picnic tables and children's play areas. The presence of public art and tactical urbanism are also considered relevant elements that tend to encourage the use of public space. Public space is often linked to positive perceptions of safety in relation to social opportunities and empowerment, but it could also carry negative connotations for women in relation to the risk of being exposed to verbal, physical or sexual violence.

**Spaces of Gathering:** Spaces of gathering are understood as recognizable centers of cultural, social or recreational activity. These include closed spaces with a public and social vocation, such as cultural centers, centers for the elderly, sports and leisure centers, and schools. Such spaces could have a positive impact on the perception of safety. However, this state is often contingent on the prior knowledge of that space's presence.

**Parks:** Parks within urban contexts are bounded green areas, often hosting natural elements such as greenery and trees. Urban parks also tend to include services, sports facilities and playgrounds. Parks are particularly tricky spaces in terms of safety perception that is often different depending on the time of day and the presence of people. As previously stated, opaque vegetation coupled with a low occupancy level could also instigate perceptions of unsafety.

**Open Spaces:** Open areas are largely unused, unoccupied or abandoned spaces in the city, vacant either temporarily or permanently. These include vacant lands, abandoned buildings, construction sites and large empty parking lots. Unlike parks, which have an important environmental aspect, the large open areas included in this category share the state of lacking personal activity and are therefore associated with a sense of unsafety.

**Law Enforcement Units:** Law enforcement units include fixed police stations and police patrol stations that move around the city following different timetables and shifts and are usually more active in specific places and at specific times. Police units are an element that should and often do guarantee security in a public spaces [48]. However, the presence of a large number of armed forces could sometimes contribute to perceptions of insecurity. Perceptions of safety in relation to this factor vary depending on users' subjective demographic profiles and their personal (or collective) experiences and relations to police violence.

#### 2.4. Approach, Timeframe and Tools

During the Literature Review activity, further categorizations emerged within the scientific papers, some of which contributed to the vertical development of the final project theme. Based on how the research papers were developed, they were categorized by 'Gender Approach', 'Timeframe', and 'Tools' (see Table 2). The Approach refers to the way the topic of gender is addressed in the context of each scientific article, which can be classified as follows:

- General: The paper is not aimed at a certain demographic group;
- Gender-focused: The research is strictly related to gender, often through a binary approach, without considering the interconnections with other demographic characteristics;
- Intersectional: The paper uses an intersectional approach where gender is studied in intersection with multiple other factors of discrimination, such as age, economic status, etc.

The timeframe categorizes the research papers on the basis of whether they focus on a specific period of the day or not, which is a relevant factor in the topic of perception of safety and security. Research based on different time periods can offer very different insights. The timeframes are classified as follows:

- Undefined: The period of the day is not specified in the research paper;
- Daytime: The research paper focuses on the daytime period;
- Night: The research paper focuses on the nighttime period.

The papers analyzed in the Literature Review presented a vast number of assessment tools, including a wide range of methodologies and techniques that have been developed to empirically measure the perception of safety for women walking:

- Geographic Information Systems: These methods can be applied to characterize a neighborhood level of safety and safety perception through the analysis of location-based data related to the topographical, cadastral, infrastructural, and architectural features of urban areas (e.g., presence of public services, quality of road infrastructures, demographics, etc.);
- GPS and Smartphone Application Data: GPS and application data can be applied to produce behavioral maps by systematically annotating where pedestrian movements occur within a certain environment (e.g., people counting, pedestrian trajectories, etc.). Crowd-sourced safety reporting and mapping tools such as Wher app and Safetipin could further provide information about the perception of safety directly from the end-users;
- Questionnaires and Focus Groups: Audit tools are based on the use of validated measures, self-reporting, survey questionnaires, and interviews to study the subjective perception of women about the level of safety of a preselected urban area. These are generally not geo-localized inputs, although in situ safety auditing methods such as neighborhood walks or community mapping can be used to identify localized hotspots.

It was interesting to note how the subject of intersectionality tends to be tackled in a qualitative manner. In Table 2, the intersectional approach to gender coincides, for the most part, with tools such as Questionnaires and Focus Groups. This limitation is due to a Gender Data Gap [50] and the lack of sufficient data disaggregated by various axes of discrimination [51].

**Table 2.** Results of the review of scientific literature about gender approach, timeframe and tools. (“•”—reference categorized based on the type of gender approach, timeframe and tools).

References	Gender				Timeframe			Tools	
	General	Gender-focused	Intersectional	Undefined	Daytime	Night	GIS	GPS Data App Data	Questionnaires Focus Groups
Beebeejaun, 2017 [52]			•	•				•	
Ceccato et al., 2022 [35]		•			•	•	•	•	•
England & Simon, 2010 [36]			•	•					
Fenster, 2005 [37]			•	•					
Galbrun et al., 2015 [38]	•			•			•		
Golan et al., 2019 [14]		•			•		•		•
Gorrini et al., 2021 [10]		•		•			•		
Grove, 2015 [39]			•	•			•	•	•
Koskela, 1999 [18]			•		•	•			•
Lebugle et al., 2017 [40]		•	•	•					•
Levy, 2013 [53]		•		•					•
Loukaitou-Sideris, 2006 [42]		•	•	•					•
Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014 [20]		•	•	•					•
Pain, 2000 [19]			•						
Pain, 2001 [32]			•	•					•
Ramirez et al., 2021 [43]					•				•
Rossetti et al., 2019 [44]	•			•				•	•

Table 2. Cont.

References	Gender				Timeframe			Tools	
	General	Gender-focused	Intersectional	Undefined	Daytime	Night	GIS	GPS Data App Data	Questionnaires Focus Groups
Uteng, 2019 [45]		•	•	•		•			
Uteng, 2021 [46]		•		•					
Vasquez-Henriquez, 2020 [47]		•		•				•	•
Vitrano et al., 2018 [48]		•				•			•
Whitzman et al., 2014 [49]			•	•					•
Whitzman, 2012 [22]		•		•					•

### 3. Review of Existing Guidelines, Reports, and Case Studies

This part of the research refers to the review of documents that are not categorized as scientific papers but are nonetheless useful to gain a perspective on the issues in various contexts and how these are tackled by global field experts. These include reports, policy papers, green papers, planning guides and handbooks. For the sake of simplification, documents are categorized broadly herein as (i) reports (e.g., thematic reports, policy papers, green papers, etc.); and (ii) guidelines (e.g., planning guides, policy guides, handbooks, etc.). The final part of this section also highlights case studies revealed through the document review that relate to the experience of women's walkability in public spaces with a particular focus on safety.

#### 3.1. Benchmarking Process

The benchmarking process was focused on the selection of relevant documents that focus on gender-sensitive urban planning and, in particular, the relationship between cities, gender, walkability and safety with a global overview. The selected documents (30 in total), published between 2009 and 2023, were also selected on the basis of geographical diversity. Analyzed documents highlight that gender in the context of mobility, in this case specifically related to the perception of safety while walking, is an issue of global relevance. The documents are categorized by typology as follows:

- Reports present an overview of the current situation in a specific context, introducing the main issues and often including original studies carried out by the researchers in the selected context. Reports often include a short section outlining recommendations for policy actions or physical intervention strategies based on the results of the report studies;
- Guidelines are practical documents designed with the aim to offer strategies, action plans or replicable methodologies to plan cities with a gendered lens, especially in relation to walking, safety and public space. Alternatively, guideline documents can focus on practical spatial design and management measures following gender-sensitive design principles.

This process led to a total collection of 20 reports and 10 guidelines (see Tables 3–5). Each of the above categories is analyzed according to criteria that are relevant to the document type. The following sections will outline the main criteria considered for each document typology, discussing the main findings associated with each.

**Table 3.** Policy Benchmarking—Reports. (“•”—reference categorized based on Transport Mode Studied).

References	Geographic Scale and Location			Transport Mode Studied				
	Background Studies	Original Studies (if Applicable)	Study Areas	Walking	Cycling	Public Transport	Private Vehicles	Other (Shared Mobility, Micromobility, Microtransit, etc.)
Allen & Vanderschuren (2016) [54]	Global (focus on developing countries)	Local (city-level)	Cape Town (South Africa)	•	•	•		•
Allen (2018) [41]	Global (focus on developing countries)		Developing countries	•	•	•	•	
Allen et al. (2018) [55]	Global	Local (city-level)	Quito (Ecuador), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Santiago (Chile)	•	•	•	•	•
Andreola & Muzzonigro (2021) [8]	Local (city-level)		Milan (Italy)	•	•	•	•	•
Arup (2022) [56]	Global	Local (district-level)	Legacy Corporation area in London (UK)	•				
Barker et al. (2022) [57]	Local (national)	Local (county-level)	Five districts of West Yorkshire (UK)	•				
Cahill et al. (2020) [58]	Global	Local (national for surveys, city-wide for interviews)	Cork, Dublin (Ireland)	•	•	•	•	•
Candiracci & Power (2022) [59]	Global	Global		•				
Dellenbaugh-Losee & Dreyer (2022) [60]	Regional		Europe	•				
Fahmy et al. (2014) [61]	Local (national)	Local (city-level)	Cairo (Egypt)	•	•	•		
FIA Foundation & Safetipin (2020) [62]	Local (national)	Local (district-level)	Three districts in Delhi (India)	•		•		

Table 3. Cont.

References	Geographic Scale and Location			Transport Mode Studied					
	Author, Year	Background Studies	Original Studies (if Applicable)	Study Areas	Walking	Cycling	Public Transport	Private Vehicles	Other (Shared Mobility, Micromobility, Microtransit, etc.)
Goulds & Tanner (2018) [63]			Local (city-level)	Lima (Peru), Madrid (Spain), Kampala (Uganda), Delhi (India), Sydney (Australia)	•		•		
Lambrick et al. (2010) [64]			Local (city-level)	Rosario (Argentina), Delhi (India), Petrozavodsk (Russia), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)	•				
Loukaitou-Sideris et al. (2009) [65]		Global	Local (national-level)	United States	•	•	•	•	•
Ramboll Smart Mobility (2021) [66]		Global	Local (city-level)	Helsinki (Finland), Oslo (Norway), Stockholm (Sweden), Copenhagen (Denmark), Berlin (Germany), Delhi (India), Singapore (Singapore)	•	•	•	•	•
Safetipin (2022) [17]		Local (city-level)	Local (district-level)	Eight districts in Buenos Aires (Argentina)	•				
Shah et al. (2017) [67]		Global			•	•	•	•	•
Travers et al. (2013) [68]		Global	Local (city-level)	Cairo (Egypt), Delhi (India), Hanoi (Vietnam), Kampala (Uganda), Lima (Peru)	•		•		
UK Government, House of Commons—Women and Equality Committee (2019) [69]		Local (national)	Local (national-level)	UK	•		•		
Walker (2022) [70]		Regional		Europe	•	•	•	•	•

**Table 4.** Review of data collection methods in reports with original studies. (“•”—reference categorized based on the Data Collection Method).

References	Data Collection Method								
	Literature Review/Desk Research	Review of Existing Data (Data Analysis)	Surveys and Questionnaires	Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	Interviews Including In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)	Workshops	Safety Audit /Safety Walks	App/Online Safety /Mapping Tools	Specific Tool
Allen & Vanderschuren (2016) [54]	•	•	•	•	•				
Allen (2018) [41]	•								
Allen et al. (2018) [55]		•	•	•	•	•			
Andreola & Muzzonigro (2021) [8]	•		•		•				
Arup (2022) [56]			•	•				•	Online platform
Barker et al. (2022) [57]				•					
Cahill et al. (2020) [58]				•	•				
Candiracci & Power (2022) [59]	•		•		•	•			
Dellenbaugh-Losee & Dreyer (2022) [60]	•								
Fahmy et al. (2014) [61]			•	•	•			•	HarassMap
FIA Foundation & Safetipin (2020) [62]				•	•		•	•	Safetipin
Goulds & Tanner (2018) [63]								•	Free To Be



Table 4. Cont.

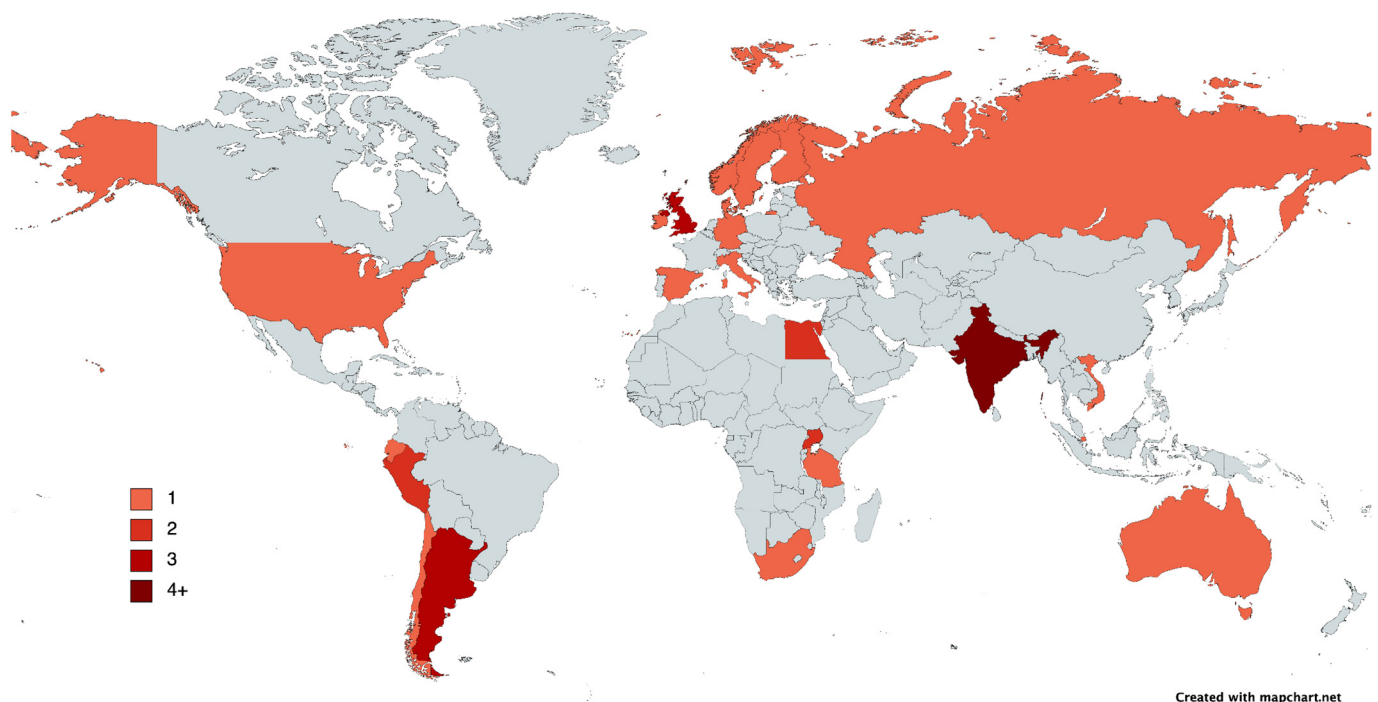
References	Data Collection Method								
Author, Year	Literature Review/Desk Research	Review of Existing Data (Data Analysis)	Surveys and Questionnaires	Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	Interviews Including In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)	Workshops	Safety Audit /Safety Walks	App/Online Safety /Mapping Tools	Specific Tool
Lambrick et al. (2010) [64]	•		•	•			•		
Loukaitou-Sideris et al. (2009) [65]	•		•		•				
Ramboll Smart Mobility (2021) [66]		•	•	•	•				
Safetipin (2022) [17]			•				•	•	Safetipin
Shah et al. (2017) [67]				•					
Travers et al. (2013) [68]	•			•	•				
UK Government, House of Commons—Women and Equality Committee (2019) [69]			•	•					
Walker (2022) [70]	•	•							

**Table 5.** Policy Benchmarking—Guidelines (“•”—reference categorized based on Target Audience).

References	Scope	Geographic Scale and Location			Target Audience		
		Scale of Area of Interest	Area of Interest	Scale of Target Area	Public Authorities	Private Entities	Third-Sector Organizations
<b>Authors, Year</b>	<b>“GP”: General Planning Guide “SPC”: Safety in Public Space Guide</b>						
Action Aid (2013) [71]	SPC	Regional	Global South (Nepal, Cambodia, Liberia, Ethiopia, Brazil)	Local (National)			•
Andersdotter Fabre et al. (2021) [16]	GP	Global		Local	•	•	•
Cities Alliance (2022) [72]	GP	Regional	Global South	Local	•	•	•
Drăguțescu et al. (2020) [73]	GP	Regional	Europe	Regional	•	•	
Generalitat Valenciana (2022) [74]	GP	Local	Valencia (Spain)	Local	•	•	•
Safer Parks Consortium (2023) [75]	SPC	Local	United Kingdom	Local	•	•	•
Simon & Stoppi (2021) [76]	SPC	Local	United Kingdom	Local	•	•	
Taft et al. (2020) [77]	SPC	Local	Melbourne (Australia)	Local	•	•	•
Tandon Mehrotra et al. (2022) [78]	GP	Regional	Global South (Asia, Africa, Latin America)	Local	•	•	•
Terraza et al. (2020) [79]	GP	Global		Local	•	•	•

### 3.2. Reports

**Geographical Scale and Focus:** There is a good balance among the reports in terms of the geographical scale of background studies (secondary research): Global (8 documents), Regional or specific country groupings, such as Global South or developing countries (4), and Local studies, which focus on a specific city or country (6). Among the reports that include original studies, the scale of focus varies between global and local scales from national to city scale and down to the district level. Original studies included in the reports cover a total of 24 cities in 23 different countries spread out geographically, equally distributed between regions of the Global North (12 cities in 12 countries) and Global South (12 cities in 11 countries) (Given the multiple definitions for the terms ‘Global North’ and ‘Global South’, this classification follows the list defined by the United Nations Finance Center for South-South Cooperation (2015) [80]). The highest number of studies by country come from India (5), Argentina (3) and the United Kingdom (3). The most studied city is Delhi (5 studies), followed by Buenos Aires, Cairo, Lima and Kampala (two studies each). Below is a map showing the locations of the original studies represented in all reports combined by country, the color scale indicating countries with a higher number of studies as per the legend (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** Map of original study locations included in reviewed reports, the color scale indicates the number of studies for each country.

**Transport Modes:** The reviewed reports reveal crucial aspects of the relationship between women and public space, considering different modes of mobility. Apart from walking (discussed in all 20 documents), the reports also discuss issues of women’s mobility experiences in relation to public transport (14 documents), cycling (10 documents), private vehicles (8 documents) and other mobility modes, such as micro-mobility, shared mobility and micro-transit (8 documents). These references underline the fact that safety is a common theme in women’s mobility experiences in the city, whether in transport spaces (vehicles, hubs) or in transport environments (walking to the station, etc.). It is important to remember that multimodal trips make up the majority of trips in cities, and so the experiences in different transport modes are often overlapping and interrelated.

**Common Themes:** Certain common themes were identified that relate to the goals of STEP UP. Most of the reports in the sample focused on the impact of spatial

features of the urban environment on women's perceptions of safety while walking [17,41,54,56,57,64–67,70]. In studying perceptions of safety on public transport, Allen [41] focuses more on aspects such as the speed of the transit mode, travel time and frequency, as well as the in-vehicle conditions. In addition to this, many of the studies presented also focused on the role of individual characteristics or intersectional identities on the subjects' perceptions of safety [41,54,56,57,63–65]. Socio-demographic features considered were age, occupation, family structure (female/male heads of household), socio-economic status, religion, ethnicity, LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual) identity, nationality and disability status.

**Data Collection Methods:** Most of the reports in the sample employed some form of desk research to present background studies on the topic. In addition, about half of the sample presented a literature review on the thematic focus and/or review of existing transport data. Of the 15 reports that contained an original study, the most commonly used methods for data collection were Focus Group Discussions (11 documents), Surveys or Questionnaires (10 documents), and Interviews with users, experts or stakeholders (9 documents). Other common methods include online safety reporting tools or applications (5 documents) and safety audits and/or neighborhood safety walks (3 documents). An overview of the methodologies used in all 15 references is shown below (see Table 4), featuring names of specific tools where relevant. Some of the studies that utilized online mapping as a method relied on data collected from tools or applications that were already in use, analyzing their existing datasets [61]. Others relied on already existing tools to collect new data from the field, such as SafetiPin Nite and SafetiPin Site (SafetiPin Nite collects images in the evening and night (6–8 pm and 8–10 pm) of the urban environment, which is later analyzed by image analysts to create thematic maps and correlation maps. SafetiPin Site is an online tool to qualitatively analyze the conditions of certain geo-referenced locations, used in SafetiPin (2022) to assess bus stops in neighborhoods under study.) [17,62]. In some cases, safety mapping tools or platforms were specifically designed to collect data for the study and made accessible to participants for a limited timeframe [56,63].

### 3.3. Guidelines

**Geographical Scale:** The selected guidelines are diverse in terms of their approach with respect to geographical scale. As shown in Table 3, a distinction is made between the scale of the Area of Interest (the area under study) and the scale of the target area (the geographical scale that the document targets for action). In most cases, the guidelines are targeted towards cities. The scale of the Area of Interest differs between the documents and follows the following logic:

- The global approach describes a document that tackles the issue on a worldwide scale of interest. Any document that aims to have a global approach will be versatile and maintain a general framework. These include Her City [16], a practical participatory planning guide with a step-by-step toolbox for urban actors interested in initiating a girl-inclusive urban project or plan. The Handbook for Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning and Design [79] also includes a toolbox for gender action plans aimed at three different stakeholder groups: public, private and citizens—organizations and individuals [16,79]. Both of these documents are considered general planning guides;
- The regional approach describes a document studying large areas of interest that include several geographically proximal countries or countries with similar social, economic or political structures. Examples include Latin America, developing countries or the Global South. This offers the chance to compare certain aspects concerning safety for women walking on the premise of assumed congruence. There are 4 regional guidelines included in this review: three provide a general framework for applying a gender lens in urban plans [72,73,78], and one is targeted to the issue of safety in public spaces [71];
- The local approach describes a document that studies the case of one or several specific areas of interest (cities, countries) as stand-alone contexts without the prerequisite of

regional connection or proximity. These guidelines usually go in-depth on the issues of a particular city or district within a city. In some cases, these guidelines fall within a particular project framework and are commissioned by an authoritative body with the specific goal of improving the level of safety of an area within its jurisdiction [77].

**Target Audience:** In most cases, the guidelines were aimed at a wide range of stakeholders and urban actors involved in urban decision-making processes. For simplification, the target audience could be divided into three broad categories:

- Public entities (public administrations, local city authorities, council officers, etc.);
- Private entities (such as landowners, real estate developers, professionals and experts in the field, practitioners and residents);
- Third-sector organizations (such as NGOs, academic institutions, community organizations and advocacy groups, etc.).

In specific cases, guidelines were designed to address internal actors within the organization bodies issuing the guideline. This applies to the case of “Gender-Inclusive Urban Planning Design”, which targeted World Bank staff involved in designing, managing, delivering, and evaluating urban planning and design projects as well as Government clients and Contractors. It also applies to “Making Cities and Urban Spaces Safe for Women and Girls”, which is a guideline that was developed by ActionAid, specifically designed to be used by the working teams of ActionAid International and ActionAid’s country offices in their own projects [71,79] (ActionAid, 2013; Terraza, H., et al., 2020).

**Common Themes:** Given the diversity of the selected documents and their limited number, it is difficult to infer common themes from their contents. However, some elements stand out in relation to the scope and approach of the reviewed selection.

The first set of guidelines are handbooks for gender-inclusive urban planning focusing on different elements of the planning process.

- Tandon Mehrotra et al. [78] presented an overall framework for addressing a range of dimensions of city life from the perspective of women by placing the economics and ethics of care at the center;
- Andersdotter Fabre et al. [16], Cities Alliance [72] and Terraza, H., et al. [79] focused on the participatory process in all phases of the gender-inclusive plan. The HerCity guide focuses particularly on the inclusion of young girls in the planning process [16];
- The work of Drăguțescu et al. [73] and Generalitat Valenciana [74] were designed as gender inclusion guides to support specific planning guidelines and laws in their respective territories. Drăguțescu et al.’s work [73] is intended as a support guideline for the SUMP’s within the European context, whereas Generalitat Valenciana [9] aims to support the law on territorial planning LOTUP for the city of Valencia. Generalitat Valenciana [74] elaborated on specific recommendations by different thematic content blocks of the LOTUP, including climate change, mobility, equipment, services, housing, etc. The guideline is fully equipped with priority actions, guiding questions and self-assessment indicators.

The second set of guidelines is designed with a specific focus on strategies to enhance women’s safety in public spaces.

- Action Aid [71] and Taft et al. [77] focused more on elements of the planning process. Action Aid [71] is a participatory toolkit for conducting safety audits in 5 countries of the global south. It elaborates on tools developed for the Safe Cities Initiative adapted to contextual local needs. Taft et al.’s work [77] is a guideline published by the city of Melbourne that provides gender-sensitive toolkits focused on data collection and analysis, placemaking and safety measures, as well as communication campaigns and training;
- Simon and Stoppi [76] and the Safer Parks Consortium [75] aimed to promote gender-sensitive design principles for walking environments of different natures. Simon and Stoppi [76] focused on the UK context, and their work was particularly concerned with walking as a first and last-mile connection with public transport and other transport

facilities. Safer Parks Consortium [75], which also focuses on the UK context, deals instead with safety measures for walking in leisure contexts, i.e., parks.

### 3.4. Case Studies

**Urban Projects:** During the last decades, concrete actions have been carried out globally to improve safety for women in public spaces and realized through successful urban and architectural design projects.

- LEV! Tunnel (Available at: <https://fa-art.se/lev/>, accessed on 28 October 2023) is an underground passageway in the railway station of Umeå in Sweden. It was completed in 2012, commissioned by the Municipality of Umeå and designed by the group FA + ART. The architecture aims to guarantee a perception of safety through broad dimensions, high visibility and designated lines for bikes, walking completely accessible for strollers and wheelchairs;
- Einsiedler Park (Available at: <https://www.wien.gv.at/umwelt/parks/anlagen/einsiedler.html>, accessed on 28 October 2023) is a public square in the city of Vienna, Austria. It was completed in 2001, commissioned by the Stadt Wien and designed in consultation with people and, particularly girls, throughout various workshops. One of the main strategies was to implement a quick win to attract girls and invite them to engage with the space (includes elements like hammocks, installations and platforms along the pedestrian paths). Other interventions such as increasing egress points, providing wider paths, improving lighting, redistributing the spaces and incorporating new games and equipment guaranteed a safe and attractive public space;
- Plaça d'en Baró (Available at: <https://equalsaree.org/project/fem-dissabte-a-placa-baro/>, accessed on 28 October 2023) is an urban redevelopment project located in Barcelona and designed by Equal Saree in 2019. It was co-created with children of the municipality of Santa Coloma de Gramenet in Barcelona. The objective of the project was to rethink the use and activities of the square, in collaboration with a group of girls and boys ages 6 to 12 years in order to create an inclusive, diverse, vibrant and safe public spaces;
- Frizon was inaugurated in 2016 and is a public space by the Ume River in Umeå intended to be a place to socialize. It was designed for a specific group of people, i.e., young girls, as a reaction to the more dominant use of public spaces by boys (a recently built skate park in particular). The municipality worked with different groups of girls aged between 15 and 20, focusing the discussions on how girls felt in specific public spaces and what they would have wanted in these spaces [81].

**Urban Initiatives:** Urban initiatives are programs rather than physical projects that aim to improve women's sense of safety in public spaces. These include services provided by the local authorities, crowd-sourced mapping platforms and mobile applications to report safety conditions.

- Traveling alone at night (Available at: <https://www.stm.info/en/info/advice/travelling-alone-night>, accessed on 28 October 2023)—“Between stops” service is an urban initiative implemented in 1996 in Montréal by the Société de transport de Montréal (STM). Its aim is to improve the safety of women traveling alone at night on the bus network. The service allows drivers to drop off women between stops in order to reduce opportunities for harassment when walking from the bus stop to home or other destinations;
- “Donnexstrada” (Available at: <https://donnexstrada.org/>, accessed on 28 October 2023) is an association that offers help to victims of gender-based violence, providing concrete tools to prevent the recurrence of gender violence dynamics. It began as a method to guarantee the right to return home safely at night by connecting the community through social networks. Donnexstrada also initiated a project called Puntí Viola, aiming to educate staff of commercial shops on harassment and gender-

based violence, to create safe spaces for women in emergency situations and spread information on the issue;

- “HarassMap” (Available at: <https://harassmap.org/en>, accessed on 28 October 2023) is an urban initiative launched in 2010 in the city of Cairo. Its aim is to take a stand against sexual harassment by engaging citizens to speak up and build a society free from sexual and gender-based violence. The service consists of an online map where anyone can report either an incident of sexual harassment or an intervention (someone intervening to stop a sexual harassment incident). The information is anonymous, geo-located and the time of day is also available;
- “Gendered Landscape Tour” is a guided tour with the aim of showing the city from a different perspective: it shows how gender plays a role in the political and social landscape of Umeå Municipality. It aims to highlight positive examples of feminist planning and analyze the shortcomings that often characterize the urban environment [81];
- “1522” (Available at: <https://www.1522.eu>, accessed on 28 October 2023) is a public service promoted by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers—Department for Equal Opportunities. The number is free of charge and active 24 h a day, with the aim to receive requests for help and support victims of violence and stalking through the work of specialized operators.

#### 4. Conclusions

The paper consisted of a diversified document review focused on the theme of walkability in intersection with gender, with a particular focus on the issue of safety. The review was split between a scientific literature review covering the latest and most relevant scientific papers on the topic and a review of global reports and key urban design and policy guidelines tackling gender inequality in cities. The mixed document approach enabled an overview of the subject matter from a scientific perspective, aiding in the formulation of the research approach to practical tools and guidelines to aid in the development of an intervention plan for the city of Milan (Italy).

The overall approach was based on the acknowledgment of the necessity of positioning the research within an intersectional framework. When focusing on a phenomenon of social discrimination, such as the experience of safety for women in public space, the recognition of interconnected axes of privilege and oppression is essential to avoid bias and partial discourse. The overall literature review revealed that the topic of intersectionality is not always addressed in discourse about gender inequality in public spaces and safety while walking. When addressed, it tends to be tackled in a qualitative manner, focusing on the interplay of one or two axes of discrimination at most. Table 2 demonstrates how data collection in the analyzed documents often relies on qualitative tools such as focus group discussions and surveys with limited data sampling.

The scientific literature review focused on findings from 23 scientific references revolving around the keywords gender, safety and walkability. The key learnings obtained through the review process mainly consist of the individuation of Safety Factors as indicators related to the perception of safety in public spaces and their relation to the theme of gender. Three types of factors were identified pertaining to the condition of the built environment (SF\_L1 Safety Features), the use of the urban environment (SF\_L1 City Use) and specific urban land use typologies (SF\_L1 Hotspots). These safety factors, verified by the research, create the basis for data collection in consecutive phases of the STEP UP project.

The report review covered a collection of 20 reports; all focused on issues of urban walkability for women in the respective contexts. It highlighted the relevance of walking as a travel mode in women’s mobility experiences in various global contexts, particularly in areas of deprivation. The analysis also highlights the important relationship between mobility experiences in various modes of transport and emphasizes the importance of walking as part of a multimodal trip, as is most commonly the case in cities. It also

highlights the importance of studying perceptions of safety and walkability in relation to various intersecting dimensions of identity along with gender, such as age, ethnicity and economic conditions.

The selected guideline documents vary in terms of scale (global, regional and local), target audience and scope. The majority of the guidelines are aimed at cities and target a wide range of urban actors. The focus of the guidelines differs among documents, ranging from process-oriented to design-oriented guidelines. One of the research limitations of the guideline document review process is due to the limited number of documents in the review sample and their wide diversity in terms of scope, approach and aims. For more conclusive results, the document sample (number of guidelines in review) should be expanded while focusing on specific document objectives for deeper analysis.

The selection of case studies offers an overview of concrete approaches tested in different contexts. Urban projects and urban initiatives have complementary aims addressed using different means. Urban and architectural design projects focus on inclusive spatial design, often as a result of a participatory design process involving girls and women in the selected areas. On the other hand, urban initiatives include non-physical interventions ranging from policies to tools for data collection and safety reporting. They focus on increasing awareness of the issues and provide actionable solutions to improve gender-related inequalities in public spaces.

In the current state and in light of the project's objectives, the review of significant reports and case studies offered a diverse and complementary point of view to the scientific literature in the field, which was found useful for identifying gaps in the field that the STEP UP project intends to address in the next research steps. The mixed approach to the technical document review also serves the purpose of validating the originality of the project by comparing its theoretical framework and methodological approach to previous works. This provides a solid foundation for further investigation through a comprehensive analysis and synthesis of findings, emerging trends and technologies, filling knowledge gaps and advancing rigorous methodologies.

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