



VISUALIZING THE CITY WHILE WALKING

Health, Landscape, and Enjoyment: Urban Education

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
City Walk Urban health Landscape Education Visibility Public space Walkability	<i>This article reflects on urban walking as a healthy, educational, and aesthetic practice, highlighting the role of the landscape in the bodily and emotional experience. Based on a documentary and comparative review, which includes theoretical references and experiences in cities like Cienfuegos and Guayaquil, it identifies spaces, policies, and initiatives that promote walkability. The case of Guayaquil is presented as an inspiring example due to its iconic landscapes and its educational and urban strategies. The findings allow for the integration of dispersed information and provide useful tools to encourage healthy urban habits from design, public management, and education.</i>
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1. Introduction

Over time, cities have been built and transformed in a constant process, depending on various economic, social, and cultural situations and processes that have given meaning to urban agglomeration. They are the result of the intersecting power relations between different social actors. In each era, in accordance with the development and culture achieved, cities and their stakeholders have paid greater or lesser attention to certain details, framed by scientific and technological advances, in response to identified interests, tastes, and needs.

Thus, today we live in cities that, perhaps formed in the 19th century, entered the 20th century with the construction characteristics approved at that time and, thanks to their state of preservation, those early features remain in the 21st century. On the one hand, this is very good, because vestiges of a past that can be learned about and enjoyed are preserved. On the other hand, the people who inhabit these spaces today, even though they live with that past, may need to find solutions to problems of the present for which the city is not prepared.

Without referring to legislation, in terms of the reasons for their existence, the reality is that cities are built at a certain time, and they normally remain until they are occupied by other generations, bearers of more advanced cultures, other developments, other conditions, which lead to new characteristics being prioritized for the city. This is where those perspectives that urge us to propose and solve needs for their current use come in. Páramo et al, (2021) record it as follows:

Those who planned and managed the city in the 20th century did not pay enough attention to people's need to walk when moving around public spaces. This is reflected in the discontinuity of sidewalks, their narrowness, and the few kilometers of them that are in good condition, the lack of lighting in different areas, and the insecurity perceived by residents. At the root of this is an urban design in several Latin American cities that followed the modernist model of large American cities in the 1950s and 1960s, which prioritized car mobility when people began to live in the suburbs (Oldenburg, 2013), leaving walking as something marginal. (Páramo et al., 2021, p.21)

The aforementioned authors highlight that the new social configuration of the 21st century, resulting from globalization, migration, high population density in cities, technological development, and the impact of air pollution, has driven a global interest in improving the quality of urban life. Based on this idea, they defend the implications of walking in public spaces for the quality of urban life in today's cities.

In line with the above, an in-depth look at cities reveals traces that allow us to distinguish a whole history in the relationship between city, health, and body movement. Vera (2015) acknowledges this when she recognizes that cities were not always considered healthy environments. The author describes chronologically that:

in the 18th century, the city breathed through its green lungs, and thus large parks, squares, and trees began to be considered indispensable. At the same time, streets were considered veins and arteries that enabled urban circulation and vitality. In the 19th century, the hygienist movement became institutionalized within urban planning, seeking to create spaces that facilitated movement, circulation, and the purification of city air. Thus, avenues, diagonal streets, and boulevards were added to green spaces as types of public spaces that facilitated health. (Vera, 2015, p.46)

Thus, cities are transformed to facilitate movement and thus become healthy cities, which are those that "constantly create and/or improve their physical and social environments and expand those community resources that enable people to support each other in performing all vital functions and achieving the maximum development of their potential" (WHO, 2002, p. 30).

Capel's (2002) description of the origin of these urban spaces for health purposes is interesting:

The concept of public parks also emerged in response to the hygiene problems that arose in European industrial cities. When the effects of the Industrial Revolution were felt most intensely, the need for green spaces became more pressing. (...) For example, in 1833, in Great Britain, the establishment of open green spaces in all large cities was planned, specifically aimed at improving the health of the working class and the general population (...) it was necessary to provide them with an alternative and regulated form of recreation that would not weaken their bodies and would restore their minds to the ideals of health, cooperation, and social harmony. (Capel, H., 2002, p.6)

Aguilar et al. (2018) identify this transformation of cities in accordance with the needs of each era as urban regeneration, explaining that "the principles of modern urban planning are considered a paradigmatic example of urban regeneration that combines respect and conservation of heritage with renovation and adaptation to new needs" (p.26).

Among these new needs is the "culture of quality of life" urged by the WHO (2002) and on which the imaginary of health is effectively based. It requires certain urban spaces that collaborate in the exercise of the habit and cult of health and well-being.

From this perspective, public spaces play a strategic role because they constitute the environment in which the imaginary and material intersections of the matrix of meanings that is configured around health and aesthetics are condensed. (Vera, 2015)

1.1. Walking as a health resource in the city

The Sustainable Development Goals proclaim in their 2030 Agenda the need for good health for all, and from this perspective, cities are at the forefront of attention because of their public spaces. There is an increasing demand for structures that promote adequate mobility during the daily activities of each of their inhabitants.

Mobility is a quality or attribute of individuals referring to their ability to move. Although it can be understood from different perspectives, in this case, mobility is assumed to be an attribute of people, and specifically, within the dimension of urban mobility, as a social practice that allows access to the places where people go.

To be more specific, it refers to the movement of the human body walking from one place to another within the city, making use of it. In this case, we take from Isunza (2018) the reference to "the street for walking, in the sense of the social use of public space as a meeting place. The street as part of that infrastructure that fulfills the social function of generating adequate spaces for walking" (p.99).

Urban pedestrian mobility is a basic need for people to move from one place to another; it is the variation in the position of a body moving through corridors, walkways, sidewalks, stairs, and ramps. Its effectiveness is contingent upon the connectivity that the city's public space offers for the interrelation of its activities (Samudio Córdoba, 2021).

Walking, in addition to being pleasant and necessary, is the starting point for everything, not only because of the benefits it provides to people's health, but also because it allows social interaction and interaction with the environment, and is one of the most efficient ways to get around (Sánchez, Suco, Campoverde & Valencia, 2023).

Walking is an easy and accessible way for people of all ages to contribute to their health as a resource for quality of life. It is an activity that is suitable for everyone, regardless of age or gender, and it does not incur any cost but does provide many health benefits. It is a physical activity that does not pollute, is a daily urban practice, and contributes to improving people's physical and mental health. Herrmann-Lunecke, Mora, and Vejares (2020)

Walking regularly can help improve mood, lower blood sugar and blood pressure, and even get you in shape. Eventually, walking can help reduce the risk of chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. It can also provide musculoskeletal benefits that result in less muscle pain, greater mobility, and the ability to perform normal daily tasks better.

But health is not just about the quest to "be well" and free of disease. From the perspective of walking in the city, health goes beyond the traditional concept defined by the WHO in 1948: "A

state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Currently, as Soriano and Lumbreras (2023) suggest, this WHO concept has been modified and complemented with a fourth dimension: spiritual health.

It implies a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction with one's own life, value system, self-confidence and self-esteem, self-awareness and presence, peace and tranquility with dynamic emotional balance, both internally and towards the environment, morality and truthfulness, selflessness, positive emotions, compassion and willingness to help and support others, responsibility and contribution to the common good, and successful management of the problems and demands of everyday life, as well as social stress. (Soriano and Lumbreras, 2023, p.9)

Relating walking through the city to health as a resource for quality of life, in this case, has to do with the updated perspective of the concept of health, with the possibility that walking can strongly develop sociability. Appreciating walking as proposed by Le Breton (2011), from a position that proposes recovering pleasure, reflection, freedom, and enjoyment of the sensory dimension of the body in motion.

The perspective of sociability as a healthy benefit of walking is presented by Aguilar (2016) when he mentions the possibility of anonymous relationships, which can later become lasting. The aforementioned author describes that walking can be thought of as an act that, although individual—someone walks—in order to take place in terms of interaction, requires a set of previous experiences and knowledge about how to relate to other passersby, and also forms particular types of relationships.

Walking increases the flow of oxygen and nutrients to the brain, which can open the door to greater creativity. Studies show that the simple act of getting up from your desk and taking a short walk can help generate ideas. But also, when walking in different places, you can see different landscapes and colors.

Walking in nature is particularly effective in reducing stress levels. The impact of being outdoors may have to do with "optical flow," the perception that objects are passing us by as we walk, which quiets the circuits responsible for stress. (Murphy, 2023)

It can be said with certainty that the results of investigations into the experiences of pedestrians walking in the city reveal a wealth of sociocultural, anthropological, and psychological information that is of singular importance to take into account in actions to improve urban spaces in cities. Aguilar (2016) points out that walking has gone from being an abstract and little-considered act to being a meaningful activity as it has become part of everyday routines (p.25).

Although different information is presented daily regarding whether walking 5,000 or 10,000 steps is valid, and there are even technological devices to count the number of steps "live," the important thing is to walk at your own pace, breathe correctly (inhale and exhale rhythmically), at appropriate times and in suitable clothing, in spaces that encourage walking.

For Saiz-Calleja (2016), spaces that encourage walking are an art form, an emotional connection, and a physical experience. This author recognizes that it is walkers in motion who give rise to the city because, in addition, when walking according to their objectives, walkers invent shortcuts, transform routes, and recover lost stories when they realize what was there before and is no longer there today, or what new things have been built. He quotes Michel De Certeau to recognize that the urban walker, who moves at street level, in emotional connection with their surroundings, enjoys a horizontal relationship with the city.

It is an experience that is acquired and can be categorized in various ways, such as "the act of walking makes us think and build our own world between the real and the imagined" (Lapeña Gallego, 2014). In this process lies the key to enjoyment, as part of the happiness that inhabits that moment, rather than in the result itself. (Archilla Pérez, 2008)

In this sense, walking can be understood as a form of urban physical education, in which the landscape plays a motivating role and the physical act becomes an exercise in perception, enjoyment, and vitality.

1.2. The urban landscape as a stimulus for walking

Walking not only activates the body, it also awakens the gaze. The urban landscape—whether natural or built—becomes a mediator between the walker and the city, capable of influencing their mood, their perception of physical effort, and their desire to continue the journey. When the environment is visually appealing, safe, and diverse, walking becomes an aesthetic and emotional experience, beyond simple displacement.

When walking, one can appreciate an infinite number of landscapes in which, according to Murgia and Gesualdi (2004), the observer actively participates in the experience of perceiving the outside world, transforming it into a representation of their inner world (...), the result of this process of transformation and representation is closely linked to the position from which it is observed, and to the physical and emotional makeup of the observer.

According to Herrmann-Lunecke, Mora, and Véjares (2020), elements such as wide sidewalks, urban trees, and mixed land use are perceived by walkers as factors that facilitate walking, while narrow sidewalks, dangerous intersections, and vehicle noise inhibit it. This perception was gathered through interviews conducted while walking in neighborhoods of Santiago, Chile, reinforcing the idea that the urban landscape is not just a backdrop, but a protagonist in the act of walking.

On the other hand, Briceño-Ávila (2018) argues that the urban landscape expresses physical, psychological, and cultural dimensions that affect the visual quality of public space. The physical-spatial configuration, biodiversity, aesthetic expression, and integrity of the environment are attributes that can be designed to stimulate the walker's positive perception and encourage their appropriation of urban space.

Walking in pleasant environments also has restorative effects. Fernández (2018) and Villalpando Flores (2021) highlight that the urban-landscape design of nearby green spaces has a positive impact on environmental restoration and pro-ecological behaviors, suggesting that the landscape not only beautifies, but also heals and educates.

In this sense, the urban landscape can be understood as an educational and therapeutic resource that accompanies walkers on their physical and emotional journey. Visualizing the city's while walking not only improves health but also strengthens the bond with the environment, urban memory, and sense of belonging.

Based on the initial analysis that recognizes how cities have historically transitioned from being functional and unhealthy spaces to potential settings for well-being, and considering that the act of walking in the urban environment brings together deeply meaningful physiological, sensory, emotional, and cultural dimensions, it has been shown that the urban landscape, as a visual and emotional stimulus, can transform the walker's experience into a therapeutic, pedagogical, and civic resource.

From this perspective, this article aims to reflect on walking in the city as a healthy, educational, and aesthetic practice, highlighting the role of the urban landscape in the walker's experience and proposing the promotion of this activity through urban design and public education.

From here, the communication develops in an epigraph that invites us to explore the city with different eyes... and different steps, through thematic axes: visibility as a form of perception of the environment, walking as a transformative action, and urban education as a driver of change.

To this end, the epigraph contains a look at the Ecuadorian city of Guayaquil that allows for a proactive reflection on urban walking as a practice of health, education, and landscape appreciation. From this approach, the idea is defended that encouraging walking from childhood—and doing so through active visualization of the environment—can transform citizens' relationship with public space, reconnecting individuals with their health and their context.

1.3. Guayaquil as an inspiring case study: walking while visualizing the landscape and improving urban health

The city of Guayaquil, with its diversity of natural and built spaces, offers a fertile setting for reflecting on walking as a healthy and aesthetic practice. Although, based on the evidence provided by publications such as those by García (2025) and Vallejo, Ríos, and González (2024), it is known that the city faces challenges—such as the perception of insecurity or the fragmentation of its pedestrian infrastructure—it still has enclaves that invite physical movement, contemplation, and an emotional connection with the environment.

Places such as Malecón 2000, Santay Island, Cerro Santa Ana, and Bosque Cerro Blanco reveal that the city can be explored with the senses and that the act of walking and visualizing the details of each space can be transformed into an experience of physical, emotional, and cultural well-being.

In this sense, Guayaquil presents itself as an inspiring case for recovering walking as an urban and educational habit, recognizing the value of landscape and public space in favor of health. Therefore, it is of great social benefit to develop public policies, educational strategies, and urban designs that promote walking from the perspective of visibility, health, and appropriation of public space.

Encouraging walking from school as part of life skills training is a task of great social benefit. In Guayaquil, there are university degrees such as Physical Activity and Sports Education at institutions such as the University of Guayaquil, the Salesian Polytechnic University (UPS), and the State University of Milagros (UNEMI), which train professionals capable of designing educational programs that integrate physical exercise as part of comprehensive development.

The invitation is extended to these professionals, who can play a key role in promoting school projects that encourage guided walks, exploration of the urban environment, and appreciation of the landscape.

In addition, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education has proposed an Educational Transformation with a focus on health, inclusion, and active citizenship (2023). "It is a process of social transformation that emphasizes the design of relevant, inclusive, and contextualized public policies" (p.5). This means that their actions open the door to walking in the city being seen not only as physical activity, but also as a pedagogic tool for experiential learning, respect for the environment, and community building. However, this requires identifying different spaces, both those that exist and have been remodeled and those that are planned as apolitical public response initiatives.

1.3.1. Emblematic spaces for walking in Guayaquil

Without ignoring the aforementioned urban challenges facing Guayaquil, the city has spaces that allow walkers to experience the environment from a healthy and aesthetic perspective. These places, due to their landscape configuration and symbolic value, become privileged settings for physical movement and contemplation.

1.3.1.1. Malecón 2000: history, culture, and visual appeal

Stretching 2.5 km along the Guayas River, Malecón 2000 is one of the most representative spaces of urban regeneration in Guayaquil. It includes gardens with more than 350 plant species, civic squares, historical monuments, museums, dining areas, and rest areas. Malecón 2000 Foundation. Walking along this boardwalk allows the body to move in a safe, visually stimulating environment steeped in urban memory. The presence of water, vegetation, and public art makes the walk a multisensory experience that promotes physical and emotional health.

In this context, it is inspiring to compare the use of water and the urban wall with other Latin American landscapes. In the case of Cienfuegos, as Bestard González and López García (2018) point out, the boardwalk is presented as an "imaginary dividing line" between the sea and the city, where the presence of water "promotes the enjoyment of spaces that, within collective sensibilities, favor the environment and quality of life". This cultural appropriation of the wall—which originally served as a physical boundary facing the sea—shows how the maritime landscape can become a setting for affection, memory, and community uses.

As in Cienfuegos, the Malecón 2000 not only acts as urban infrastructure, but also as a physical and emotional experience that transforms the perception of the environment. The water, the route, and the visual landscape form an urban narrative that welcomes the walker and connects them to the city.

1.3.1.2. Santay Island: nature and active mobility

Declared a National Recreation Area, Santay Island has become the new green lung of Guayaquil. It is accessed by pedestrian bridges from Durán or from the boardwalk itself, and once on the island, walkers can follow ecological trails that connect to the eco-village, the environmental interpretation center, and the crocodile farm. (Zambrano Caguana & Chan, 2019) and (Retamal 2017).

This natural environment offers a peaceful walk surrounded by biodiversity, ideal for physical activity in contact with the landscape.

1.3.1.3. Cerro Santa Ana: stairs, viewpoints, and memory

Located in the Las Peñas neighborhood, Cerro Santa Ana (Vergara, 2004) offers an uphill walk along stairways that pass colorful houses, murals, cafes, and viewpoints. Although the route requires physical effort, the visual and cultural rewards are significant. From the top, walkers can contemplate the city and the river, reconnecting with their surroundings from an elevated and symbolic perspective.

1.3.1.4. Cerro Blanco Forest: an ecological hike

This tropical dry forest, located on the outskirts of the city, offers hiking trails that allow walkers to be in direct contact with nature. It is an ideal space for longer walks, where the natural landscape acts as a restorative and educational agent. The Pro-Bosque Foundation (2021) promotes guided activities that integrate health, conservation, and environmental learning.

These spaces not only offer inspiring landscapes for walkers, but also reveal Guayaquil's potential to project itself as a healthy and walkable city. Beyond its visual and ecological richness, it is in the design of public policies and the activation of collective initiatives where the true momentum of this human mobility comes into play. Below, we explore the institutional efforts that have begun to pave the way toward a city that can be explored with the body, the gaze, and the right to inhabit it.

1.3.2. Public initiatives and urban policies that promote walking in Guayaquil: urban regeneration

In recent years, Guayaquil has begun to reconfigure its relationship with public space, promoting projects that reclaim the street as a place for meeting, movement, and health. These initiatives, although still emerging, reveal a political will to restore the body's prominence in the city.

1.3.2.1. Ruta Centro: pedestrianization as a revitalization strategy

The Ruta Centro initiative, promoted by the municipality since 2023 (Municipality of Guayaquil, 2025), seeks to pedestrianize emblematic streets such as Malecón, Panamá, Pichincha, and República de Guayaquil. It could be thought that the term pedestrian, although in many texts "pedestrian" is used as a synonym for someone who walks, has a more functional and normative meaning: a pedestrian is someone who circulates on foot in public spaces, subject to traffic rules. In contrast, "walker" evokes a freer, more sensitive, and active experience: someone who walks by choice, for pleasure, for health, for contemplation.

Every Sunday, these roads are transformed into pedestrian corridors where sports, cultural, and recreational activities take place. The proposal not only reactivates local commerce but also promotes walking as a collective, safe, and enjoyable practice.

Similarly, Bestard González and López García (2018) are mentioned comparatively, because their communication refers to countless traditional activities in that part of the city of Cienfuegos, such as traditional maritime festivals, such as the popular performance entitled "Arrival and Farewell of the Shrimp," and the plastic arts event called Salón del Mar, organized by the Naval Museum, along with traditional seafood events in Cienfuegos. During the day, the population has also enjoyed traditional regattas or competitive events such as the Grand Prix and canoeing, and every day they can enjoy watching rowing athletes practice in their different modalities.

But above all, the aforementioned authors emphasize that the comfortable paved sidewalk encourages a simple but fundamental activity for today's society: walking, exercising outdoors, playing sports, in short, moving the body (the secret key to achieving and maintaining health as a resource for quality of life).

1.3.2.2. Urdesa Route: community, health, and visibility

Inspired by Ruta Centro, Ruta Urdesa turns Víctor Emilio Estrada Avenue into a vehicle-free space every Sunday. More than 5,000 people participate in walks, yoga classes, cycling, and dance therapy. In addition, art exhibitions and live music are integrated, strengthening the link between health, culture, and the urban landscape. (Guevara, 2015) This initiative has shown that pedestrianization can be a tool for social cohesion and collective well-being.

1.3.2.3. A city for children: walking as an urban right

Pedestrianization has also been designed with children in mind. Events such as the Ruta Mágica (Municipality of Guayaquil, 2025b) on Malecón Avenue have turned public spaces into a safe and playful environment for children and young people. These actions assert children's right to inhabit the city by walking, playing, and exploring, and open the door to urban policies that think about the city from the bottom up, from the small steps that traverse it.

1.3.2.4. Urban planning with a human focus

The Guayaquil 2050 Master Plan (Máster Plan General, 2020) envisions a green, healthy, and walkable city. Among its actions, the following stand out:

- Increased pedestrian crossing times at traffic lights.
- Auditing roads and improving sidewalks.
- Planting of trees in urban areas.
- Promotion of mixed uses and neighborhood economy.

These measures point to a city that prioritizes pedestrians, recognizing that urban design can be an ally of health and quality of life.

Following on from the above, a third subsection is developed under the heading Guayaquil as an inspiring case study, focusing on the educational potential of walking as a formative, healthy practice that is sensitive to the urban landscape.

1.4. Education for walking: sowing habits from childhood

Walking in the city is not only a physical activity, but also an educational opportunity to train the eye, the body, and civic awareness. In Guayaquil, various initiatives have begun to recognize this potential, integrating walking as part of comprehensive education in schools.

1.4.1. "Educating on the Way": learning on the move

One of the most significant experiences is the Educating on the Way program, promoted by the Municipality of Guayaquil in coordination with the Ministry of Education. (Women's Directorate, 2022)

Educating on the Way aims to promote the retention of children in the school system from early childhood education through elementary and middle school, as well as to foster conditions of

comprehensive protection, gender equality, non-discrimination, and care for minors by their families and communities.

This initiative, which benefits more than 7,500 children in vulnerable situations in areas such as Monte Sinahí and Isla Puná, offers personalized and group tutoring that revalues walking as part of the educational process, connecting the journey with the environment, emotional health, and community ties.

1.4.2. MAIS-CE: comprehensive health in educational contexts

The Manual for Comprehensive Health Care in Educational Contexts (MAIS-CE, 2022), developed by the Ecuadorian Ministries of Health and Education, recognizes schools as key spaces for promoting healthy habits. Among its strategies, it considers regular physical activity as part of student well-being and promotes coordination between the educational community and the urban environment to encourage practices such as mindful walking.

1.4.3. Safe school routes: thinking about the city from the bottom up

Inspired by international models, some projects in Guayaquil have begun to explore safe school routes, where the journey to school becomes a space for learning, socialization, and autonomy. These routes, designed with community participation, seek to reduce road risks, improve pedestrian infrastructure, and encourage the active use of public space.

1.4.4. Visuality and landscape as teaching resources

Walking in the city can also be a way to educate perception and aesthetic sense. By visiting places such as the Malecón, Santay Island, or Cerro Santa Ana, students can learn about history, ecology, urban art, and citizenship. Integrating these routes into the school curriculum—as educational outings or classroom projects—helps to develop sensitive, critical walkers who are connected to their environment.

2. Methodology

This article is based on a qualitative, reflective, and proactive approach aimed at integrating scattered knowledge about urban walking as a healthy, educational, and aesthetic practice. The methodology used is based on documentary review, thematic analysis, and experiential learning, with the purpose of articulating concepts, public policies, academic studies, and personal observations in an enriching narrative.

- Type of study

This is a reflective essay with a qualitative approach, based on a literature review, comparative analysis of urban experiences, and situated observation. The study does not seek to validate hypotheses, but rather to explore conceptual and practical connections that allow us to understand walking as a comprehensive urban experience.

- Sources of information

The article is based on:

- Academic articles on walkability, urban health, landscape, and education, such as the study by Páramo et al. (2021) on the experience of walking in Latin American cities.

- Perceptual research, such as that by Herrmann-Lunecke, Mora, and Véjares (2020), who conducted 120 interviews while walking in Santiago, Chile, to identify elements of the urban landscape that facilitate or inhibit walking.

- Systematic review, such as that by Ríos-Llamas and Hernández-Vázquez (2022), who analyzed 30 publications on active mobility in Latin American cities, using thematic coding with ATLAS.ti to identify urban factors that influence walking, cycling, and driving.

- State of the art in education, such as the work of Andrea Viviana Torres Peña (2019), which systematizes public policies and academic reflections on walking as a learning experience in the city, in the context of educating cities.

- Institutional documents from organizations such as the WHO, UN-Habitat, and national ministries that address urban health, quality of life, and active mobility.
- Comparative experiences of cities such as Cienfuegos and Guayaquil, which provide a sensitive and comparative perspective to the analysis.
- Procedure
 - The methodological process was carried out in the following stages:
 - Selection of relevant texts using thematic criteria: health, landscape, education, and urban design.
 - Critical reading and extraction of significant quotes that engage with the article's proposal and allow for the construction of an argumentative narrative.
 - Organization of information into thematic headings that facilitate fluid reading and conceptual articulation.
 - Integration of experiential experiences as a narrative and reflective resource, which adds emotional and cultural depth to the analysis.
 - Proactive writing that articulates the findings with the article's objective and the Latin American context, seeking to offer a useful tool for social actors, urban planners, and educators.

3. Results

The document review and thematic analysis identified a series of findings that confirm the value of urban walking as a comprehensive practice that links health, landscape, education, and civic culture. These findings are reported below.

3.1. Walking as a multidimensional experience

Studies by Páramo et al. (2021) and Herrmann-Lunecke, Mora, and Véjares (2020) confirm that urban walking is experienced in three interrelated dimensions: personal purposes, the place where one walks, and the spatial and social conditions that facilitate or inhibit this experience. These dimensions are expressed in walking as physical activity, recreation, contemplation of the landscape, and a form of social interaction.

3.2. The landscape as a sensory and emotional stimulus

It was evident that the visual environment—whether natural or built—directly influences the perception of physical effort and the enjoyment of walking. Spaces with vegetation, public art, water, and heritage architecture encourage adherence to walking and promote positive emotional states. In this sense, the urban landscape becomes a therapeutic and pedagogical resource, as pointed out by Briceño-Avila (2018) and Villalpando Flores (2021).

3.3. Guayaquil as a setting for emerging walkability

The city of Guayaquil has iconic spaces that allow for meaningful walking: the Malecón 2000, Santay Island, Cerro Santa Ana, and Bosque Cerro Blanco. In addition, initiatives such as Ruta Centro, Ruta Urdesa, and Educando en el Camino show that there are public efforts to reclaim space for the body and the community. These actions reveal that walkability can be promoted through urban design, civic culture, and school education.

3.4. Education as a strategy for transformation

Educational programs that integrate walking as part of learning—such as MAIS-CE and safe school routes—demonstrate that it is possible to instill healthy habits from childhood, linking body, landscape, and citizenship. This formative dimension of walking aligns with the approach of educating cities, where public space becomes an open classroom and walking becomes a learning experience.

4. Discussion

The results obtained in this reflective study confirm that walking in the city is not a simple act of movement, but a practice loaded with meanings that involves the body, perception, memory, and culture. This perspective aligns with that proposed by Páramo et al. (2021), who identify that the experience of walking is shaped by personal purposes, the place traveled, and the spatial and social conditions that enable or inhibit it.

In this sense, urban walking can be understood as a form of appropriation of public space, where the body becomes an active agent of transformation and the city reveals itself as a sensitive stage. As proposed by Avilés Arias (2020), everyday walking allows the city to be co-constructed from the aesthetic, perceptual, and critical experience of the walker, generating an urban poetics that transforms the environment and subjectivity.

The city of Guayaquil, with its emblematic spaces and public initiatives, demonstrates that it is possible to revalue walking as a collective practice, even in contexts marked by security challenges, urban fragmentation, and inequality. Actions such as Ruta Centro, Ruta Urdesa, and Educando en el Camino reveal an institutional willingness to reclaim the street for the body, the community, and learning. This articulation between health, landscape, and urban education responds to what UN-Habitat calls "cities for people," where walking becomes a vital, sustainable, and safe experience.

Furthermore, walking as an educational experience—as proposed by Torres Peña (2019)—allows for the formation of citizens who are sensitive, critical, and connected to their environment, within the framework of educating cities. This formative dimension of walking, when linked to landscape and health, can transform the relationship between the individual and the city, generating emotional bonds, environmental awareness, and a sense of belonging.

Taken together, these findings invite us to rethink urban design from a more human perspective, where walking is not an exception but a legitimate and desirable way of inhabiting the city. The integration of the information scattered throughout this article offers a useful tool for social actors, urban planners, and educators who wish to promote a culture of walking as part of collective well-being and the right to the city.

5. Conclusion

Walking the city is a practice that transcends physical movement: it is a way of inhabiting time, space, and urban memory. In this reflective journey, it has become clear that walking can become an exercise in holistic health, a pedagogical act, and an aesthetic experience linked to the urban landscape. Reclaiming the street for the body and for the gaze also means reclaiming the city for its inhabitants, where urban design, public policy, and education play a leading role.

The case of Guayaquil shows that, even in complex contexts, the city can be thought of in terms of its steps: from its pedestrian corridors, its green islands, its community and school initiatives, to its river landscapes that invite sensory enjoyment. Integrating this scattered information and making it visible in a coherent and stimulating narrative not only facilitates knowledge, but also opens the way for new urban decisions that are more humane, sensitive, and connected to the experience of the walker.

In this sense, visualizing the city on foot is not only a practice of health and well-being: it is a way of building active and conscious citizenship, of educating in the connection with the environment, and of re-enchanting everyday life with enjoyment in shared spaces. Because perhaps, as the best journeys teach us, the horizon of the urban is not at the end of the road, but in the beauty of each step.

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