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**Key words:** fear, urban safety, gender, feminism**Approaching safety from a gender perspective in urban planning: more than forty years of feminist struggle**Sara Ortiz Escalante<sup>1</sup>

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**Fear and safety have been the object of extensive study throughout the history of urban planning and development. Although safety continues to be a central element in urban policy, few cities have incorporated a gender perspective in urban planning, safety and the prevention of violence. This article looks back at how feminist urban planning has approached safety over the last forty years. A review of feminist contributions is followed by the methods used to approach the topic of safety in the intertwined public-private space. Finally, the article presents two examples applied in practice undertaken by Col·lectiu Punt 6. The article concludes with a reflection on how institutions can better incorporate feminist knowledge and practices, whilst also recognising the progress made by authorities in this area.**

**Introduction**

Fear and safety have been the object of extensive study throughout the history of urban planning and development. Planning and urban management discourses are, and always have been, saturated with fear. The history of planning could be rewritten as the attempt to manage fear in the city. (Sandercock, 2002, p. 203)

Although in the past safety has been, and continues to be, a central element in urban policy, few cities have yet incorporated a gender perspective into urban planning, safety and the prevention of violence. As a result, most theories and actions relating to safety in the area of urban development have centred on controlling and preventing crime through the design of city spaces. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) takes this approach, as do safe city programmes. These initiatives, however, mainly respond to crime committed by unknown actors in public spaces and against private property. The feminist perspective has criticised these strategies as they do not consider gender and are merely focused on the physical aspects of urban planning, with no social analysis as to why the perception of safety is different according to gender and other intersectional identities (Koskela and Pain; Pain, 'Gender, Race, Age and Fear in the City'; Sweet and Escalante). Feminist research over the last few decades has shown that fear and the perception of safety limits women's right to the city; one example of which is women going out less

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at night (Pain, 'Space, Sexual Violence and Social Control: Integrating Geographical and Feminist Analyses of Women's Fear of Crime'; Pain, 'Social Geographies of Women's Fear of Crime'; Koskela and Tani; Koskela, 'Gendered Exclusions': Women's Fear of Violence and Changing Relations to Space'; Loukaitou-Sideris, 'Is It Safe to Walk Here?').

This article takes a look at how feminist urban planning has approached fear and safety over the last forty years. Following a theoretical review bringing together contributions from feminism on the subject of urban safety, methods used as an approach in the real world in different contexts will be presented. Finally, the article presents some examples put into practice by Col·lectiu Punt 6, a cooperative of women architects, sociologists and planners who have been working with and developing methodologies for feminist urban planning for over ten years at a local, national and international level. In particular, two experiences are presented which have employed an intersectional gender perspective in their approach to urban safety: the guide *Entorns habitables* and the feminist participatory action-research project 'Nocturnes'.

### 1. A look at past approaches to safety in urban planning

Approaches and research into crime prevention has excluded a gender and intersectional perspective from its analysis, and has essentially focused on acts of vandalism, theft and disorderly behaviour. Measures taken by local governments for crime prevention and control usually have their roots in criminology and the justice system, and restrictive strategies are imposed such as increasing police presence and controlling access to public spaces; closing parks at a certain time of night, for example. Other, more interactive strategies have also been used such as increasing the flow of people in the public space, or carrying out educational workshops in the most disadvantaged communities (Wekerle and Whitzman; Pain and Townshend). These interventions, however, have not previously included an intersectional gender perspective in their definition and implementation and have stigmatised sections of the population, as if to suggest that violence only occurs in marginalised communities.

One example of this, which emerged in the Anglo-Saxon world in the seventies and which is still applied in many contexts, are Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) programmes<sup>2</sup>. The main elements of this programme's approach are natural surveillance, territorial reinforcement, maintenance and cleaning of public areas, reducing areas of conflict, access control and promoting alternative routes. These strategies have been criticised for only addressing criminal acts and crimes perpetrated in public spaces by unknown actors, ignoring most of the violence against women and excluding a gender analysis of violence (Wekerle and Whitzman). In the UK in the eighties, safe city programmes were created, aimed at preventing violence through urban design, and in France crime and violence prevention programmes were created with a social focus, targeting young men as a group at risk of committing crimes.

In 1996, the UN-Habitat agency also created a safe cities programme to tackle urban safety defined as violence, crime and lack of safety in towns and cities. This programme was based on combining two key aspects: the physical and the social. However, it did not include a gender perspective or an approach to violence against women. Despite this, a positive aspect of this programme was that it gave the same importance to the perception of a fear of violence as to violence itself, and considered citizens as experts in the analysis of urban violence. These programmes also promoted collaboration between local, regional and national governments and the public, to not only prevent violence through design, but also through community development and education (Wekerle and Whitzman).

In today's world, safety and the approach to violence in cities continues to focus mainly on crimes, in other words, that defined as violence by law, but not on all the types of violence that exist. Programmes to deal with crime are very limited because they only respond to that which each context, city or country typifies by law, prohibits or punishes. But some types of gender violence

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.cpted-region.org/spanish/>

are not prohibited or penalised in many contexts. At the same time, this focus excludes the perception of fear and safety, which is vital to address safety from an intersectional feminist perspective.

Since the seventies, the feminist movement and feminist research has pushed for physical planning of the environment to go hand in hand with social and economic elements. At the same time, the (lack of) safety for women in cities and everyday environments has been analysed, detailing what is understood by gender violence and the perception of fear and safety in order to go beyond crime and the violence typified by the law. As previously mentioned, including the perception of fear and safety allows us to address, for example, sexual harassment in the street, 'a form of non-criminalised street violence with a high impact on women's access to urban spaces'. (Koskela and Tani).

Including women's perception of safety and fear also means going beyond the physical characteristics of the public space and considering social roles in a society that discriminates against women (Kallus and Churchman). Fear can be defined as the emotional and practical responses of people and communities to violence. (Pain, 'Gender, Race, Age and Fear in the City'; Koskela, 'Fear and Its Others'). Fear and the perception of safety are conditioned by the differences that exist between the type of violence people may experience depending on their sex, gender, age, origin, and so on, and this has a direct impact on the differing perceptions. Fear is based on gender power relationships that also appear in spaces (Koskela, "'Gendered Exclusions": Women's Fear of Violence and Changing Relations to Space.'; Koskela, 'Fear and Its Others'; Dammert; Epstein), and it is reproduced in the practices of daily life (Koskela, 'Fear and Its Others'; Sandberg, L. and Rönnblom; Gordon et al.; Valentine, 'The Geography of Women's Fear'). Fear is reproduced through a process of socialisation in hegemonic gender roles that define women as vulnerable and men as strong and aggressive. This socially produced fear emerges through formal and informal channels, in the media and policing strategies, through to advice given in families when we tell a young girl not to go home alone (Valentine, 'Images of Danger: Women's Sources of Information about the Spatial Distribution of Male Violence'; Dammert; Koskela, 'Fear and Its Others'; Mackie; Maccoby; Stockard).

Fear and safety therefore have very different points of reference and meanings for men and women (del Valle, 2006). For women, it is framed by sexualised violent acts to their body and in large part determines how women live in different domestic, community and public spaces. Women usually fear sexual violence, the type of violence that attacks the most private part of the bodies and they tend to limit and adapt their daily life because of fear of violence (Pain, 'Space, Sexual Violence and Social Control: Integrating Geographical and Feminist Analyses of Women's Fear of Crime'; Falú, 'Restricciones Ciudadanas: Las Violencias de Género En El Espacio Público'; Sweet and Ortiz Escalante, 'Bringing Bodies into Planning: Visceral Methods, Fear and Gender Violence'). As stated Ana Falú (2009), women's bodies are subject to violence in both public spaces and behind closed doors. Women's bodies are the territory at stake; to be occupied, conceived as a commodity that can be appropriated and perceived as available, but also as a political category, a place to exercise rights and resist violence. (Falú, *Mujeres En La Ciudad: De Violencias Y Derechos.*).

Including the perception of safety in the analysis produces an awareness of how fear limits women's freedom and mobility, and how they respond to this, mainly through both leisure and work-related activities at night, and especially when getting around (Laub) and the use of certain spaces. This fear means there is less feeling of belonging and less active participation by women.

Fear and the perception of safety affect women's daily lives and mobility, how they use the city and their participation in their everyday surroundings (Pain, 'Space, Sexual Violence and Social Control: Integrating Geographical and Feminist Analyses of Women's Fear of Crime'; Moser). These restrictions increase when it gets dark (Lynch, G., and Atkins; Atkins; Pain, 'Space, Sexual Violence and Social Control: Integrating Geographical and Feminist Analyses of Women's Fear of

Crime'; Pain, 'Social Geographies of Women's Fear of Crime'; Koskela, "'Gendered Exclusions": Women's Fear of Violence and Changing Relations to Space.'; Ganjavi, Lebrasseur, and Whissell; Carter; Loukaitou-Sideris, 'Is It Safe to Walk Here?'; Laub; Morey; Whitzman et al., *Building Inclusive Cities: Women's Safety and the Right to the City.*). Studies on women's mobility have shown that women have more sustainable, complex and diverse mobility (Grieco, Pickup, and Whipp; Grieco and Ronald; Hanson and Johnston; Hanson and Hanson; Law; Hanson; Miralles-Guasch and Martínez Melo; Miralles-Guasch). At night, however, women's mobility can become paralysed due to fear of violence. They avoid certain areas of the city at night, do not use certain types of transport or decide not to go out (Atkins; Ganjavi, Lebrasseur, and Whissell; Carter; Loukaitou-Sideris, 'Is It Safe to Walk Here?'; Loukaitou-Sideris, 'Is It Safe to Walk?1 Neighborhood Safety and Security Considerations and Their Effects on Walking'; Whitzman et al., *Building Inclusive Cities: Women's Safety and the Right to the City.*). Urban planning must respond to this paradox to guarantee the women's right to the city during the day and at night.

Analysis of approaches to safety in cities from a feminist perspective is also key to shattering and questioning the division imposed by a patriarchal society between public and private space. Through their work, feminist planners question the reproduction of the separation of the public-productive sphere and the public-reproductive sphere because they respond to patriarchal and capitalist structures (Hayden; Sandercock, L., & Forsyth; Healey; Duncan; Miranne, K. B., & Young; Bofill; Fainstein, S. and Servon; Sweet and Escalante; Muxí Martínez, Z., Casanovas, R., Ciocchetto, A., Fonseca, M. and Gutiérrez Valdivia).

Miranne, K. B., & Young (2000) question the public-private division through a reflection on the limitations of women in the city, and how these boundaries are constructed, endure and reconfigure themselves.

'Women's lives are a constant transitioning across boundaries; accompanying men to 'their' places, going into spaces that have closed to them (such as city streets at night), or creating new or alternative spaces that transcend boundaries, both visible and invisible. Some women transgress boundaries (for example, prostitutes plying their trade, or others who may be allowed to enter the male domain if they have male attributes); others work to maintain boundaries, accepting the gendered division of labor.' (Miranne, K. B., & Young 7)

This false dichotomy is also ethnocentric in addition to being the legacy of a patriarchal and capitalist system as the concept of 'home' has little meaning in informal neighbourhoods or settlements where the separation between public and private space does not exist; if you live in a shack, the structure is so vulnerable that even the doors and windows do not close securely. (Meth).

Further to this, sexual separation of spaces is oppressive to transgender people as it forces them to conform to the hegemonic expectations of a particular gender in a space (Doan). Duncan (1996) It also brings into question whether the public-private dichotomy is used to 'construct, control, discipline, confine, exclude and suppress gender and sexual difference, preserving patriarchal and heterosexist power structures'. (Duncan, 1996: 128)

More recent work on the subject of urban planning claims a more fluid relationship between the body and the city, seeing bodies as a spatial scale that connects the public and private space (Doan, 2010; Milroy a Miranne, K. B., & Young, 2000; Sweet & Ortiz Escalante, 2014). This claim has been made from an architecture perspective (Milroy in Miranne, K. B., & Young, 2000)) and a geographical perspective (Sweet and Ortiz Escalante, 'Bringing Bodies into Planning: Visceral Methods, Fear and Gender Violence') and is often linked to issues of the perception of safety. Another example is how Gina Vargas (2009) conceptualises bodies as biographical spaces, spaces for the memory of violence we experience as women. At the same time, understanding bodies in this way also allows them to be conceptualised as occupied territory and also places of resistance. Ana Falú (2009) argues that women's bodies are a unique private space, and that we

have to re-appropriate ourselves from our bodies as women in order to also appropriate ourselves from other territories too, such as the home, neighbourhood, city and country.

## 2. Feminist participatory methods for the approach to urban safety

The feminist academic and activist contribution to the field of urban planning is behind a reformulation of the development agenda in which gender violence is a central theme when it comes to planning (Andrew, 1995; Michaud, 2005; Smaoun, 2000). Since the seventies, methodologies and tools have been developed to create safe and inclusive environments for women, such as women's safety audits; the creation of spaces of empowerment, reflexive freedom and refuge, and the incorporation of a gender perspective in safety plans in the community sphere.

Canadian feminists have always been at the forefront of this work. In the eighties, following an escalation of sexual violence against women in public spaces in cities such as Montreal and Toronto, the feminist movement mobilised to get this issue onto the urban planning agenda. In Montreal during the nineties, the Montreal Council of Women was created, which worked to ensure that cities' urban policies addressed women's safety and worked to improve daily life. One of the demands and actions that emerged from this council was the creation of women's safety audits, in particular, for which several exploratory walks were organised in different areas of the city. 'Femmes et Ville', coordinated by Anne Michaud, was the city programme through which these walks were carried out. Exploratory walks have a long history in Toronto, organised by METRAC. Years later, at the start of 2000, this work went international with the creation of the NGO Women in Cities International, based in Montreal. This feminist organisation is among those working the hardest to ensure the safety of women and children is included on the local, national and international agenda.

This work, which began in Montreal, gathered a lot of information about the elements that contribute to women's perception of safety. Out of this work came the famous six basic principles for a safe environment for women:

- Know where you are and where you are going.
- See and be seen.
- Hear and be heard.
- Be able to escape and get help.
- Live in a clean and welcoming environment.
- Act collectively.

The work done in Montreal was published in 2002 in the *Guide d'aménagement por un environnement sécuritaire*, coordinated by Anne Michaud, who was the representative for 'Femmes et Ville' at that time. Both these principles and the urban safety audit and exploratory walks have adapted to different contexts and been put into practice, for example, by the Latin American Women and Habitat Network, which has been working on safe city projects since the nineties, and by Jagori in India and Col·lectiu Punt 6 through the recent publication of *Entorns Habitables*<sup>3</sup>.

Three international conferences on women's safety were also announced, organised by Women in Cities International. The first in Montreal in 2002, the second in Bogotá in 2004 (co-organised by the Women and Habitat Network) and the third in New Delhi in 2010 (co-organised with Jagori). During these conferences, there was progress on the implication of the various agents involved in city safety: public administrations, feminist and women's organisations, and multicultural bodies such as UN Women and UN Habitat. The book *Building inclusive cities: women's safety and the*

<sup>3</sup> Valdivia, Blanca, Adriana Ciocchetto, Sara Ortiz Escalante, Marta Fonseca and Roser Casanovas (2017) *Entorns Habitables. Auditoria de seguretat urbana amb perspectiva de gènere a l'habitatge i l'entorn*. Col·lectiu Punt 6. [https://issuu.com/punt6/docs/entorns\\_habitables\\_cat\\_final](https://issuu.com/punt6/docs/entorns_habitables_cat_final)

*right to the city* (Whitzman et al., 2013) emerged from this last conference, and is a collection of advances in the practice of urban safety from a feminist perspective and its relationship with different town planning and social areas: mobility, immigration, intersectionality and so on.

Since the last conference, both UN Women and UN Habitat have expanded their work in this area, work which was previously carried out exclusively by feminist organisations. This leads us to a critical reading of the evolution of the approach to urban safety since the UN began to work on this issue. On the other hand, these UN agencies have appropriated the discourse and practice developed over decades by the feminist movement for themselves, going so far as to make the genealogy of this movement invisible. They have collected methodologies which feminist movements have spent years developing, and have started to offer expert consultations to local bodies. This co-opting by multilateral bodies and the appropriation of the feminist discourse has filtered through to a national and local level resulting in many cities embracing safe city programmes for women in recent years. We should, however, be critical of how this has been done, as feminist organisations have spent years developing this work and continue to receive little recognition or be attributed value, often continuing to operate under precarious working conditions. United Nations personnel, on the other hand, carry out these expert consultations under employment and salary conditions that feminist organisations can only dream of.

In any case, the work done in the international sphere has helped to develop and consolidate a methodology to work on urban safety from an intersectional gender perspective. Methodologies developed by feminist organisations to carry out urban safety audits have included exploratory walks, maps of perceived safety, participant observation, victimisation surveys, interviews with key people and discussion groups, to name a few.

Exploratory walks are a very specific methodology developed through feminist theory and practice, and which centres on identifying urban aspects related to the perception of the safety of public spaces from a gender perspective. Exploratory walks are one of the best-known and most-used practices. They involve walking around a neighbourhood or specific environment with a small group of five to ten women, to detect and analyse social and physical elements that may condition the perception of safety by women who live in and use a particular environment. Besides being a diagnostic tool to obtain information about how urban planning can respond to this issue, they are also a tool to empower women as they raise the profile of residents' knowledge of the environment they live and move in, and value is placed on their active participation in the design and transformation of their urban surroundings.

Nowadays, exploratory walks are undertaken with different groups, but it is important to understand that when dealing with gender violence, the group must enable those within it to feel comfortable expressing their experiences and perceptions. For this reason, it is recommended that groups be women-only or separate groups with a shared reality. For example, women with functional diversity, lesbian women, trans women, young men, mature women, and so on.

In Spain, feminists from the Basque Country have been the pioneers in this area, above all through maps of the 'forbidden city'. They are leaders in working with maps of perceived safety in our context; the work done by Plazaandreak in San Sebastián and Hiria Kolektiboa is an example, as is present-day work by Dunak in the Basque Country, and Col·lectiu Punt 6 in Catalonia.

Maps of perceived safety enable physical or social elements that limit or encourage the use of spaces to be clearly seen, to identify the qualities that mean we can use and enjoy them independently and safely. The map is located both in spaces that are unused and those that are not entered because they create fear or because they are not easy to use, as well as those that are used frequently because they are attractive and pleasant (Valdivia et al.).

At Col·lectiu Punt 6, we have also adapted the principles of safety, first for a publication by the Institute of Political and Social Sciences of Catalonia, in which theoretical adaptation was

presented with applied examples (Col-lectiu Punt 6, 2011). More recently, we have developed an urban safety audit with a gender perspective on housing and the environment in Cali, Colombia, where we contributed through the application of new participatory methodological tools and the application of specific development strategies and actions in order to improve the perception of safety in housing and its surroundings (Valdivia et al.).

### 3. Experiences

In this section, we present two experiences of approaching urban safety from a gender perspective that we believe have contributed to expanding the tools to deal with it.

#### 3.1. Liveable environments. Urban safety audit with a gender perspective for housing and its surroundings.

The urban safety audit with a gender perspective for housing and its surroundings is an urban diagnostic tool that analyses people's safety. It is based on a comprehensive analysis of social, physical and functional aspects that condition the perception of safety in the space and by applying an intersectional gender perspective. The audit has involved working jointly with the specialised personnel, women's organisations, other civil society organisations and other people who work in the field and understand the reality of the context, in collaboration with the audit's facilitating and reporting team. The experience and participation of women is essential to this work, because it is the residents who know their area best in relation to its safety in particular.

The audit is carried out by applying a repertoire of participatory and feminist tools and methods to obtain information on the different social and physical aspects, and the impact safety has on the people's lives. These tools are participant observation, interviews with key people, discussion groups, workshops on daily life and urban safety, exploratory walks, maps of perceived safety, body maps and the house without gender.

Col-lectiu Punt 6 has contributed to expanding the tools available for a safety audit by incorporating new tools into this methodology which focus on breaking down the public-private dichotomy. Three more tools are included in addition to those mentioned above, which help to bring this dichotomy into question: workshops on daily life and urban safety, body maps and the house without gender.

The workshops on daily life and urban safety aim to recognise, describe and evaluate day-to-day activities, to detect those which create dependent relationships, explain the movements required to perform them, distinguish the characteristics of spaces where they take place and analyse whether the perception of safety conditions the performance of these activities and the use of the spaces. These workshops are a tool that Col-lectiu Punt 6 has been using for over twelve years and which is used and adapted to different contexts in the local setting, as well as at national and international level (Casanovas et al.). By using them, the starting point of an individual reflection on daily life by each of the women can become a collective prioritisation of the favourable and unfavourable elements of their neighbourhood or area that affect their daily life. This method is very useful as a tool for empowerment and to raise awareness of the knowledge women have about their area, and at the same time, to collect very detailed qualitative data on a neighbourhood level.

Body maps are 'a holistic and non-linear data creation technique that can document intersecting temporal and spatial events, processes, and experiences that include feelings, emotions, perceptions while also visually engaging bodies and spaces around them' (Sweet and Ortiz Escalante, 'Engaging Territorio Cuerpo-Tierra through Body and Community Mapping : A Methodology for Making Communities Safer'). Since the eighties, body maps have been used in the field of healthcare (Cornwall) to document migratory experiences and health issues of undocumented migrants (Gastaldo, Magalhães, and Carrasco). Recently, together with Elizabeth L. Sweet, we have been using body maps to analyse fear and gender violence from an urban planning point of view (Sweet and Ortiz Escalante, 'Bringing Bodies into Planning: Visceral Methods, Fear and Gender Violence'; Sweet and Ortiz Escalante, 'Engaging Territorio Cuerpo-Tierra through Body and Community Mapping : A Methodology for Making Communities Safer'). In

the context of urban safety audits, body maps are used to analyse how people experience, through the body, the emotions, feelings and other physical and sensory manifestations that relate to the spaces and environment we inhabit, connecting body experiences from the most private and intimate realm with the public realm and the urban surroundings we live in. Body maps allow reflection on how women and men experience safety in their bodies in different ways in the personal, public and social spheres. With the help of another member of the group, each participant draws a life-sized silhouette of their body and participants are asked to portray certain questions in this body, for example:

- How do you feel that the city where you live impacts on your body?
- What emotions do you feel when you walk through your neighbourhood? And the rest of the city? And when you take public transport? And when you go around on your own?
- How are situations of fear and being unsafe that you experience in your city represented in your body?
- Where would you concentrate your strength and power to confront a situation in which you felt afraid or that was violent? How do you feel it in your body?

Afterwards, each person explains how they felt and how they have portrayed the questions posed on their map. Through this technique, private and personal issues are touched upon, which may produce emotional situations or memories amongst participants. For this reason, this tool is used in a series of workshops, where participants have already established trust and a group conscience and can therefore feel supported by the rest of the group.

The **house without gender** is an exercise to analyse gender roles in a housing setup and to motivate the changes incorporated in gender equality in the definition of the places where we live. It goes from 'the private and intimate' located inside the dwelling, to intermediate links with the complexity of the urban fabric where we find 'the public'. The workshop proposes the deconstruction of the concept of space as per types of housing and to raise the profile of gender roles, the hierarchisation of spaces, the need to respond to different co-existing groups, contempt for housework and how housing conditions the people's perception of safety, linked to gender roles. This workshop looks at the childhood home to identify gender roles and hierarchies that are reproduced through the configuration of the space. After this individual reflection, the group works on what a house without gender would be like, one that integrates equitable relationships free from violence.

As mentioned, these three techniques which Col-lectiu Punt 6 incorporates into the urban safety audits help to break down the public-private dichotomy, understanding the perception of safety in the continuum of the most private part of our body, our house, the street and the city. It is therefore connected to how women perceive these spaces through their bodies and identities.

Once the audit has been carried out, Col-lectiu Punt 6 proposes a series of specific strategies and actions to intervene in the area and improve the perception of safety. These can be applied on different scales (housing, building and environment). The strategic lines proposed are structured into six characteristics: sign-posted, visible, vital, monitored, equipped and community. Spaces must have them in order to be perceived as safe from a gender perspective. These six characteristics are based on the six principles drawn up by Anne Michaud in the *Guide d'aménagement pour un environnement urbain sécuritaire* relating to Montreal as part of the 2001 'Femmes et Villes' programme. These principles are as follows:

- **Signalled:** has legible signs and markers (visual, acoustic and tactile) that aid an understanding of the city and its structure and enable easy orientation. Signage with non-sexist and diverse iconography (age and body-type) which includes the different people that make up our society. Examples of a sign-posted environment would be the displays showing frequency at transport stops, traffic signals that include different body-types and the presence of the everyday network and safe routes maps.

- **Visible:** the design of the space allows people to see all the elements and people in the surrounding area and to identify possible exits in a risk situation. Furthermore, it should promote symbolic and social visibility of women as active subjects, recognising the diverse roles that develop in a society without resorting to stereotypes, and encouraging spaces that recognise female figures and undervalued roles. Examples of a visible environment include streets with continuous lighting that responds to pedestrian routes, with no blind spots, with buildings with activity on the ground floor, as well as spaces that raise the profile of the work women do; for example, squares and streets named after women.
- **Vital:** guarantees the presence of people, diverse activities, meetings, relationships and mutual support. We find vital environments in multifunctional zones that combine residential, commercial or administrative activities connected to public transport and pedestrian thoroughfares.
- **Surveyed:** allows informal surveillance, exercised among equals and in a collaborative and non-authoritarian way, that responds to the meaning of caring claimed by Jane Jacobs. For example, this happens in a square full of diverse people (age, social group, sex) who are simultaneously using this space where a variety of activities and uses are allowed.
- **Equipped:** with infrastructures and elements that support the activities of daily life from an accessible distance, in a clean and welcoming environment and which guarantees that diverse people use public spaces because they have, for example, benches for resting and socialising, trees that provide shade in the summer – but well-maintained so they do not obstruct lighting – or games areas for different age groups that also allow socialising, both for the players and their carers.
- **Community:** encourages appropriation and a feeling of belonging in people and strengthens social cohesion and community participation. Depending on the uses and activities prioritised in the design of the spaces, co-existence, exchange and socialising can all be encouraged amongst people in an egalitarian way, as well as contributing to the development of social networks and strengthening belonging in the community.

Within every strategic line, there is a series of proposed actions that can be rolled out with the design, construction, rehabilitation or adaptation of the spaces and the uses made of them or through urban planning by introducing town regulations that include criteria about the nature of spaces and to guarantee they endure over time.

The audit also includes the application of some actions specific to the context of Cali, where the full audit was carried out as part of cooperation on the project 'urban management plan to improve safety from a gender perspective', financed by Barcelona Provincial Council and executed in Cali, Colombia<sup>4</sup>. To complete the proposed actions, different specific experiences of housing and safety with a gender perspective that have already been developed in international contexts were gathered, with details of who was behind them (institutions, civil society, professionals), as well as the needs they seek to meet. Examples include the housing cooperative MUJEFA from Uruguay, the Nashira eco-village in Palmira, Colombia, the Frauen-Werk-Stadt in Vienna, and the safe entrances policy in San Sebastián.

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<sup>4</sup> Project coordinated by Col lectiu Punt 6 with the participation of the Gender Consultancy Service and the Mayoral Housing Secretary, Santiago de Cali (Colombia) between 2015 and 2016. Also includes participation by the Centre for Development Cooperation at the Polytechnic University of Catalonia and the Sí Mujer Foundation on the project 'Improving urban safety from a gender perspective', also implemented in Cali (Colombia) and carried out alongside that previously mentioned.

Table 1. Strategic line, overall and specific objectives of the audit

<b>Strategic line 1</b> Signalised environment	<b>Overall objective</b> To know where you are and where you are going in an environment, encouraging orientation, the legibility of the space and information using non-sexist language.	<b>Specific objectives</b> 1.1 To orientate and encourage legibility in daily usage 1.2 To use non-sexist signage that respects diversity
<b>Strategic line 2</b> Visible environment	<b>Overall objective</b> The ability to see and be seen in a space, but also symbolically, and to recognise women as social agents.	<b>Specific objectives</b> 2.1 Encourage spatial visibility. 2.2 Raise the profile of women's situation in society and symbolically.
<b>Strategic line 3</b> Vital environment	<b>Overall objective</b> The ability to listen and be heard thanks to people gathering constantly and simultaneously, deriving from diversity of use and activities in the street and spaces.	<b>Specific objectives</b> 3.1 Encourage diverse uses, density and proximity for people to come together. 3.2 Encourage simultaneous and continuous use and activities. 3.3 Prioritise relational public space over traffic use.
<b>Strategic line 4</b> Surveyed environment	<b>Overall objective</b> Be able to get out of an unsafe situation and seek help because trust exists with those nearby who have the ability and desire to provide assistance.	<b>Specific objectives</b> 4.1 Foster diversity of people and uses. 4.2 Design buildings and spaces so that there is a visual link.
<b>Strategic line 5</b> Equipped environment	<b>Overall objective</b> <b>Plan and maintain spaces that have everything necessary for different daily activities, both public and community spaces.</b>	<b>Specific objectives</b> 5.1 Guarantee diversity of types of housing. 5.2 Design equipped spaces and routes that are looked after and linked to daily activities. 5.3 Ensure the necessary equipment and services to carry out daily life. 5.4 Ensure the safety of women and children who have experienced gender violence.
<b>Strategic line 6</b> Community environment	<b>Overall objective</b> Act collectively to construct safe environments. Facilitate the existence and sustainability of social networks in the near environment so people can share spaces and common activities and recognise women as key generating agents in the community.	<b>Specific objectives</b> 6.1 Boost existing social networks and community appropriation of spaces. 6.2 Ensure community participation from an intersectional gender perspective in order to identify the needs of daily life in projects.

### 3.2. Nocturnes. The everyday life of women nightshift workers in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area<sup>5</sup>

'Nocturnes' is a feminist participatory action-research project carried out between 2015 and 2017 which analyses how urban planning of towns within the Barcelona Metropolitan Area conditions the everyday lives of women who work at night, and specifically, the influence of gender roles and the reproduction of patriarchal and capitalist patterns in mobility, the perception of safety, the decision to work at night, the performance of daily activities, social relationships, health and inequality in the workplace.

This project was carried out by Col·lectiu Punt 6 together with the Ambit Previsió Foundation, the CCOO Women's Secretary, Ca la Dona and Irídia, and with a team of 24 women who work at night in different sectors and areas of work (cleaning, healthcare, geriatric care, local police, emergency social work and the sex industry).

Even today, night-time is considered a forbidden space for women, where our presence is often questioned, above all if we go about alone, or where our bodies are perceived as vulnerable and objects at the same time. This has influenced perceptions of women's safety at night, above all in relation to sexual violence, which affects the most intimate part of our bodies and curtails our right to the city.

At the same time, most development plans and projects that deal with town planning after dark have focused on the so-called *night-time economy* of city centres. This seeks to revitalise the

<sup>5</sup> [https://issuu.com/punt6/docs/nocturnes\\_catala](https://issuu.com/punt6/docs/nocturnes_catala)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LvKxqeAJRTY>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vp3EZiQufsA&t=8s>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JC2ojY2OERc&t=7s>

economy through leisure and alcohol consumption and perpetuates a night culture that is predominantly masculine and heteropatriarchal.

That is why we wanted to broaden research in the area of urban planning through the 'Nocturnes' project, and raise the profile of and assess the productive-reproductive aspect of the city after dark from a feminist perspective, in order to put a stop to the predominantly masculine night-time culture that is linked to leisure. The analysis of daily life with active participation from women who work at night has helped to raise the profile of the use and appropriation of the city by women at night, and to claim our right to ownership of the night in order to appropriate it regardless of how we use it or the activities we carry out.

The project has made it clear that night-time mobility and the perception of safety are problems that affect the daily life of those who work at night to a greater extent, above all those who get around using public transport or on foot. The public transport system of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area does not answer the needs of women who work at night; the timetables, frequency of the service and the routes at night all make their daily lives more difficult. The public transport system connects the periphery of the Barcelona Metropolitan Area with the city of Barcelona, but connections between the outlying towns is sorely lacking, especially in the Baix Llobregat area despite the towns being in close proximity to each other. The problem is not that transport does not exist, but that the time required to get from one place to another is so great that it negatively affects those who most depend on this transport. This is worst during the early hours of the morning (between 5.00 a.m. and 6.30 a.m.) and at the weekends, when certain routes are more seriously affected.

Infrastructures linked to mobility also do not provide autonomy, safety and freedom of movement for women. For example, the design of parking zones or the connection on foot between the means of transport and the workplace or residence. These factors mean that women change their routes, look for alternatives or depend on others to get to and from work. Some particularly worrying cases of sexual violence have been documented.

The perception of a lack of safety is also identified as a factor that limits women's right to the city, and which is conditioned in part by physical aspects of the environment such as the mono-functionality of work zones and the lack of visibility in them. But it is also a cross-cutting factor in mobility; in the routes walked to public transport, in mobility infrastructures and on public transport itself. A lack of safety, in addition to being based on physical elements, is also conditioned by social aspects. One very worrying issue is the fear generated by groups of intoxicated people, particularly men, during journeys in the early hours after Friday and Saturday night. Many women can share stories of the sexual harassment they have experienced while moving around. This forces them to change their route to so as not to leave any trace of their movements and to avoid being watched.

This project has enabled an invisible reality to be assessed and recognised; that the cities within the Barcelona Metropolitan Area have a lot of work to do to address this issue.

#### **4. Conclusions**

This article has taken a look at how the feminist movement and theory have approached and analysed urban safety over the last forty years. This is one of the areas most often addressed by feminist urban planning meaning it has progressed in many ways but, at the same time, we can identify areas for improvement.

One of the essential aspects that institutions dealing with the issue of safety need to address is to broaden their outlook to include an expanded vision of safety that includes a feminist perspective and that emphasises and brings together different perceptions of safety.

At the same time, one of the issues most often brought up by the feminist movement is the need to break down the public-private dichotomy because of its oppressive and limiting nature. Even though there is still much to do in this area, great advances have been made in the debate surrounding the implementation of ways to erase this separation; for example, the work to analyse the problem of violence on many levels: in the body, the home, the neighbourhood, the city and the region.

Besides this, this article seeks to raise the profile of and highlight the ongoing and tireless work of the feminist movement, and to provide a critical point of view to understand how the discourse has been institutionalised. From the point of view of the authorities, they must reflect on how to incorporate feminist practice and knowledge without co-opting ideas and practices to be used as political propaganda. We need to move towards a shared process of recognition, under equal conditions, in which knowledge and disciplinary hierarchies are broken down and where grass-roots organisations and institutions come together.

Finally, although there is still much work to be done, it should be said that in the local Catalan area there has been gradual progress on the incorporation of a gender perspective into the issue of safety; from training of specialised personnel at Barcelona City Council in exploratory walks in 2013 within the framework of the city safety audit from a gender perspective, to the recent training on this issue from the Home Affairs Department of the Generalitat. The work initiated by the feminist movement to draw up protocols on sexual assault in the context of parties, and public and leisure space should also be noted, something which many city councils have recently begun to adopt.

In conclusion, there is still a long way to go, but we mustn't forget how far we have come and everything we have achieved.

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