Title

Viajemos Segures: Violence and harassment in mobility spaces experienced by queer transit riders in Mexico City

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Publication Date

2024

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Los Angeles

Viajemos Segures: Violence and harassment in mobility spaces experienced by queer transit riders in Mexico City

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Latin American Studies

by

Alejandra Rios Gutiérrez

2024

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Viajemos Segures: Violence and harassment

in mobility spaces experienced by queer transit riders in Mexico City

by

Alejandra Rios Gutiérrez

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2024

Professor Elizabeth Marchant, Chair

Safe spaces for queer communities provide refuge for enjoying important cultural and social spaces. Traveling to these safe spaces often presents many safety-related obstacles for queer-identifying people. In this research, I examine the travel experience of LGBTQ+ transit riders in Mexico City. I inquire about the types of safety concerns queer communities encounter in transportation spaces and the actions they take to address these concerns. I use a qualitative research approach by conducting interviews with 20 queer transit riders. I find that perceptions and experiences of safety impact how queer transit riders use public spaces. Participants adapt to safety concerns by altering when, where, and how they travel, as well as employing strategies of resistance like activism, mutual aid, and community care. They also share recommendations for improving safety through infrastructure, policy, and education. This research contributes to the literature on public safety in transportation for underrepresented urban populations.

The thesis of Alejandra Rios Gutiérrez is approved.

Charlene Villaseñor Black

Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris

Elizabeth Marchant, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2024

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Acknowledgments

I extend heartfelt gratitude to the individuals who generously shared their life experiences for this research. Thank you for trusting me with your time and knowledge. Your narratives were fundamental to this project, and it is through your contributions that it has become a reality.

Special thanks are due to my committee for their unwavering support, encouragement, and guidance. I am grateful to Dr. Elizabeth Marchant and Dr. Charlene Villaseñor Black for kindly joining my committee and offering valuable perspectives despite the topic being outside their primary fields. Thank you also to Dr. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris for your guidance and for lending your expertise in gender and safety in transportation.

I am grateful to all my friends, classmates, and colleagues. Your discussions and knowledge have been a constant source of inspiration. I'm particularly thankful to my classmates in the Fall 2022 208C Dissertation/Thesis Proposal Writing course for helping me organize the foundations of this research, improve my academic writing, and learn how to navigate the thesis process. I am also incredibly grateful for Tam Guy. The resources, knowledge, and expertise you shared helped design this study.

Thanks to my sister, Nataly Rios, for her continuous encouragement and support, including her insightful feedback on my interview protocol and the final draft of this thesis. Thanks to Madalyn Bryant, Andrew Jarnagin, and Lupe Velez for their thoughtful edits and comments on my final draft. I am grateful to my

cousin, Minia Oseguera Gutiérrez, for carefully revising my translated interview protocol. Thanks to Madeline Wander and Tamika Butler for teaching me the interviewing techniques that supported me in this research. Thank you also to Diego Safa, my old roommate in Mexico City, for their support in recruiting participants.

Thank you to the UCLA Latin American Institute for generous funding support for this research. Thank you to the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy in Mexico City for their support and encouragement during the data collection period, providing valuable resources and connections. I am especially grateful to Felix Vidal, César Hernández, and Alejandro Lerma for their help recruiting participants.

I am immensely thankful for Mexico City and the people who make this a place for collective care, joy, and love. Thank you for always welcoming me with open arms.

Introduction

Sitting between Glorieta Insurgentes and Paseo de la Reforma, the lively neighborhood of Zona Rosa, one of the oldest LGBTQ+ neighborhoods in the city, rests as a seemingly sanctuary space for queer communities. As one of the main gathering spaces for LGBTQ+ people living in or visiting Mexico City, Zona Rosa provides some escape from the discrimination and intolerance the community faces in other parts of the city and the country. However, it is important to note that Zona Rosa, with its trans-exclusionary history (explained below), is not considered a safe space by everyone in the LGBTQ+ community (González, 2024; @MarchaLGBTCDMX, 2024).

Similarly to other gayborhoods around the world, Zona Rosa formed through organizing, planning, and development by mostly cisgender gay men (Córdova, 2010; Ghaziani, 2020; Lanzagorta García, 2018). Gay club owners and management teams in Zona Rosa are often not part of the queer community and primarily seek a profit rather than helping create community. Many people in the LGBTQ+ community report violence inflicted by transphobic or heteronormative visitors, residents, or workers in Zona Rosa, which turns this apparently safe queer haven into an unwelcoming nightmare for many members of the community (Alfaro, 2023; Morales, 2024; Villa, 2023).

Other queer neighborhoods and spaces have emerged over time throughout the city, including bars and clubs in Calle República de Cuba located in the city center and pop-up gatherings. Despite these spaces, violent anti-queer sentiments

persist, making many parts of the city unsafe or hostile for the queer community. Transportation spaces used to reach safer destinations are also subject to this violence. The costs of living in or near many queer neighborhoods are very high, given their central location and proximity to some of the city's most vital economic centers. This means that most visitors to LGBTQ+ spaces travel from more affordable parts of the city. Queer-presenting transit riders constantly face potentially dangerous situations since they frequently risk encountering people with queer-phobic sentiments on their trips.

This research examines the types of safety considerations queer transit riders face while traveling, as well as identifying the destinations where they feel the safest. The research contributes to the literature on mobility access and public safety for gender and sexual minorities. Research on public transit safety in Mexico City examines gender-based violence against women and evaluates the adoption of design standards and policies to address violence and harassment in public transit infrastructure. However, literature focusing on similar topics for queer groups in Mexico City is limited. This research aims to address this gap in the literature and support design and policy changes for urban equitable planning and development practices. The findings of this research might assist in the creation of a framework that addresses how perceptions of safety and experiences of harassment and violence affect mobility for sexual and gender minorities across geographies.

I apply qualitative methods in this study. The data collected comes from twenty semi-structured interviews with queer transit riders living in Mexico City.

The interviews provide qualitative data about how queer transit riders travel, their safety concerns, and how these concerns might affect their travel behavior. Interview participants also provide information about their desired experience in public and mobility spaces to support design and policy recommendations.

Literature Review

Transportation research focusing on gender and sexual minorities is limited. Interest in learning more about these populations has grown in recent years, culminating in the study of queer mobilities and transmobilities. These emerging fields support the development of more accessible transportation by understanding the needs of queer communities, allowing gendered violence and harassment research to expand beyond the study of the safety of women in transit. Studying safety in transportation for queer groups aims to address how violence and harassment create outcomes of immobility (Lubitow et al., 2017; Shakibaei & Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2024; Sheller & Urry, 2006).

Safety in public and transit spaces

The study of public safety and reducing gender-based violence for women invites multidisciplinary research in the fields of urban planning, sociology, gender studies, and political geography (Dunckel Graglia, 2016; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014; Ramírez Kuri, 2015; Rivadeneyra et al., 2015; Yavuz & Welch, 2010). This research presents evidence that women often alter and restrict their movement due to their fears and experiences of violence. Literature on experienced harassment and

violence indicates that people change their travel behavior after experiencing violence in public transit (Gardner et al., 2017; Kash, 2019). Extensive research on the study of the fear of crime or perceptions of safety centers on the gender binary, with women as the victimized and generally excluding the perspectives of queer people. Nevertheless, similar findings appear in the limited research addressing safety in mobility spaces for sexual and gender minorities.

Studies by Lubitow and Shakibaei focusing on transgender and gender non-conforming people in the US and Turkey, respectively, find that people who present queer in public face discrimination and harassment from other transit passengers, transit operators, and police (Lubitow et al., 2017; Shakibaei & Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2024). Moreover, experiences of harassment, discrimination, and violence often lead to travel limitations for queer people who lack access to other transportation options (Lubitow et al., 2017; Ritterbusch, 2016; Shakibaei & Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2024). Shakibaei adds that social stigma characterized by localized cultural, social, and religious values causes incidents of violence and harassment against trans and gender-diverse people in public transit (Shakibaei & Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2024).

Factors affecting safety

The transportation safety literature identifies several factors that impact safety, including research evaluating policy and planning strategies implemented to address safety. Policies and planning strategies in practice have been implemented in response to women's safety concerns (Dunckel-Graglia, 2013; Lea et al., 2017). The research finds that added security features improve perceptions of safety but do

not address the root causes of gendered violence and harassment. The appearance of transit vehicles and facilities influences perceptions of safety. Cleaner, well-lit spaces can improve the perception of safety (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014; Yavuz & Welch, 2010). Moreover, reliable service and transportation systems technologies can result in positive changes in perceptions of safety (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014; Rivadeneyra et al., 2015; Yavuz & Welch, 2010).

The literature provides conflicting evidence about policing. Some research describes policing as an effective tactic to improve perceptions of safety (Yavuz & Welch, 2010), while other studies find the opposite. These differences could be explained by the different geographies of the literature on this topic and varying histories of police brutality in different communities. Some literature also connects experiences of safety and perceived safety by describing strategies intended to prevent or reduce instances of violence while also addressing perceptions of safety that prevent people from accessing mobility spaces, such as surveillance systems or lighting improvements (Loukaitou-Sideris & Fink, 2009).

Studies focusing on LGBTQ+ populations specifically found similar strategies for managing perceived fear and experiences of violence and harassment. Some research found that security measures, such as policing, cameras, and panic buttons, lead to a decrease in feelings of insecurity (Shakibaei & Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2024), but other research found opposite results (Lubitow et al., 2017). Additionally, queer people employ their own strategies to manage harassment and violence, such as changing how they dress or present themselves in public, limiting the time of day

they travel, avoiding modes of transportation, and walking away from active incidents (Ivanova & O'Hern, 2024; Lubitow et al., 2017; Shakibaei & Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2024).

Gaps in the literature

The literature establishes that women have a higher likelihood than men to fear the potential of crime (Yavuz & Welch, 2010) and that they are more likely to be victimized (Savard, 2018). However, limited information is available measuring the likelihood of victimization or of feeling fear for sexual and gender minorities. Moreover, very little academic research exists in Latin America and Mexico about the transit experiences of queer groups. With these gaps in the literature, the implementation of effective actions that lead to equitable development and mobility justice for queer groups is limited.

Context

Mexico City, with a population of more than 9.2 million residents, is a social, cultural, and political center (INEGI, 2020). The first-of-its-kind survey, Encuesta Nacional sobre Diversidad Sexual y de Género [National Survey on Sexual and Gender Diversity] (ENDISEG) administered in 2021 by the Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [National Institute of Statistics and Geography] (INEGI), estimates that the LGBTQ+ population in Mexico is 5 million and that more than 310,788 people who identify as LGBTQ+ live in Mexico City (INEGI, 2021).

In the backdrop of a conservative and Catholic society, queerness has thrived for decades in this metropolis. Attitudes and norms have shifted over time to allow for more open public expressions of gender and sexual identities (Laguarda, 2010). Additionally, policies and laws increasingly provide protection and rights for LGBTQ+ people. At the federal level, the Constitution prohibits discrimination and violence against people on the basis of sexual orientation or gender and provides full human rights to LGBTQ+ people (Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Distrito Federal, 2018). Additionally, all 32 Mexican states and federal entities[1] recognize same-sex marriage, legal gender changes, and gender-affirming care. While same-sex adoption is not yet legal in all of the states, Mexico City does provide this right (INEGI, 2022). Mexico City, a self-proclaimed LGBTQ+ friendly city, ratifies some of the most progressive laws and policies that protect and grant rights to the LGBTQ+ population compared to other parts of the country (COPRED, n.d.). For example, the city government runs a health clinic for trans populations and partners with other healthcare clinics to increase access to essential services, including hormone therapy and gender-affirming care (Gobierno de la Ciudad de México, n.d.). Nevertheless, some barriers to full rights for the queer community exist. For example, trans children younger than 12 years old in Mexico City cannot obtain legal recognition of their gender identity (Alonzo Romero, 2023).

[1] Mexico City gained autonomy and self-governance similar to other states in 2016.

Additionally, enforcement of these laws is not guaranteed. Many LGBTQ+ people report discrimination and harassment that prevents them from accessing their full rights (INEGI, 2023a). According to the 2022 Encuesta Nacional sobre Discriminación [National Survey on Discrimination] (ENADIS), 37.3% of sexual and gender-diverse populations reported experiencing discrimination in the last 12 months. Currently, 54.9% of non-LGBTQ+ people in Mexico approve of physical affection of same-sex couples in public, and 58.9% believe that same-sex couples should be able to marry (INEGI, 2022). 34% of Mexicans reported unwillingness to rent a room to someone who is trans, and 29.8% were unwilling to rent to someone who is gay or lesbian. 10.7% of people would be unwilling to hire a trans person, and 9.6% would be unwilling to hire a gay or lesbian person (INEGI, 2023a). Traditional cultural and social attitudes are a major source of discrimination and harassment. 77.7% of the Mexican population practices Catholicism, a religious tradition with a long history of anti-queer sentiments and beliefs (INEGI, 2023b). Additionally, society holds tight to the hetero-patriarchal system that oppresses and enacts violence towards women, gender non-conforming minorities, and non-heteronormative people (Celorio, 2018).

Violence, discrimination, and harassment based on gender are common in shared private and public spaces in Mexico City. Crime data is often inaccurate and challenging to collect due to chronic underreporting. Nevertheless, some studies focused on gender-based violence against women in Mexico City suggest the magnitude of the problem. A survey in a 2015 study of transit riders in Mexico City

found that the percentage of women who experience gender-based violence is likely to be much higher than the 65% reported by the city (Rivadeneyra et al., 2015). Another recent study concluded that 91% of women have experienced some form of gender-based violence in public spaces (Soto Villagrán et al., 2017). Similarly, a 2018 study focusing on college students in Mexico City found that 90% of female students have experienced sexual harassment in public transportation (Romero-Torres & Garcia-Gutierrez, 2020).

Despite the laws protecting queer people from gender or sexual discrimination and violence, incidents often go unreported due to a broad distrust in police and the legal system in Mexico (Gobierno de la Ciudad de México et al., 2021; Grijalva Eternod & Fernández Molina, 2017). A report presented by LetraS, an LGBTQ+ organization in Mexico, estimates at least 150 murders of queer individuals in Mexico in 2023, while the federal government only reported 66 cases (Letra S, Sida, Cultura y Vida Cotidiana, 2023). Underreporting and mislabeling of cases, including the misgendering of victims, explain the mismatch between the estimated and official counts. The LetraS study also points out that 65% of the victims were trans women, indicating that this group is the most vulnerable amongst the queer community (Letra S, Sida, Cultura y Vida Cotidiana, 2023). Queer people frequently face other types of violence and harassment that create hostile environments that diminish their safety (Comité de Violencia Sexual, 2015).

The government responded to the gender safety problem by addressing issues women face. However, they overlooked the specific safety needs of sexual and

gender minorities. In 2008, the city government launched the "Viajemos Seguras" [Traveling Safe] program, which included implementing panic buttons, additional safety personnel, and women-exclusive spaces in Metro and Metrobus stations and vehicles (Gobierno de la Ciudad de México, 2024; Soto Villagrán et al., 2017).[2] In 2019, the city also published the Strategic Plan for Gender and Mobility of Mexico City (2019-2024), aiming to implement additional strategies to combat gender-based violence in public transit systems and support mobility access for women. These programs and plans aim to provide a safer travel experience for women and girls. The strategies resulted in safer transportation for women, but some people believe these solutions only provide a band-aid to the problem (Dunckel-Graglia, 2013; Soto Villagrán et al., 2017).

Conceptual Framework

This study on the types of safety concerns experienced by queer transit riders pulls from the theories of gendered violence and harassment and studies on how experiences and perceptions of safety affect mobility.

This thesis examines the following research questions:

- Do safety concerns around violence and harassment influence the travel behavior of queer transit riders?

[2] See Appendix 1.2.1 for visuals of women-exclusive spaces in the Metro.

- To what extent are experienced, perceived, or a combination of these safety grievances prevalent and impactful in shaping the travel experience and behavior of queer transit riders?

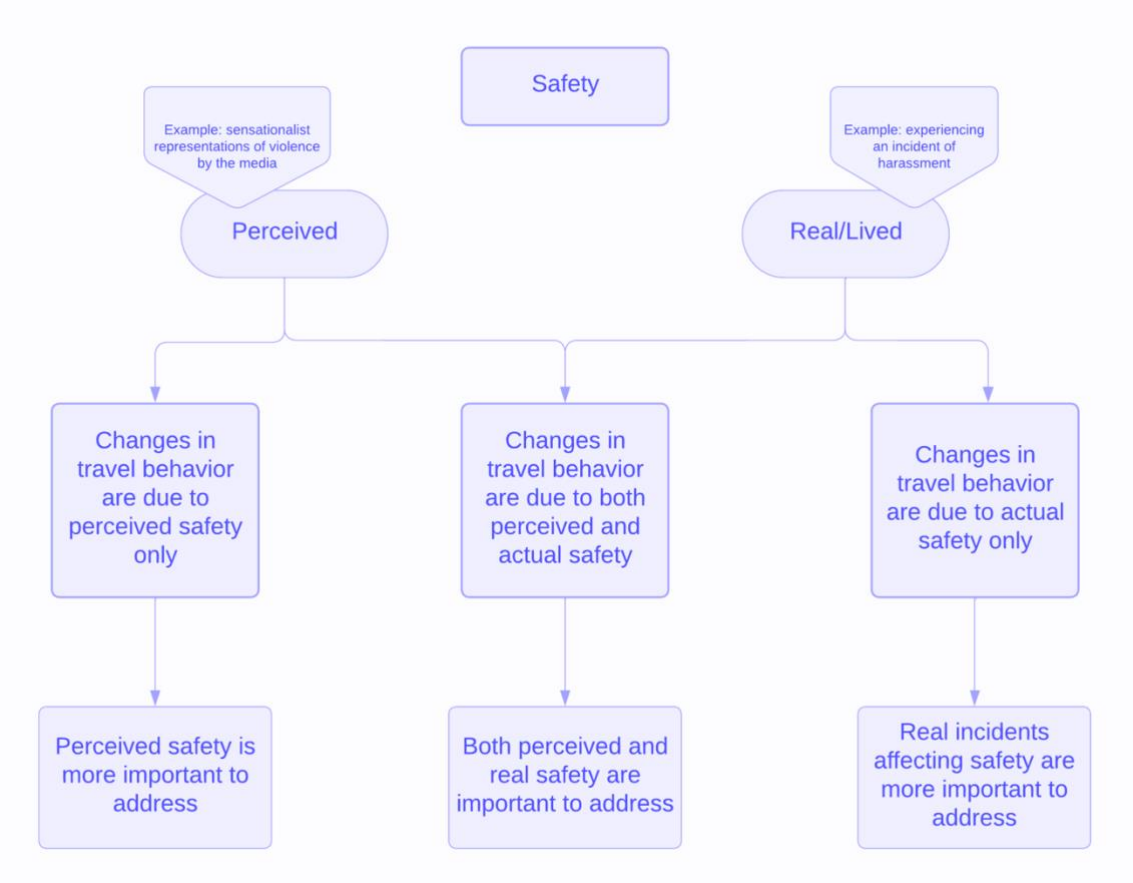
Secondary research questions:

- Are incidents of violence and harassment and perceptions of safety understood to be associated with gender and sexual identities, or are these concerns associated with other factors?
- What strategies are employed by queer transit riders in response to safety concerns, and how do these strategies manifest in their travel behavior?

I theorize that concerns around violence and harassment affect travel behavior for queer transit riders. I use participant interview responses to questions on their experienced violence and harassment to examine this theory. Furthermore, the secondary research question examines what factors participants attribute as the motivation behind incidents of violence as participants examine their own perceptions of safety.

Moreover, I separate *experienced* and *perceived* safety to understand travel behavior changes more precisely. I use travel behavior changes and the reason for those changes to identify the type of grievance. I provide three possibilities where either perceived safety, experienced safety, or a combination of the two types could impact the travel experience for queer transit riders. Figure 1 below illustrates the conceptual framework addressing this primary research question.

Figure 1: Conceptual model: Factors influencing safety



Measurement, Data, & Methods

Data for this study was collected using qualitative research methods. The data consists of twenty interviews conducted between August 9, 2023, and August 31, 2023. I discuss the measurement, data, and methods in the sections below.

Measurement

The interviews provide in-depth information on how queer transit riders travel, how they experience different safety concerns, and how they react to these

concerns and experiences. The interviews also assist in the creation of recommendations stemming from how queer communities (re)imagine equitable urban spaces. Specifically, the data collected from the interviews helps answer the questions outlined in the Conceptual Framework section of this thesis.

I use a semi-structured interview protocol drawing inspiration from Loukaitou-Sideris (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020) and LA Metro's (LA Metro, 2019) similar previous research on gendered safety concerns in public transit spaces. The interview questions aim to understand both experienced and perceived safety. This study differentiates between perceptions and experiences of safety by defining 'experienced safety' as incidents of violence and harassment that the participant directly lived or experienced. All other safety concerns fall under 'perceived safety,' including any incidents experienced by people in participants' networks. See Appendix 1.1 for the full interview protocol.

Data

Twenty people participated in an interview. Criteria for participation included being 18 years or older, self-identifying with at least one LGBTQ+ identity, and living in Mexico City. Participants did not need to be frequent transit riders to participate in order to include multimodal perspectives, such as people who regularly use rideshare services or ride a bike. Nevertheless, all participants use the public transit system. Subsets of the queer population experience safety while traveling differently, so given that trans and non-binary folks face higher levels of discrimination and violence in Mexico (Brito et al., 2022), I recruited a larger pool of

participants within these specific groups. Fourteen participants self-described as trans, non-binary, or gender fluid. The remaining six self-identified as cisgender gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

All personal information, including name and contact information, was kept on a password-encrypted Excel spreadsheet accessible only to me. I employ pseudonyms to maintain privacy and mask any identifying information. Some participants indicated they wanted their first name or a personal nickname used rather than a pseudonym in this research.

Methods

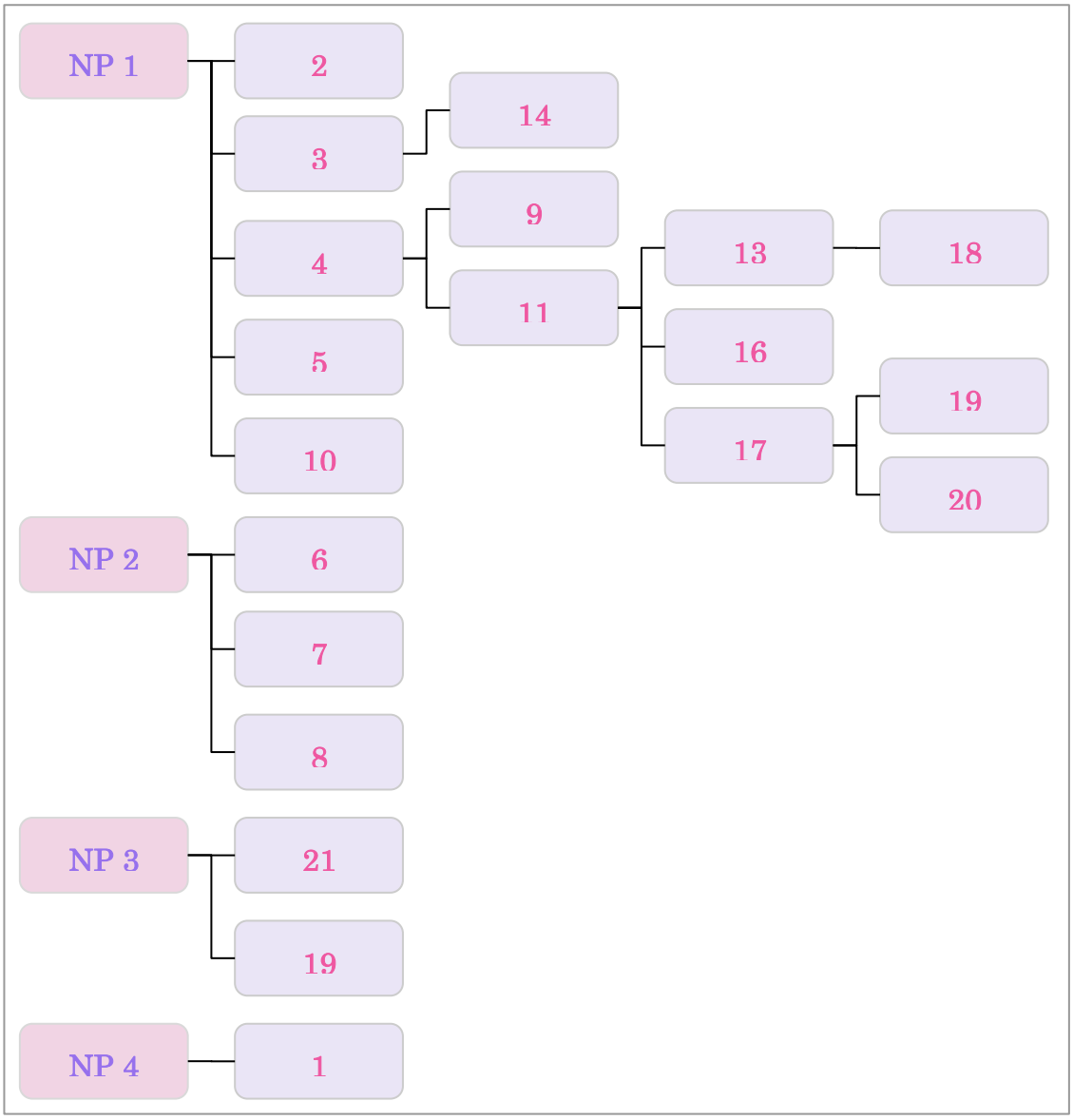
I recruited participants using a snowball sampling process. Given the nature of snowball sampling, which recruits participants within existing networks, the sample skews towards a similar age group, with 55% of the interviewees between the ages of 25 and 31. Table 1 summarizes these demographics.

Table 1: Interviewee demographics

Name	Gender or Sexual Identity	Age	Interview Length (minutes)	Interview Format
Fer	genderfluid	18-24	49	online
Sofia	trans woman	32-38	52	in-person
Quique	non-binary	18-24	46	in-person
Pablo	gay man	18-24	89	in-person
Dani	non-binary	25-31	64	online
Mel	non-binary	25-31	85	in-person
Mariana	bisexual woman	25-31	74	in-person
Fabi	non-binary	32-38	54	online
Samanta	trans woman	25-31	81	in-person
Mitshell	queer	32-38	71	in-person
Leo	trans man	25-31	99	online
Amelia	lesbian woman	18-24	84	online
Juguito	lesbian woman	25-31	63	online
Terry Holiday	trans woman	60+	106	in-person
Daniel	gay man	18-24	72	online
Cristina	trans woman	25-31	70	online
Andres	trans man	25-31	55	online
Ariel	non-binary	25-31	101	in-person
Diego	gay man	25-31	66	online
Andy	non-binary	18-24	60	online

To kick off recruitment, I shared an information sheet in Spanish describing the project with four people who did not participate in the research study but who shared the document among their networks. I met the non-participating (NP) people through my personal and professional networks in Mexico City between 2019 and 2024. Figure 2 below shows the recruitment of participants through different networks. One of the NPs is a lecturer at a local university who shared the information sheet with their undergraduate class. The rest of the non-participants shared the information with their friends, colleagues, and partners. The NPs recruited eleven participants, and five of the participants recruited nine others. The ID given to each participant also indicates the order of the first time I made contact during the sample recruitment process.

Figure 2: Snowball sampling recruitment



Participants had the option to complete the hour-long interview virtually or in person. Nine people chose to take the interview in person, and eleven chose to take it over Zoom. Participants chose the location for the in-person interviews. Six

participants selected a coffee shop, and three invited me to their homes for their interviews.

I provided monetary compensation to encourage participation and to compensate for the time and knowledge provided. Each interview participant received 500 Mexican pesos, or about 30 USD[3]. In-person participants received the compensation in cash. The other participants received the funds through a bank deposit transfer within two days of completing the interview. Participants did not need to finish the interview to receive the full compensation, but all participants completed the interview.

I acquired consent to participate in the study and to record the interviews from all participants at the beginning of the interview. I intended the interviews to last one hour or less, but most participants volunteered to exceed this time limit when asked. The interviews averaged 73 minutes, with the shortest lasting 46 minutes and the longest taking 106.

Interviews were coded using a thematic analysis approach, and Atlas.ti coding software was employed to analyze the interviews. In the analysis, I focus on these themes: queer mobility, effects of violence and harassment for mobility, strategies of survival and resistance, and imaginations of safer futures. All direct quotes from participants in the analysis are translations from Spanish. Some

[3] The exchange rate between MXN and USD can fluctuate, meaning the value of USD relative to MXN may vary depending on the current rate.

modifications were made in the translation to ensure clarity of the message intended by participants.

Limitations

While the stories collected from the interviews provide a lot of valuable information and knowledge, some inherent limitations exist in the use of a qualitative method of research. For example, the interviews are unable to provide an actual estimate of the amount of violence, harassment, and discrimination queer people experience in transit. Nevertheless, this study is not concerned with measuring the magnitude of the victimization of the queer community but rather to understand and identify the causes of different safety concerns for this group while traveling in and using public space.

The nature of using interviews, as opposed to other research methods, prevents capturing all experiences of the queer population. As a result, the study might omit certain information from hard-to-reach sub-groups within this community. For example, this research excludes the perspectives and experiences of people in the LGBTQ+ community who are parents. Additionally, the limited number of interviewees does not allow for an analysis of intersectional differences in safety perceptions and experiences among LGBTQ+ people.

Moreover, the recruitment process invited close networks to participate in the research rather than collecting data from a fully unassociated pool of participants. Nevertheless, the goal was to understand how safety impacts mobility for queer people, and the results indicate similar impacts exist among most participants,

including those with no association with each other, so a different pool of participants would likely yield similar results.

Findings & Analysis

The findings of this study are organized into four themes: queer mobility, effects of violence and harassment for mobility, strategies of survival and resistance, and imaginations of safer futures. The 'queer mobility' theme examines how queer people travel and their destinations. The 'effects of violence and harassment for mobility' section includes an analysis of experiences of harassment and violence and their impact on travel behavior. The 'strategies for survival and resistance' theme includes ways in which queer people respond to violence and harassment. Finally, the 'imaginations of safer futures' section includes policy and planning recommendations proposed by participants.

Queer Mobility

Getting places

Participants were asked to describe how they get to their typical destinations, such as work, school, or socializing with family and friends. To address the transportation needs of millions of people, Mexico City offers several transportation options, including extensive metro and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, buses, gondolas, taxis, bikeshare, and rideshare services. See Appendix 1.2.2 for an image of the system's map inside a metro station.

With twelve lines crossing the city, the Metro serves 195 stations and moves more than a billion passengers per year (Metro CDMX, 2022). Unsurprisingly, all participants mentioned using the Metro system. Use of the Metro varies by participant based on their access to other modes of transportation and their comfort levels. For example, some participants avoid the Metro during peak hours when it is too crowded. In these cases, participants opt for taking alternative forms of transportation. One participant reported avoiding taking the Metro when possible since "everything in the Metro is more aggressive, and the police (inside) don't make me feel safe" (Mitshell).

All participants also mentioned taking the Metrobus—a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system with seven lines operating in dedicated lanes. The Metrobus fare is one peso more expensive than the Metro fare, but only one participant described this price difference as a factor for determining which mode to take. Most participants decide which system to take based on the station's proximity from their trip start and end locations. Only two people described taking the Trolebus—the city's trolley bus system. This system is more expensive and less extensive than the Metro or Metrobus, explaining the participants' lower ridership.

Ten participants regularly ride buses, and eight participants take microbuses or combis. Buses include city-run buses (RTP and Nochebus lines) and private city-regulated bus companies (Corredores Concesionados). Microbuses, which include

combis and *peseros*,[4] differ from buses in that independent bus drivers typically operate the former and lack the level of organization of government-ran or private bus companies. Microbuses also have a smaller capacity and usually serve routes underserved by the city's transit system. The city started introducing policies and programs to replace the microbus systems and vehicles with modern buses operated by bus companies. One of the reasons the government has provided for eliminating the microbuses is to increase the safety of riders. At least one participant avoids taking this transit system due to safety concerns, and almost everyone else who rides this mode also raises safety concerns.

Seventeen participants use some form of rideshare service like Uber or Didi, and six people use taxis. Notably, Mitshell started avoiding rideshare services and prefers to take taxis now after some of their friends were robbed by an Uber driver. On the other hand, Ariel uses rideshare but avoids taking taxis due to safety concerns. Only Amelia sometimes gets driven in a personal vehicle to destinations. Everyone else lacks car access, does not know how to drive, or dislikes driving.

Many participants explicitly mentioned walking to get to places, but all participants do some amount of walking since they are all transit users and need to walk to and from transit stops or stations. Eight participants traveled by bike, while seven participants avoided riding a bike due to safety concerns, not knowing how to

[4] *combis* is the name for microbus vans and *peseros* is another word used for microbuses

ride a bike, or finding the mode inconvenient to their mobility needs. Table 2 below provides more details about the types of transportation modes participants use.

Table 2: Travel modes used by participants

Name	Metro	Metrobus	Trole bus	Bus	Micro bus	Walking	Biking	Ride share	Taxi	Personal vehicle
Fer	X	X		*	X	X	*	X	X	
Sofia	X	X						X		
Quique	X	X		X				X		
Pablo	X	X		*	*	X				
Dani	X	X				X	X	X		
Mel	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		
Mariana	X	X		X		X	X	X		
Fabi	X	X					X	X		
Samanta	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	
Mitshell	X	X				X	X	*	X	
Leo	X	X		X		X	*	X		
Amelia	X	X		X	X	X	*	X	X	X
Juguito	X	X		*		X	X	X		
Terry Holiday	X	X	X	X			*		X	
Daniel	X	X		X			X	X		
Cristina	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	
Andres	X	X			X	X		X		
Ariel	X	X			X	X	*	X	*	
Diego	X	X		X	X	X	*	X		
Andy	X	X	X	X	X		*	X		

X= mode is used, * = mode is avoided

Traveling to queer spaces

Participants were asked to provide the destinations where they felt safe and how they traveled to those places. Many locations described were nightlife places such as bars, warehouse parties, or nightclubs. Destinations included popular bars and clubs in gay hotspots like Zona Rosa and República de Cuba.

Seven participants mentioned visiting Zona Rosa regularly for nightlife activities, while four participants only went to the area to visit La Tianguis Disidente in the daytime. La Tianguis Disidente is an LGBTQ+ reclaimed public space supporting economic activity and community-building. Eight participants described rarely or never visiting Zona Rosa, and one did not discuss their current connection to Zona Rosa. Of the nineteen participants who talked about Zona Rosa, only one had a neutral stance, and one offered a favorable opinion of the space:

> Zona Rosa is something that I think we have in common because when you're walking around there, it's different how one feels, honestly. (Andy)

All other participants shared their concerns with bars and clubs in the area. Some quibbles were about expensive club entrance covers or being too far from home, but many complaints were specifically about feeling unsafe in Zona Rosa. Safety concerns included participants' observations of the clubs pushing drugs or spiking drinks. Other safety concerns included feeling like the spaces cater to cis gay men who practice toxic masculinity or that it invites heteronormative people who make the space feel less welcoming. Many felt like the club and bar owners discriminate against subsets of the queer community. For example, Daniel

described receiving uncomfortable looks as a result of classism. Feeling unwelcome because of their gender identity was common among trans and gender non-conforming participants. A few participants shared anecdotes about violence experienced by their friends or themselves, such as getting beat up by employees or encountering hate speech confrontations from other clubgoers. Mitshell talked about an incident with employees at a bar in Zona Rosa:

> I used to visit it before, then one day my friend was physically assaulted [...] and then I was assaulted too. They took our phones, and the police arrived and tried to blame us. (Mitshell)

Participants described additional places where they like to go out at night, including pop-up micro-parties, raves, and alternative bars and clubs. Participants described these places as spaces of joy where they can be themselves, be with community, and listen to good music. Some explanations of how participants choose where to go include their familiarity with an area, the amount of gender diversity in a place, or just following where their favorite DJs are performing.

Nightlife spaces are not the only queer safe spaces in the city. Thirteen participants included other types of spaces, such as queer-friendly coffee shops, bookstores, bakeries, libraries, movie theaters, art galleries and studios, universities, and other cultural spaces as third spaces where they feel safe. A couple of participants described rarely or never joining queer nightlife spaces, but they were able to find similar benefits in other spaces. For example, Amelia lives in the south of the city, so she is far from most queer nightlife locations. Instead, she finds

community in more local destinations with her family, partner, and friends from school.

Participants discussed how they travel to reach queer destinations. During the day, most participants use transit to get to and from places. Some participants mentioned biking or walking to their destinations. At night, most participants arrive at places by public transit and go back home using rideshare services. A couple of interviewees explained that they take Uber to and from nightlife destinations because of how they are dressed. Instead of Uber, Andy sometimes gets a ride from their mom, and Fer and Andres take a Nochebus bus. The city operates the Nochebus system, which is one of the only public transit options that run at night when other government-operated options are closed. Most people end up taking rideshare services due to the limited options available after the Metro closes. This affects the people who live further away from the city center. For example, Ariel, Leo, and Daniel mentioned spending the night with friends instead of returning home late. Daniel also explained how common it is for people who live far away to nap by the entrance of the Metro and wait until it opens.

In an effort to ensure that these spaces remain safe for the participants and others who enjoy them, the names of queer destinations are not publicly disclosed.

Economic precarity and mobility

While the focus of this research is not on understanding the socio-economic characteristics of LGBTQ+ people in Mexico City, economic precarity among this group of interviewees does impact travel and mobility. Thirteen participants said

their monthly income is less than 9,000 pesos, or about 450 USD monthly. Four people said that they earn between $9,000 and $16,000 pesos (about 450-800 USD) per month, and only two earn between $16,000 and $22,000 pesos (800-2,000 USD) monthly. None of the participants earned higher amounts.

Some participants discussed their economic precarity when talking about their jobs. Most described needing to have more than one job at a time, particularly those identifying as trans. For example, Sofia is a writer, an art performer, and a techno party host. She noted that it is difficult for her to find job security in more traditional sectors since they often exclude her and other trans identities from accessing those jobs. Terry Holiday, the oldest participant and a trans woman, mentioned that people in the community regularly have to find ways to forge themselves somewhere, which is often in creative fields. This observation appears to be somewhat true among the pool of participants since twelve participants described working in something creative as performers, artists, photographers, designers, or dancers.

While this experience of economic precarity and job insecurity is not unique to queer folks in Mexico City,[5] these characteristics influence travel behavior for this group, particularly for those who rely on the nightlife industry and those needing to travel to multiple places to get to work and school. For example, Samanta dresses up in very 'hot or sexy' outfits to head to her DJ events, so she

[5] Note that the average income in Mexico City is around $6,100 pesos (Gobierno de México, 2024)

always takes Uber to these destinations even though she usually rides public transportation to other destinations. Similarly, Terry Holiday described taking a taxi to travel between the theater where she acts, the cabaret where she works, and back home at the end of the night.

Some participants need the flexibility of self-employment, such as Diego and Ariel, who primarily work as street vendors. Diego is a full-time student needing a source of income where he can set his own schedule to meet the demands of his studies. Ariel worked at a call center but eventually became a full-time street vendor since they struggled to fit in a traditional workplace due to their gender expression and disabilities. They both described needing to show up at their selling locations very early in the morning to secure a spot. This means they often have to leave their home before the Metro starts running, so they must take Uber to work.

Effects of violence and harassment for mobility

This section includes narratives of violence, including stalking, sexual harassment, and attempted rape, which may be distressing for some readers.

Experiences of violence and harassment

When asked about experiences that impacted feelings of safety while traveling, participants shared personal stories of violence and harassment in public and transportation spaces. The stories showed that incidents of violence and harassment are common among the LGBTQ+ community. Additionally, these incidents can happen anywhere during a trip. The most common type of violence

shared by participants was being followed or stalked. Nine participants shared stories about being followed by strangers during their travels. Participants reported feeling very scared and stressed about figuring out how to find safety during these incidents:

> It feels awful because you're scared, but there's also anger and the helplessness of not knowing what to do (Andy)

Participants described creative ways to get rid of the people following them. For example, Leo shared how when a person was following him inside a metro station, he went inside a metro car but got off at the last second before the doors closed. Cristina and Fabi, a trans woman and a non-binary person, were able to lose a person who was following them by entering the women-only section. This is important to note because being able to access this area literally saved Cristina and Fabi from aggressors. However, some trans women and non-binary people experience exclusion from this space, so it is not always a solution for reaching safety.

These experiences of being followed impacted how participants felt while traveling, and for some, it changed how they took up space. For instance, Fer shared a time when he was dressed more feminine and was followed by a man in the street and into the Metro. The man touched himself sexually while staring at Fer. This experience impacted how he travels now by making him worry about how others will perceive him depending on how he is dressed:

> After that, I started to become more aware that when I dressed or presented more femininely, it was more likely… I was more prone to being harassed by older men specifically. (Fer)

Receiving unwanted sexually coded touches is another common type of harassment described among participants. Participants described instances of men getting too close to them where they could even feel their erections and instances where men grabbed them inappropriately.

Other types of sexual harassment described by participants include sexual comments or catcalls, receiving "leering looks" from strangers, inappropriate sexual behavior (e.g., masturbation directed at participants), and attempted rape. Participants described how these experiences made them feel uncomfortable and how they were forced to tolerate sexual harassment in order to stay safe. For example, Leo and Samanta shared how they avoid reacting in a hostile or aggressive manner to try to prevent worse outcomes:

> It has happened to me a lot in Ubers, where I feel like... well, they start flirting with me, and that scares me a lot because I've literally felt like I've flirted for survival. I try to play along to keep an atmosphere of 'yeah, this is cool,' and I tell them to drop me off like two blocks before my destination, and I get out, and it's like, 'well, have a nice day' and stuff. But that's mostly how I've dealt with it because it makes me really... Like, my mind thinks that if I try to be hostile, it will make the other person hostile, and things could get out of control and turn bad. (Leo)

Most of the sexual harassment stories came from femininities. In fact, participants who grew up presenting as girls described noticing a huge change after their gender transition in terms of hardly experiencing sexual harassment now.

Most participants also shared instances of homophobic and transphobic violence. People described three main kinds of this type of harassment: comments related to intolerance, hate speech, and physical harassment. Intolerant comments mostly came from conservative and religious people who wanted the participants to stop showing affection with their partners. For instance, Andy described a time when they hugged their partner, and some strangers told them to stop because their children were present. Diego also shared a time when he felt that some women were staring at him and his boyfriend on the bus, and when they exited the bus, they gave them a small piece of paper with bible verses insinuating that they needed to be saved from hell for being gay. Similarly, Quique shared instances where "religious people passed by and told [them] that [they] would go to hell" (Quique).

Many participants described receiving hate speech regularly with attackers using insulting slurs like '*pinche puto*,' '*pinches lesbianas*,' or '*jotos*.'[6] Some experiences of hate speech were intense and consequential, such as when a stranger told a participant that they "shouldn't exist and should die because it was not right and it disgusted him" (Andy). Another example comes from Mel, where a person attempted to remove their right to equal access to transit spaces:

> "I was dating someone who identified as a guy, and that's how they looked at the time. I was with them and their family [and] there was a man watching us, and when he got up to leave, he said to a woman, 'There's a spot if you want to get rid of the *joto*.'" (Mel)

Participants also discussed receiving looks of hate or disapproval towards them. For example, Fer described getting disapproving stares while doing their makeup in public transit. Participants who present their gender ambiguously shared instances of feeling uncomfortable by the puzzled looks of people who were clearly trying to put them into a gender binary box. A participant brought up experiencing multiple instances where people groped them to try to figure out their gender.

In all the interviews, participants shared the ways in which they have experienced violence in public and transportation spaces. While femme-presenting participants experience more sexual harassment than masc-presenting

[6] 'pinche puto' translates to 'fucking f**got', 'pinches lesbianas' translates to 'fucking lesbian' and 'jotos' translates to 'f**got. *Puto* and *joto* are words used as homophobic slurs. The queer community has reclaimed these words but they are still used as hate speech.

participants, both experience sexual and non-sexual harassment. These experiences shape how they interact with the world, including changes to how they travel and strategies they adopt to address the violence.

Violence and harassment: Impacts on travel behavior

Participants discussed ways in which their perceptions and experiences of safety affect how they travel. Many participants described a sense of constant vigilance when traveling. They also reported how time of day and location affect their feelings of safety and how their feelings change based on the presence of others. Additionally, some participants shared changes in how they travel, including changing routes, avoiding certain transportation modes, and restricting behavior in public.

Increased Vigilance

Many participants reported experiencing having to be vigilant while traveling to destinations. This vigilance impacts how participants feel when using mobility spaces since they are unable to relax. For example, Dani talked about how past experiences of getting followed led to an increased need to check surroundings and remain alert constantly. Other participants described feeling like they always have eyes on them (this was especially true for trans women and non-binary femininities):

> As a trans girl, you don't feel safe at any moment... you always feel watched. There are always so many eyes on you, so of course, I don't feel safe. (Sofia)

> When I'm on the street, I'm always on alert... constantly watching to see if someone is following me or if someone is being violent, transphobic, or committing an act of sexual harassment. (Samanta)

> As a trans feminine person, I feel like it's a double kind of harassment because there's the usual harassment toward femininity, plus the harassment that trans people experience just for being who they are. A lot of people stare at me just because I'm different or with a look of being thrown off or even hateful looks. (Fabi)

Other trans and gender non-conforming participants also discussed feeling constant stares from other people. For example, Mitshell thinks that people stare at them to try to figure out what gender they are. These stares often make them feel uncomfortable and unsafe, increasing their sense of vigilance since they have to remain alert in case someone tries to assault or harass them.

Time of day

When asked about how feelings of safety change while traveling, participants brought up feeling more or less safe depending on the time of day when they are traveling. Some participants described changing how they travel based on the time of day. For example, Terry Holiday avoids traveling to certain places she feels are dark or unsafe at night to not expose herself to harm.

Other participants also talked about increased feelings of fear, alertness, and worry when traveling at night. Most participants shared that they feel less safe at night. Samanta discussed how she feels like the absence of large crowds adds to her unease:

> [During the day] violence isn't absent; it's just that there are people watching me. If I see that someone is staring at me, I can shout and say, 'this guy is harassing me,' and everyone can come over. At night, it's different; maybe it feels a bit more unsafe because there isn't a public audience to witness the aggressor's violence. (Samanta)

Interestingly, Sofia, who also stated that they never truly feel safe, feels differently about traveling at night. The lack of people at this time helps her feel a bit safer since there are fewer eyes on her:

> As strange as it may sound, I feel much more comfortable at night. It might be because of the type of people who are around during the day. At night, there are fewer people, and I feel less watched. (Sofia)

Sofia alluded to encountering people during the daytime who are more conservative and less welcoming to her gender identity as a trans woman.

Location

Areas of the city, including those tied to past experiences of harassment and violence, also influence feelings of safety. Specific neighborhoods or areas where participants felt like they stood out made them feel less safe. For example, Leo talked about receiving more stares while waiting for the bus near his home than in other places of the city. He lives in Santa Fe, a low-income neighborhood in the periphery of the city, where he might be labeled as different or as an outcast by people who have less exposure to queer people, so he tries to hide or blend in:

> It stresses me out waiting for the bus because it's not the same as waiting here [by my house] as it is in the center… people stare at me and everything. For example, if I'm waiting here, I lean against the wall and feel like if I don't move, they won't see me. (Leo)

Another way location matters is based on participants' perception of an area's safety. For instance, Juguito described choosing to take or arrive at a particular metro stop near their home because they perceive one route to be safer than the other:

> I can go to either the San Cosme or Buenavista metro stations. I feel safer walking towards San Cosme because the lighting on the way to that metro is really good. In contrast, the lighting on the way to Buenavista isn't as good [...], and during the day, the area is very empty, so I prefer to walk a little further to get to the Metro. (Juguito)

The worries associated with location were more strongly linked with the fear of assault and robbery. Many participants shared this concern. As one participant mentioned, most people in Mexico City worry about assault and robbery. Nevertheless, many feel like their risk of these types of crimes increases because of how others perceive their gender or sexual orientation. Experiences like these explain increased alertness and worry when traveling in locations known for theft and robbery, leading to restricted or modified mobility. For example, Terry Holiday plans a lot when traveling to areas that she feels are not very safe:

> It depends on the area. When it's around here near my home, I feel safe, but when I have to go to La Merced or Mercado Sonora or somewhere like that, I feel afraid of what could happen. So, to get to Mercado Sonora, I take the Metrobus or enter from the Metro side going toward Santa Anita. I mean, I try to find the least dangerous route, because if you end up getting off at Tacuba, you can get lost in a sea of street stands and stuff like that. (Terry Holiday)

Traveling with others

Participants discussed how their feelings of safety change in the presence of others, both while traveling with others and in the presence of strangers. While traveling with others, participants shared mixed responses about how their feelings of safety improved or worsened. Some felt a lot safer while traveling with others, while others felt less safe. People reported feeling differently based on who was accompanying them. A couple of participants described feeling safer by just traveling with others who are queer, especially when traveling as a group. For others, feelings of safety improved when traveling specifically with men or someone perceived as such. One participant discussed how they avoid taking public transit when going out at night but explained feeling safe to do so when they used to travel with an ex-partner, a cis-passing trans man. Other participants shared feeling similarly about traveling with men or other cis-passing queer folks:

> I usually feel safer if I'm with someone else, especially if it's a man, unfortunately. It also varies a lot depending on whether he's a gay man or a straight man. (Juguito)

Mariana, a cis woman, also described feeling safer when traveling with men but feeling more alert and nervous when traveling with her trans friends since she worries about their safety.

Traveling with others increased worries about safety for many participants, especially if the people accompanying them were also queer. A couple of interviewees mentioned feeling more unsafe when traveling with their partners. For example, Diego described feeling more eyes on them than usual when traveling with his partner, which decreases his sense of safety. For Juguito, she feels less safe traveling with her partner, who is trans, when she chooses to take the Metro in the mixed area rather than the women-only section to be able to ride with him:

> I usually get on the women's section, but sometimes it's a bit of a conflict because I have a partner right now who's a trans guy, so there's this division, and I suddenly feel very unsafe getting on the mixed car, especially when I'm with him. (Juguito)

Cis and trans men described feeling like they needed to be more alert when traveling with women or people perceived as women. For example, Daniel discussed taking steps to ensure that his female friends felt safe and comfortable while traveling with him by paying attention and observing men's behavior:

> The difference is really noticeable when I go alone versus with a [female] friend. It feels and seems more unsafe because I see how men look at her, shout things at her, make comments, etc. I become more defensive and try to stay more alert to everything happening, taking certain steps to help them feel safer and calmer. For example, if a seat opens up on the Metro, I check if the man sitting nearby seems sketchy, and I won't let her sit there. Or I'll put my arm around her to prevent any men from touching her inappropriately. (Daniel)

The presence of strangers also resulted in changes in the perceptions of safety for some participants. Just having other people around increased how safe people felt. Quique described feeling safer in spaces with more people since he can go more unnoticed. Multiple participants brought up how getting lost in a sea of people allows them to blend in and face less attention. However, as previously mentioned, Sofia shared her preference for traveling at night since the lack of people makes her feel safer.

Daniel, Amelia, and Mitshell also discussed how the presence of police changes how they feel in terms of safety. For both Daniel and Amelia, having police around in public transportation systems made them feel more secure. Mitshell, on the other hand, described feeling less safe in the presence of police, and sometimes also military personnel, inside metro stations. They felt safer once they entered a metro car since police are no longer present, as they are usually stationed at stations rather than on metro vehicles. This observation is specifically about police presence and how that impacts feelings of safety. A longer discussion of the findings on the effectiveness of policing is provided in the sections below.

Strategies of survival and resistance

Adapting to incidents of violence

While discussing experiences of violence and harassment, many participants provided information about how they react to situations. These reactions include making ad-hoc changes to their routes, avoiding certain modes of transportation, or self-regulating their mobility. These changes in travel behavior appear as direct responses to reported incidents of violence and harassment. Some participants shared escaping from a situation by choosing to wait for the next metro vehicle or bus to arrive. Others discussed getting off from a transit vehicle and changing their entire route or taking other modes of transportation to reach their destination. This type of mode changes usually makes traveling more expensive, adding additional burden to participants.

Many participants have formed an acute sense of fear and alertness from their experiences. Andres described making travel change decisions based on getting a "bad feeling," a reaction that could result from the anxiety caused by constant vigilance and alertness. Sofia also shared how her past experiences of how people have treated her influence her decisions when she has a bad feeling about others:

> It has a lot to do with my dysphoria and feeling that I could be attacked at any moment. For example, going to a bus stop and seeing a group of guys who look super straight, I'd rather turn around and walk instead to avoid the chance of them hurting or attacking me. (Sofia)

Many participants shared about avoiding specific modes of transportation as a reaction to past experiences. For instance, Pablo avoids taking microbuses after an experience when he was young where some women sexually assaulted him on a microbus. On the other hand, Cristina and Fabi avoid riding buses based on their past experiences of being victims of hate speech. Cristina observed that she feels like the type of people who ride the bus tend to be more intolerant, leading to a greater likelihood of hate speech than in other modes.

Other participants avoid certain modes of transportation based more on their fear of theft and robbery or unfamiliarity with bus lines. Buses in Mexico City tend only to label their destination rather than the bus number. However, city bus maps and mobility apps like Google Maps use the bus numbers to provide directions and information on a bus line, resulting in a mismatch of bus information that makes using the system very confusing for many. Often, only people with extensive knowledge of an area or with the courage to ask for directions can access buses and microbuses. Participants who fear assault and robbery all described avoiding buses or microbuses. The decision to avoid taking taxi or rideshare services comes from past experiences. Some avoided these mobility options based on experiences and fears related to sexual assault, while others stated avoiding them due to experiences and fears of theft by the driver.

Other travel and individual behavior changes described by participants included self-imposed travel restrictions, such as not traveling to some destinations or only traveling during certain times of the day. Leo, who lives a long distance away from the places where he spends a lot of his time, explained how he chooses to stay with friends instead of traveling back home if he does not head back early enough. If he cannot find a place to crash, his last resort is to take an expensive Uber back home.

Participants also described self-regulating their behavior in public after experiences of violence and harassment. Juguito, Mariana, Diego, and Andy discussed refraining from physical contact and showing affection when traveling with their partners. Additionally, some described self-regulating how they dress while traveling, especially when visiting or passing through certain areas:

> In places that are more popular, like working-class neighborhoods, comments, catcalling, and being called 'maricón'[7] are more common. For example, if I go to the city center, I can't wear a skirt; I have to wear pants. I have to have my hair tied up. (Ariel)

Finding Safety — strategies for managing violence and harassment

Participants provided ways in which they manage violence towards them. While preventing harassment cannot be controlled by the participants, they all take measures that improve their feeling of safety and security. Some safety measures to manage violence and harassment are less linked to sexual or non-sexual

[7] *'maricón'* is used as a homophobic slur

harassment. Instead, many participants described worrying about getting robbed or assaulted, prompting them to take prevention measures, such as not wearing headphones or using their phone in public or a crowded metro car and avoiding certain routes or modes of transportation with a reputation for crime. Fer discussed a particular method for managing attempts of robbery and assault:

> I have a theory, which I've proven several times, that if you offer someone marijuana—like if you're smoking on the street and you offer it to someone who clearly has intentions of robbing you—they won't rob you. So, that's my safety measure. (Fer)

When faced with situations of violence and harassment, participants reflected on how they navigate public transit spaces by assessing a situation and deciding to seek help or escape:

> No, I shout. I mean, I make the aggression public. That is, if the aggression were public, I could also replicate it publicly. I mean, not replicate it by committing it myself, but by communicating it out loud so that other people notice and I can get help. But in most cases, I just go to the other side, run away, flee, go to another place. (Samanta)

Strategies directly targeting the prevention of harassment include changing how they dress, altering their voice, modifying how they walk and move their bodies, and avoiding displays of affection with their partners in public, such as holding hands, hugging, or kissing. Participants who described moderating how they dressed or how they moved while in public to try to avoid sexual harassment

included cis women, trans women, non-binary people who sometimes dress femme, and gay men who wore revealing clothing to go out:

> I do take some precautions. For example, in the way I move. I think I change it when I feel like I'm in an unsafe or unfamiliar place. I think my movements stopped being so feminine and became more masculine—well, what falls within the masculine canon. Very rarely do I go out wearing makeup because it does make me feel scared. (Diego)

Perhaps the most notable thing is that every participant discussed a specific location where they choose to wait for or ride the Metro. The selected location depended on each person's perception of how others perceive and interact with them. For example, many participants choose to ride in the back cars of the Metro. The back of the Metro vehicles is widely known as a cruising site or public sex space for gay cis men. Only a few of the participants mentioned ever engaging in cruising in the Metro. Most participants described this space as more empty than other areas of the train, making the riding experience more comfortable. Despite its reputation for cruising, many participants consider this space to be the safest place to travel for them:

> I prefer to go on the last car in the Metro because, socially, it's an LGBT place. It does have other connotations, but all my friends always go to the last car, so it's more likely that you'll run into a friend there who can accompany you (Quique)

> We ride in the last car because it's a place where you feel less watched. (Andres)

Unfortunately, participants described recent incidents where people were pushed down to the rails in this area of the platform. Some of the participants chose to wait for or ride the Metro in other areas after these incidents:

> In the Metro, lately I feel more scared. I always stick close to the wall. It really frightens me. I don't know if it's something about the [LGBTQ+] community or what, but I live in fear that someone might try to push me or something like that. (Leo)

Some of the cisgender women and gender non-conforming participants who are perceived as female by cis-straight women tended to ride the Metro in the women-only section unless they were riding with friends who did not fit these classifications. They described feeling significantly safer in the women-only area:

> When I'm alone, I never get on the mixed car because it even feels like there's a different kind of energy. Sometimes, I do it when it's just one station, and I don't have time to reach the women-only area, but I do feel very watched, I don't know. It's like I have to be more cautious and more on alert than if I'm not there. (Juguito)

In the exclusive area for women, cisgender straight women have the power to dictate who belongs in this state-sponsored exclusive area by using their judgment

of how they perceive others. Some of these participants described experiences where they were accused of not being a woman or discriminated against for appearing masculine. For example, Mitshell, who is genderqueer, avoids the exclusive area for women because they feel like the women can be very aggressive. Mel, who self-describes as non-binary, reported not using the exclusive area for women before starting their transition because the women and transit police would kick them out:

> That was the most painful because it's more about lesbophobia than anything else since I didn't look like a guy at that moment. (Mel)

Trans women had the most varied responses for a preferred location to take the Metro. For example, Terry Holiday usually rides the Metro in the women-only section when she travels alone. She described not having problems taking the Metro in this area because, as an older trans woman, she can often pass as cis. She also discussed knowing her rights. During her interview, she shared an image she took of a notice posted at a Metrobus station stating that trans women could occupy the women-only transit spaces (See Appendix 1.2.3).

The other trans women described a much different experience when using the exclusive areas for women. For example, Samanta and Sofia choose to avoid the women-only area because the way women treat them there makes them feel unsafe:

> I always try not to be so much in the middle [of the Metro]. I prefer the car right before the women's car because I don't like being there… Most of the harassment comes from women. I don't have the energy to deal with that. (Sofia)

> On the Metro, I always go to the area for gay men. I never go to the women's area because the women in the front can also be very aggressive, so I prefer to go to the back, which is the area for gay men. It's a claimed space, not even something officially designated, and I don't think it should be officially designated either because everyone goes there to hook up. I don't know, it's something very particular to Mexico City, but I always go there because I feel safer. (Samanta)

Cristina, the other trans woman who participated, as well as Fabi, who is non-binary, described experiencing similar treatment from women in the women-only cars but still choosing sometimes to ride the Metro or Metrobus in the women-only sections when they can take certain measures, such as wearing a mask:

> Ever since COVID came, my life changed. I mean, I know a lot of people died, and I know it was very difficult for many, but for me, life got better because I discovered that with the mask, people don't stare, make comments, or elbow me. That used to happen to me all the time. (Cristina)

> I almost always carry a mask in my backpack. I feel that the mask helps me feel less... I mean, if I decide to use a women-only area, it helps me feel more unnoticed. (Fabi)

Despite their tactics, Fabi still feels uncomfortable using the women-only sections, especially when traveling alone, and only sometimes uses the space:

> In the Metro, just the fact that there is a section exclusively for women makes me feel more unsafe. I feel like I'm alone… like the fact that I have a somewhat feminine appearance but don't have, like, I mean, I'm not on hormone therapy, so my build is more masculine even though my expression is more feminine. I don't know, it's like there's evidence that I'm trans [...], so it creates opportunities for people to draw conclusions or simply prevents me from using those spaces that could make me feel safer but actually do the opposite. (Fabi)

Policing and Support Systems

Participants discussed how they dealt with violent incidents directed towards them or their friends or how they would react to a hypothetical situation. Participants provided mixed responses in terms of who they would ask for help and support. Nevertheless, all participants knew who they would seek out in a situation of violence and harassment in public spaces and transportation systems. Many participants described a lack of trust in going to the police or other safety personnel, but despite this distrust, many viewed this as their only option. For some participants, going to the police is either a last resort or never an option, so they create support systems with their friends and family.

Almost all participants explicitly stated that they did not trust the police. This mistrust complicates reporting acts of violence and harassment, where only six participants described choosing to report incidents with police. Fer described an experience trying to head home after a night out where a man cornered him, sexually assaulted him, and robbed him while he waited for the Nochebus. Fer described his reaction to the attack:

> The first thing I did was call the police because I didn't know what to do. I called the police from a public phone, and that's mainly what I remember. I feel like I talked about it with more people, but I try not to give it too much importance […] they didn't react the way I wanted them to. It was like they didn't care about what happened to me. In fact, the response from the police was, 'What will you give me if I get your phone back?' to which I replied, 'My thanks, it's your job,' and the officer got angry and said, 'I won't be able to do much.' So, the police response was not good at all (Fer).

Despite the disappointing lack of action from the police, Fer also added that they would still go to the cops if a similar situation happened again in the future because it is the only available system in place. This view of police was shared among some participants who experienced similar inaction. For example, Quique explained that they would call their boyfriend and parents before calling the cops because they do not trust the police, but would still call them because they want the aggressor to face the consequences. As an alternative strategy, some gay cisgender men and lesbian cis women reported attempting to use their straight-passing privilege to intervene in situations or to broadcast a situation so that more people become aware of the violence.

A couple of participants said that they would never go to the police for help. This perspective was primarily shared among trans and gender non-conforming participants. For example, Fabi discussed feeling unsafe calling the police in situations where they are alone at night since they believe additional acts of violence could emerge in a space where they are alone with cops in a dark place.

Sofia shared a story from before their gender transition that impacted their view on policing:

> Before my gender transition, I was very, very feminine. I was on the Metro, and a man touched me. So, I got off and told one of the police officers that someone had groped me, and I had pulled the emergency lever. When the police officer arrived, I told him what had happened, that someone had touched me, but the women who were next to me said it wasn't true. So, the one who got taken away was me for supposedly misusing the emergency lever. I even had to pay money to get out of that situation. I mean, on top of being groped, I had to pay money… I feel that, since time immemorial, all forms of femininity have been seen as vulnerable, and they always try to take advantage of that. They try to scare you, and the police abuse their power. After that experience, I stopped trusting the Metro's security system. (Sofia)

Sofia mentioned that she now talks with her friends about situations of harassment to find support. In total, thirteen participants described reaching out to their friends or family for support, including some who would also call the police. Despite these types of care systems, any further action beyond support and solidarity remains limited since participants feel they no longer have the energy to organize further action to resolve these types of incidents. This suggests that some people, particularly those who are trans or non-binary, have experienced enough disappointment in the justice system to create alternative systems to offer the attention, care, and action they need to respond to acts of violence, hate, and harassment against them. One exception to this assertion came from Terry Holiday, who feels that "when you are older, there is more respect. You have to know how to

use your rights. The police feel that they have to control younger people because they are more rebellious" (Terry Holiday).

Strategies for Resistance

Participants described how they are involved in advocacy and social justice issues as a way to reclaim space in the city. Most participants attend the Pride parade every June. Three participants stated that they avoid the parade since they think it is too commercial and no longer represents their interests and demands as members of the LGBTQ+ community. Some participants recognized the criticisms of Pride, but they felt it was important to attend to claim space, express themselves, and gain visibility:

> Every year, I go to Pride, and not just to party, but always advocating and fighting for respect, inclusion, and empathy for trans people over 55 years old. I am the co-founder of a trans organization in Mexico, so we always have to be advocating and being present wherever we need to gain visibility and recognition. (Terry Holiday)

Some participants, mostly women, attend the Women's March on March 8th (the '8M' march) every year. However, many participants mentioned participating in alternative protests instead since they feel like the 8M protest excludes trans women. For example, Sofia only joins feminist marches affiliated with transfeminist groups. She also attends intersectional marches and protests associated with racialized transgender groups. While other people recognized their white privilege

during the interview, she is the only one who mentioned participating in causes directly related to Black and Indigenous people in Mexico.

Participants also engage with LGBTQ+ grass-roots organizations and advocacy groups. Twelve participants mentioned having some involvement with La Tianguis Disidente[8]. Involvement ranged from buying items from vendors, participating as a seller, or joining protests and marches to protect the space and its community. As a reclaimed public space, the market regularly faces conflict from the government, police, and the public. This is a space where people also gather for raves, music performances, fashion shows, and voguing balls. Cristina mainly engages in protest with La Tianguis, such as a protest organized by La Tianguis where they blocked off a major street to pressure authorities to accelerate the processing of a trans woman who has been jailed for more than four years:

> I feel that my connection to protests is through the Tianguis because they engage with movements that don't have much visibility. (Cristina)

Other organizations and groups mentioned include Archivo de la Memoria de México, Comuna Lencha Trans, Flux, Manos Amigues, and Respetrans. These organizations focus on archiving, housing, feeding, connecting, and raising awareness of LGBTQ+ communities. Table 3 describes each organization.

[8] Often referred to as simply 'La Tianguis.' The name itself is a form of protest, as the word 'tianguis' is traditionally gendered masculine in Mexico, using 'el tianguis.' 'Tianguis' means 'market' and derives from the Náhuatl language.

Table 3: LGBTQ+ organizations and groups mentioned by participants

Group	Description
Archivo de la Memoria Trans en México	Preserves, celebrates, and shares the visual histories and stories of trans women over 50
Comuna Lencha Trans	Commune offering housing and hosting fundraising events for the lesbian and trans communities
Flux	Raises visibility and helps create networks within the trans and non-binary community
La Tianguis Disidente	An occupied public space for street vending, mutual aid, performance, and art
Manos Amigues	LGBTQ+ soup kitchen
Respetrans	Raises awareness and respect for older trans women

Participants regularly used their skills and networks to engage with social justice issues that aim to increase visibility and awareness. For example, one of the participants described organizing LGBTQ+ strip club events to shift how people engage with sex work by providing a safe space for strippers with different types of bodies to perform. Another participant figured out how to partner with the government to reclaim space in the Metro to display art from queer artists inside highly used stations. See Appendix 1.2.4 for examples of art on display in a Metro station gallery.

Many participants also engaged in mutual aid support and care by donating to different fundraisers, such as funds for surgeries for trans people or people facing labor discrimination due to their gender or sexual identities.

Participants also mentioned their involvement in non-LGBTQ+ movements. For example, some participants join political marches, protests, and sit-ins related to state-sponsored violence, such as the disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students or the Tlatelolco massacre anniversary. One of the participants engages in political protests and marches, such as the pro-government march organized by President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador on November 27, 2022. Additionally, two participants regularly attend marches, protests, and sit-ins on the legalization of cannabis, and three participants mentioned participating in strikes and protests at their university.

All participants agreed that the government failed to adequately respond to their demands. Terry Holiday and Fer suggested that government reactions vary by borough[9]. Both mentioned that the government of Iztapalapa provides more attention to vulnerable groups, including more access to medical care for transgender people. Participants also believe that the government lacks awareness and information about the needs of LGBTQ+ people.

[9] Mexico City has sixteen boroughs

Imaginations of Safer Futures

Participants offered some ideas for ways to reduce violence and improve safety for queer communities. Some of these changes could turn into planning policies and programs, while others require large-scale structural changes. The ideas include changes to policing and improvements to security infrastructure, street and sidewalk conditions, and public transportation operations. Participants also want more inclusive spaces and specialized support for LGBTQ+ populations. Additional changes include economic policies that improve poverty outcomes to reduce crime and education policies to re-educate government employees and the population as a whole on LGBTQ+ issues. Finally, participants proposed larger-scale structural changes that aim to address systems of oppression that affect how Mexican society interacts with queer people. Table 4 summarizes the proposed changes.

The only disagreement among participants was on policing. Some participants want to increase policing, especially since "the police serve more to scare than to act" (Cristina). For these participants, adding more police could increase feelings of safety because they believe police presence often deters people from committing an aggression in public. Other participants felt that the police were only intimidating and did not improve security, so they wanted to see a future with fewer police.

Table 4: Proposed changes for safer futures for LGBTQ+ people

Proposed Change	Description	Participant Suggestions
Security infrastructure	Adding more security features like lighting, security cameras, and emergency buttons to help improve the sense of security.	It's about having better lighting, 100 percent. I think lighting is very important in the city. Many places near stations aren't well-lit. (Dani) Cameras. There should be many cameras, and they should announce that there are cameras. (Dani)
Street and sidewalk conditions	Improvements to mobility infrastructure to improve safety while walking and biking.	I would feel safer if the streets were in better condition. (Fabi) Where I walk, it's comfortable to walk, but as soon as you leave this central area, there are no sidewalks, and you have to walk in the streets. If someone were to follow me, I couldn't run because I might fall in the street or something like that. (Mariana)
Public transportation system operations improvements	Changes to the public transportation system to increase access and wait times.	A more connected and efficient public transportation system would help me feel safer if I could get to my destination faster. By reducing travel times to reach safe spaces, it would make my commutes feel more secure. (Amelia) That [the bus] wouldn't take so long to arrive, that you wouldn't have to wait at certain hours and certain places for the Metrobus to come, or that there would be better coordination [and] clear information on when the bus or metro is going to arrive. (Terry Holiday)
Policing	Changes to security personnel to improve safety outcomes.	More policing: There is a great need for more security in many places, the police are intimidating just by their presence. (Leo) Ensuring there's at least someone at each station who is there to mediate any incident [...] That they conduct a check at the entrance of the metro to see if anyone is armed. (Dani) Less policing: I couldn't say more police or metro staff. They terrify me. So, less police would make me feel safer. (Sofia)

Safe, inclusive spaces in public transit	Creating a space similar to the women-only spaces where LGBTQ+ people can safely travel.	In terms of the metro, it would help if there was an explicit rule stating that 'transfeminine people can occupy those spaces'—well, access those spaces. But still, I feel like it's more about... I mean, I don't know if it's more of a social issue because if a transphobic woman gets on the train, she's still going to discriminate against me or harass me... So I think it's more about education. (Fabi) I would also create an exclusive carriage for the LGBT community, honestly. There are many people who don't fit into the binary of 'I'm a girl or I'm a guy,' and we exist in this binary where we can't feel safe in public transportation. It's terrible to have to separate spaces in that way, but if it makes our travel safer, I would definitely do it. (Juguito)
Safe, gender-inclusive spaces	Adding gender-inclusive bathrooms for trans, non-binary, gender queer, and genderfluid populations.	An inclusive, non-binary space for everyone in the metro and public bathrooms. (Sofia) I feel that a safe space is needed [...] I would like a space where I feel safe, like a physical space. Like public bathrooms for trans and non-binary people and a metro car for LGBT+ people. (Leo)
Support for LGBTQ+ populations	Implementing programs designed to assist vulnerable populations in responding to violence and harassment.	Support modules in public transportation, assistance modules for the LGBTQ+ community near the busiest areas, and maybe a psychologist to support the community when something happens. (Mitshell)
Improving economic outcomes	Economic policies that target some of the root causes of crime.	The issue of insecurity with assaults would be more related to the economy of the country with drug trafficking... you know, something bigger. (Mel) The violence that exists here in Mexico feels very connected to crime. The lack of opportunities forces many people to enter the criminal system. So, I think that if there were better education about this and more economic opportunities, everything would be calmer and safer. (Diego)

Sexual and gender education	General public education campaigns aimed at improving LGBTQ+ tolerance and allyship.	Sexual and gender education for society as a whole. People need to learn to live with it. When people don't know how to treat you, it's not the responsibility of LGBTQ+ individuals to teach them. (Quique) I feel that, in the end, it's a matter of education and ignorance, like long-term changes; I believe that people who have no contact with trans or LGBTQ+ individuals find it easier to be transphobic because they lack this context. And for that reason, I would try to talk to people, and maybe I'm the first trans person they meet. (Mel)
Education addressing toxic masculinity and misogyny	General public education campaigns aimed at improving gendered-violence.	I just don't understand how it's going to work. There's already the women's section in the metro, there's the whistle, there are the safety buttons on the street, it's all there... but that doesn't do anything. I mean, I don't see it as a solution. My suggestion would be to either re-educate all the men or get rid of them. (Samanta)
Education for transit workers and police	Improved training and education for government workers about dealing with LGBTQ+ people.	Staff that is more educated and better trained in what they should do and how to interact with LGBTQ+ people... or replace the staff. (Sofia)
Societal changes	Structural changes in society to decrease violence.	I wouldn't go straight to abolishing the police; I would go straight to abolishing masculinity... or rather machismo, because there's nothing wrong with masculinity, but there is with machismo. Everything bad comes from this machista construction. But I reiterate, you have to re-educate them all or get rid of them and have only women and [gender minorities] because [the men] just don't know how to behave. (Samanta) "Cameras help a little. If more cameras were implemented, it might make me feel safer. But I also think that to improve sexual harassment, the entire social system would need to be modified because even the police harass." (Cristina)

Discussion

This research aimed to investigate how harassment and violence might impact travel behavior for queer transit riders. The findings of this research indicate that violence and harassment experienced in transportation spaces influence travel behavior for LGBTQ+ people in Mexico City. Furthermore, fear and perceptions of safety also influence travel behavior, regardless of having previously experienced violence or not. The research also suggests that sexual and gender identities, as perceived by others, influence the occurrence of incidents of violence and harassment in public and mobility spaces. This is true for both anti-queer incidents and other types of violence or assault, as participants often felt they were perceived as more vulnerable.

Nevertheless, more feminine-presenting queers experience different, and often more frequent, violence and harassment than masculine-presenting queers. Misogynistic and heteropatriarchal values affect the treatment of feminine-presenting people. Queer cis women, trans women, gender non-conforming feminine-presenting people, and gay or bisexual femme men are more likely to experience sexual harassment and assault than cis straight-passing and masculine-presenting LGBTQ+ people. Trans women, in particular, experience the highest risk of violence and harassment in public since they are more vulnerable to gendered sexual violence as well as hate speech and violence rooted in transphobia.

These findings build on previous research that queer people experience violence and harassment in mobility spaces and that these experiences influence

travel behavior changes (Lubitow et al., 2017; Shakibaei & Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2024). This study reveals that experiences of violence and harassment, perceptions of safety, or a combination of the two directly influence travel experiences and changes in travel behavior. For instance, participants reported changing their travel behavior after experiencing traumatic events, but they also discussed how features in the built environment or personal notions of security affected how they traveled. Travel behavior changed based on a combination of perceptions of safety and as a response to past incidents. The type of travel behavior changes vary by person for reasons that include their identity, past trauma, how they manage anxiety and fear, as well as the time of day, location, mode of transportation, or the company of others. For instance, someone might change how they are dressed in public due to how others perceive their gender. However, another queer person might not be as impacted by how others perceive them, so they refrain from changing their appearance.

This research also finds that LGBTQ+ people not only respond to experiences of violence and harassment with travel behavior changes but also with resistance. Queer people engage in organizing, mutual aid, and community care to address their needs and those of their communities. Participants expressed how they claim space and use citizen participation and activism to exercise their right to the city. Additionally, they demonstrated how they use support networks to keep each other safe, manage harm, and provide care when the state fails them.

This research also provides ideas and suggestions from queer transit riders on how infrastructure, policy, and planning changes could improve their travel. These proposals can provide guidance for increasing access by enhancing safety. Infrastructure improvements, inclusive spaces, and education would not only improve the travel experience for queer people but would also benefit all social groups. For instance, installing more lighting, security cameras, and emergency buttons can also improve perceptions of safety for everyone occupying public and transit spaces. Similarly, improvements in public transit operations can improve safety while also providing better service for all users. Education programs and awareness campaigns for transit employees and the general population could increase respect toward LGBTQ+ people. These programs could benefit all social groups by promoting a more inclusive society.

An interesting suggestion was to create an exclusive space for queer people within the public transit system similar to the existing women-only spaces. However, this proposal must be approached with caution. While an unofficial space like this already exists in the last car of Metro, making an official queer-exclusive space might create more vulnerabilities for LGBTQ+ people. For instance, this could out many people who are not openly queer or make the space a targeted site for violence and harassment. This study also highlighted different outlooks on the effectiveness of policing in public transit spaces to improve safety. Policymakers and planners might benefit from inquiring further whether more or less policing provides improvements to safety, such as trying alternative policing strategies, for

example, reducing the presence of police officers and increasing unarmed transit personnel (Transit Center, 2021). Further research is needed to assess both the potential and challenges of exclusive queer spaces and alternative policing strategies in creating safer mobility spaces.

Previous studies indicate that intersectional identities, such as race, class, and disability, impact how LGBTQ+ communities manage violence and harassment (Ivanova & O'Hern, 2024; Lubitow et al., 2017; Shakibaei & Vorobjovas-Pinta, 2024). Given that the geography of these studies differs from the demographics and culture in which this research was conducted, intersectionality is important to address in the context of Mexico in further studies. For example, one participant brought in their challenges as a disabled queer person. However, no specific conclusions can be drawn from this limited data. Additionally, the study identified significant differences among people living in low-income neighborhoods, but the data collected provided insufficient information about these differences. This study also lacks a detailed racial analysis of how identities of race, colorism, and queerness interact with each other to influence travel behavior and safety. Further research on the intersectionality of race, class, and disability can help identify additional vulnerabilities that affect safety outcomes for queer communities in Mexico City.

The findings of this research show that experiences and perceptions of safety significantly impact how queer transit riders navigate mobility spaces, leading to changes to when they travel, where they travel, what modes of transportation they

use, how they dress and present themselves in public, and how they move and occupy space. Notably, feminine-presenting queer individuals, particularly trans women, face the most frequent and severe instances of harassment rooted in gendered violence, transphobia, and misogyny. This research also highlights how queer people respond to these challenges through activism, mutual aid, and community care. Importantly, the findings can inform infrastructure improvements and policies that could enhance safety for queer transit users. While this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of queer transit riders, it also emphasizes the need for further research that considers the intersections of race, class, and disability within queer communities in Mexico.

Conclusion

This research documents violence and harassment, travel behavior changes, and the resistance of queer transit riders in Mexico City. Many of the participants faced violence and harassment in public spaces, from stares and shouts to groping, attempted rape, and other physical violence. These incidents, combined with the fear of violence, influenced travel behavior. The fears and perceptions associated with safety affect queer mobility and access to the city. Queer people adopt intricate strategies of survival and resistance in order to access the places where they need to go.

This paper takes the title '*Viajemos Segures*' by using inclusive language in Spanish for Mexico City's *Viajemos Seguras* policies and programs aimed at

addressing safety for women. This research highlights the need for programs aimed at improving safety outcomes for women to expand to gender and sexual minorities whose immobility is also impacted by gendered violence. Limited research on queer mobilities presents a barrier for planners and policymakers to understand the needs of the needs of queer community. This study provides guidance on where decision-makers can begin to make the necessary investments to improve safety outcomes and increase mobility access to LGBTQ+ communities.

Appendix

1.1 Interview Protocol

<u>General</u>

To get us started, I'll ask a few questions to get to know you a bit.

1. Can you tell me more about yourself?
    a. Where do you live?
    b. Do you live alone or with others?
    c. Are you from Mexico City?
    d. What's your profession/What do you do for work?

<u>Travel Trends</u>

Now I'll ask some questions about how you usually travel in Mexico City.

1. Can you tell me how you typically travel during the week and weekend?
    a. What modes of transportation do you use?
    b. How long are the trips?
2. Do you travel to Zona Rosa? If so, how often?
3. Why do you or don't you visit Zona Rosa? That is, what activities do you do there?
    a. Where else can you do these activities? (Are there other areas where you can do these activities?)
4. Can you walk me through how you typically travel to Zona Rosa?
    a. *Prompt*: Do you ever travel by…
        i. Metro
        ii. Bus
        iii. BRT (Metrobus)
        iv. Rideshare (Uber, Didi, Cabify, Beat)
        v. Walking
        vi. Biking
        vii. Personal vehicle
    b. Prompt: How long does it take you to get to Zona Rosa?
    c. Prompt: At what time during the day and on what days of the week do you travel to Zona Rosa?

<u>Safety Perception</u>

The following questions deal with your perceptions of safety when traveling in the city.

1. Do you feel safe walking to the bus or metro station [ADD starting location of trip]? Why?

a. Prompt: Does the feeling change depending on the time of the day?
2. Do you feel safe waiting for the bus or metro at the station/stop? Why?
    a. Prompt: Does the feeling change depending on the time of the day?
3. Do you feel safe riding the bus or metro? Why?
    a. Prompt: Does the feeling change depending on the time of the day?
4. Have you ever avoided taking public transportation because of safety concerns?
    a. Prompt: fear of victimization, fear of harassment, fear of sexual harassment, fear of hate speech
5. Does your perception of safety change when you arrive at Zona Rosa?
    a. Prompt: Do you feel more, less, or equally safe?

<u>Safety Experiences</u>

Now, I will ask you specifically about your travel safety experiences.

1. In the last six months, have you had any experience of harassment or violence while traveling to a destination? While traveling to the Zona Rosa?
    a. Prompt: Types of harassment
        i. Stalking/ following
        ii. Sexual harassment
            1. Unwanted sexual looks or gestures
            2. Groping, touching inappropriately
            3. Sexual comments
            4. Other
        iii. Other harassment
            1. Hate speech
            2. Physical attacks
            3. Intimidation
2. To what extent do you feel that these experiences are linked to your gender and/or sexual identity?
3. Do you take any precautions now?
    a. Prompts: Do you dress differently when traveling to Zona Rosa? Do you travel in a group? Do you choose a specific part of the bus/metro? Do you avoid transit at certain times?

<u>Public safety</u>

Now that we discussed your perceptions and experiences, I want to know more about your relationship with public safety services and systems.

1. What would you do if something were to happen to you or your friends in terms of safety?
    a. Prompt: Would you call the cops? Why or why not? Report it to someone else (friends, family, transit worker, other)?

Vision of safety

In this section, I want to know your vision or imagination of what the city could look like to feel safer.

1. What do you think could make traveling to and from Zona Rosa safer?

Citizen participation

In this section, I want to know about your political involvement and citizen participation.

1. Have you ever participated in a protest or march?
2. Have you ever participated in a community advocacy organization?

If yes:

1. How do you feel the government responds to your demands as a member of a community advocacy organization or as a participant in marches/protests?

Demographic questions

Finally, I want to ask some demographic questions that might help me understand patterns or trends during the analysis process.

1. What's your age range?
    a. 18-24
    b. 25-31
    c. 32-38
    d. 39-45
    e. 46-52
    f. 53-59
    g. 60 and older
2. What's your household income range?
    a. Less than $9,000 monthly
    b. $9,000-16,000
    c. $16,000-$22,000
    d. $22,000-$28,000
    e. $28,000-$34,000
    f. $34,000-$40,000
    g. $40,000-$46,000
    h. $46,000-$52,000
    i. $52,000+

1.2 Images

1.2.1 Women-only spaces inside a metro car (left) and at a station (right)

Source: Photographs by the author, 2023.

1.2.2 Wayfinding map inside a metro station

Source: Photograph by the author, 2023.

1.2.3 Government notice posted at a Metrobus station stating that trans women can use the women-only transit spaces

Source: Courtesy of Terry Holiday. Retrieved from Facebook (Terry Holiday, 2021).

1.2.4 Queer artwork displayed in a Metro station gallery

Source: Sainz, Juanjo. Descenso a los escombros de la memoria [exhibition]. Titles unknown. Photographs by the author, 2023.

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