

Embodied Fear, Perceived Safety and Transit-based Mobility among Women of Color in Metro Vancouver

By
Sadia Tabassum

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Declaration of Committee

Name: Sadia Tabassum

Degree: Master of Urban Studies

Title: Embodied Fear, Perceived Safety and Transit-based Mobility among Women of Color in Metro Vancouver

Committee:

Chair: Meg Holden
Professor of Urban Studies and Resources
and Environmental Management

Leanne Roderick
Supervisor
Term Lecturer, Urban Studies and Geography

Tiffany Muller Myrdahl
Committee Member
Senior Lecturer, Urban Studies and Gender,
Sexuality, and Women's Studies

Betsy Gardner
Examiner
Research Assistant/ Writer, Ash Center, Harvard
Kennedy School

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Abstract

This study presents the stories shared by five students at Simon Fraser University who identify as women of color, regarding their fear of harassment or violence and perceptions of safety while navigating public transit systems in Metro Vancouver. Using qualitative methods and the Body Map Storytelling exercise, this study examines how female bodies of color encounter unique threats to their safety in transit spaces due to social prejudices and the impacts of such threats upon their decisions regarding public transit usage. These stories provide an understanding about how women of color navigating public transit systems in Metro Vancouver encounter obstructions to mobility justice in their day-to-day commutes. This study advocates the use of mobility justice frameworks and alternative research methods to understand the urban mobilities of women of color in Metro Vancouver and promotes intersectional, feminist approaches to the planning and implementation of transportation strategies in urban regions in Canada.

Keywords: mobility justice; women of color; fear of harassment or violence; perceptions of safety; public transit in Metro Vancouver; Body Map Storytelling

Dedication

I dedicate this to my mother, the bravest woman I have ever known.

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I am grateful to the participants who shared their stories for this project. I hope I have done your stories justice and presented them as you had intended. I have learned so much from each of you and respect your patience and willingness to delve deep into the realms of discomfort and fear in urban public spaces and while navigating public transit systems that you have encountered throughout your lives. Your stories have inspired me to keep working towards the creation of equitable and safe cities for women everywhere.

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List of Acronyms

SFU	Simon Fraser University
ESL	English as a Second Language

Glossary

Accessibility	This refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities.
Agency	This refers to the thoughts and actions taken by people that express their individual and/or collective power. It is the power people have to think for themselves and act in ways that shape their experiences and life paths. Agency is not a constant. The intersections of women's identities impact how women may have agency in specific situations as a result of their particular social locations (Ahmed & Pollack, 2017).
Assault	The Criminal Code of Canada defines several forms of assault. In the context of this study, assault refers to any unwanted application of force upon an individual's body without their consent.
Body Map Storytelling	The Body Map Storytelling exercise combines visual drawings with verbal storytelling to enable individuals to depict and express their self-perception, worldviews, spatial and sensory experiences in various situations and spaces.
Coping Strategy	In the context of this study, this refers to the various tactics used by women of color to feel safer in public spaces or transit spaces
Commute	In the context of this study, this refers to a trip made using public transit, typically on a regular basis
Data-tagging	This refers to conducting a close reading of each transcript and labeling each segment of data to succinctly categorize what that data is about, while retaining its original context
Disability	This refers to any impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment—or a functional limitation—whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person's full and equal participation in society as defined by the Accessible Canada Act.
Discrimination	In the context of this study, this refers to practices or attitudes that limit an individual's right to opportunities generally available because of characteristics that are socially attributed, such as gender and race.

Embodied experiences	This refers to experiences relating to the human body. In the context of this study, such experiences refer to thoughts, emotions, sensations, memories and any experiences realized by the human body due to bodily functions or phenomena.
Equity/ Equitable	This refers to both the process and outcome of achieving parity in the distribution of power, access to resources, governance and decision making processes by identifying and removing systemic inequities that favor and benefit some groups or individuals and disproportionately impact cultural communities, as defined by the Equity Framework adopted by the City of Vancouver.
Ethnicity/ Ethnic Origin of Person	This refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the person's ancestors. An ancestor is usually more distant than a grandparent. (Definition taken from Statistics Canada)
Feminism	This refers to political, social, cultural and intellectual movements working towards equity among individuals of all genders
Fetishize	In the context of this study, this refers to the over-sexualisation of an individual based on assumptions made or prejudices held about their gender, sexual orientation, race or any other socially constructed facet of their identity.
Gender	This refers to the gender that a person internally feels ('gender identity' along the gender spectrum) and/or the gender a person publicly expresses ('gender expression') in their daily life, including at work, while shopping or accessing other services, in their housing environment or in the broader community. A person's current gender may differ from the sex a person was assigned at birth (male or female) and may differ from what is indicated on their current legal documents. A person's gender may change over time. (Definition taken from Statistics Canada)
Gender-based violence	The 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women defines gender-based violence as any act that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Sexual assault and harassment are persistent forms of gender-based violence that are rooted in gender inequality

Harassment	This refers to repeatedly following someone from place to place, repeatedly communicating with someone without their consent, stalking or watching someone's place of residence or engaging in threatening conduct with someone, as defined by the Criminal Code of Canada.
Hyper-vigilance	Hyper-vigilance is broadly defined as a state of heightened awareness and perceptual sensitivity to potentially threatening stimuli in the environment.
Intersectionality	An analytical tool that takes into account the simultaneously experienced multiple social locations, identities, and institutions that shape individual and collective experience within hierarchically structured systems of power and privilege. In other words, intersectionality is a lens for understanding how gender, race, social class, sexual identity, and other forms of difference work concurrently to shape people and social institutions within multiple relationships of power
Micro-aggression	This refers to verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative slights and insults towards an individual based on their association with a group of people or facets of their identity, such as their race, gender, sexuality, class, age etc.
Mobility	In the context of this study, this refers to the bodily movement of an individual through public and private spaces.
Mobility Impairment	This refers to an individual's inability to be mobile due to problems relating to their body
Mobility Justice	In the context of this study, this refers to a concept where an individual's mobility is not involuntarily restricted by threats of violence (including enforced forms of clothing, segregated means of movement, or unevenly applying temporal or spatial limits), where gender and sexual identity are not used as the basis for restricting mobility or exclusion from public space and where racial, ethnic, or national profiling are not used to police entire groups or stop particular individuals from exercising freedom of movement (Sheller, 2018, pp.26).
Normative Stance	This refers to the set of beliefs, principles or guidelines that should be followed or emulated. In the context of this study, this refers to the positioning of this research project as a proponent of the principles of mobility justice as "things that ought to be".
Otherize	To perceive of and treat an individual, a group or society as different or alien.

Public Space	This refers to any place to which the public have access as of right or by invitation, express or implied, and any motor vehicle located in a public place or in any place open to public view, as defined by the Criminal Code of Canada.
Public Transit System/ Public Transportation System	This generally refers to a network of vehicles and infrastructure within a region that allows the movement of ten or more individuals in a shared vehicle between two locations as a ticketed service. In the context of this study, the public transit system refers to all vehicles and systems owned and operated by Translink in Vancouver, BC.
Racism	This refers to discrimination based on race or ethnicity
Rape Culture	This refers to a sociological concept for an environment where sexualized violence is permissible and normalized and where the onus for sexual harassment, assault or violence is placed upon the victim rather than the perpetrator
Ride-sharing	Ride-sharing is an arrangement in which a passenger travels in a private vehicle, usually for a fee and arranged by means of a website or a mobile application (or -app"). In the context of this study, the two modes of ride-sharing discussed by participants were Uber and Evo. Traditional taxi services are discussed in this study as a third mode of non-private transportation after public transit and ride-sharing.
Safety	Freedom from any form of harassment, assault or violence.
Self-policing	In the context of this study, this refers to the thoughts, emotions, behaviors, body language and actions that an individual uses to regulate or 'police' their bodies
Sexism	This refers to discrimination based on gender.
Sexual Assault	The Criminal Code of Canada defines several forms of sexual assault. In the context of this study, sexual assault refers to any touching of another person without their consent where the touching is of a sexual nature, or where the sexual integrity of the alleged victim is violated.
Sexual Harassment	The <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i> defines this as harassment based on grounds of discrimination. In the context of this study, this refers to any advances or attempts to engage with an individual or harass them repeatedly without consent based on
Social Justice	This refers to justice in terms of the equitable distribution of power, resources, opportunities and privileges within a society

Spatialization of Fear	This refers to the mental association of violence with different environmental contexts
Stereotype	Stereotypes are oversimplified ideas about groups of people, based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation or almost any characteristic. They may be positive but are often negative (usually toward other groups, such as when members of a dominant group suggest that a subordinate group is stupid or lazy). Whether positive or negative, the stereotype is a false generalization.
Sketchy/ Creepy	Participants used these terms to describe anything that could indicate a lack of safety, including people, behaviors, places, objects and situations.
Systemic Discrimination/ Inequity	Systemic discrimination "means practices or attitudes that have, whether by design or impact, the effect of limiting an individual's or a group's right to the opportunities generally available because of attributed rather than actual characteristics.... It is not a question of whether this discrimination is motivated by an intentional desire to obstruct someone's potential, or whether it is the accidental by-product of innocently motivated practices or systems. If the barrier is affecting some groups in a disproportionately negative way, it is a signal that the practices that lead to this adverse impact may be discriminatory (Abella, 1984).
Transit Space	This refers to any space that an individual has to physically occupy in order to access and use public transportation systems. In the context of this study, this includes any bus stop, Skytrain station, the walkways or area immediately around a bus stop or a Skytrain station, interiors of a bus or Skytrain in Metro Vancouver, as defined in the context of this study.
Travel Choice	This refers to a fundamental concept in mainstream public transit-planning, where the average transit-user is assumed to be a rational man making choices regarding his destination, mode, route and time to maximize his utilities. In the context of this study, this concept is criticized since it over-simplifies and mis-represents the set of decisions regarding one's travel, disregarding the impacts of one's social and financial standing, access to resources, complexities of identity such as gender, race, class, age, able-bodiedness etc., upon these decisions.
Victim-blaming	This refers to a devaluing act that occurs when the victim(s) of a crime or an accident is held responsible — in whole or in part — for the crimes that have been committed against them

Violence	This refers to incidents of <u>aggravated assault</u> or <u>assault with a weapon or causing bodily harm</u> as defined by the Criminal Code of Canada, which includes causing bodily harm by physically wounding, maiming, disfiguring or endangering someone's life.
Visible Minority/ People of Color	This refers to "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-White in colour", as defined by The Employment Equity Act in Canada.
White-Passing	This refers to a phenomenon where a non-White person is mistaken for being White. Individuals who can "pass" as White can experience different forms of privilege and oppression than people of color who are not White-passing.
Women of Color	Refers to any individual who self-identifies as a woman and a person of color.

Foreword

This thesis deals thematically with sexual harassment, gender-based violence and racialized violence on public transit. Contained therein, the reader will encounter racial slurs, as well as references to sexual assault and police brutality. This content could potentially be upsetting and harmful to read. Please take care when reading.

Chapter 1. Laying Down the Tracks

1.1. Introduction

You f-ing chink better take your money and go back to where you came from, cause we're going to f-ing beat you and take it from you... Don't belong here... There's no cops on the train, I'm going to f-ing beat you.'

There was a lot worse and it scared me because I am Chinese and female, and he was looking straight at me when he said those words. I've lived my whole life in Canada, grew up from a poor family, and worked hard to get where I'm at. I've dealt with racism and sexual harassment before, in all kinds of situations and from different people. But this time, I was deeply scared for myself because I didn't know what was going to happen and what to do. I pulled out my phone to call the Transit Non-Emergency Line, but I had forgotten that there is no reception at Granville Station. At Burrard Station, I quickly got out and to my dismay, so did he and he was following me. I looked for a Skytrain attendant to inform them that there was someone making violent threats, but there was no one around. I'm not a confrontational person, so I did the cowardly thing and ran home, while constantly looking behind me.

The passage above is taken from the blog Harassment on Translink¹ and it was shared anonymously by a woman of color who relied on the public transit system in Metro Vancouver for her day-to-day commutes. This blog was created by Katie Nordgren and Alexa Dredge in 2013 when they attended Simon Fraser University. Several incidents shared on this blog were not reported elsewhere, through formal police reports or otherwise. Many women expressed through their posts that they were unsure about whether or not their experiences counted as assault or whether they would be taken seriously by transit authorities if they reported their experiences. However, they felt emboldened to share their stories once they read about similar incidents encountered by other women that were shared on this blog. This post, like many others that were submitted to this blog since 2013, provides a brief glimpse into the obstacles encountered by women of color in Vancouver while navigating the public transit system for daily commutes. Collectively, these stories reveal how women of

¹ Harassment on Translink is the blog that was the cornerstone of a multi-phase project, developed by SFU students enrolled in a CityStudio partner course: GSWS 333, taught by Tiffany Muller Myrdahl at SFU. This blog was created in direct relation to the City of Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy, most specifically their sixth (-Getting Around") and eleventh (-Being and Feeling Safe and Included") draft goals. Available at: <https://translinkharassment.wordpress.com/>

color experience a very real and severe fear of violence and threats to the safety of their bodies within public transit spaces in Metro Vancouver.

The Problem

The term visible minority' is defined under Canada's *Employment Equity Act*² as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian³ in race or non-White⁴ in colour". Canada's visible minority population is growing, especially in dense urban regions like the City of Vancouver. A Statistics Canada report released in 2016 found that: "in the CMA of Vancouver, 46.1% of all females belonged to a visible minority group and within this CMA, the largest share of visible minority women and girls (30.2%) lived in the City of Vancouver" (Hudon, 2016). According to Statistics Canada's population projections, the same report reveals that: "if current immigration patterns continue, Canada's female population who are members of visible minorities could reach 6.6 million or roughly 31% of the total female population by 2031" (Perreault, 2017). Many women who are newcomers to Canada as immigrants, refugees, temporary residents, work/ student permit-holders as well as first- and second- generation immigrants who grew up in Canada are all part of the visible minority' demographic, identifying as women of color. Women within these

² Employment Equity Act S. C. 1995, c. 44; <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/FullText.html>

³ The term Caucasian' has only been included in this instance since it is part of the formal definition for visible minorities in Canada's Employment Equity Act (see Chapter 4 for further details). With the exception of instances where participants in this study directly used this term (see section 3.1.2, footnote 15), it has been replaced by the word White' to refer to individuals who are White by race. The term Caucasian' has been found to be rooted in pseudo-scientific racial categories that have since been established by scholars as the basis for racist and sexist beliefs and social/ political movements based on such beliefs (Mukhopadhyay, 2017). This study therefore rejects the term Caucasian' since it perpetuates prejudiced beliefs and practices.

⁴ The term "White" is capitalized since it refers to the race of an individual or group of people. The term "Black" is also capitalized in this paper for the same reason. The choice to capitalize White in this research project is in no way connected to any associations between this term and white supremacist or white nationalist beliefs or practices. The Center for the Study of Social Policy states: "It is important to call attention to White as a race as a way to understand and give voice to how Whiteness functions in our social and political institutions and our communities. Moreover, the detachment of "White" as a proper noun allows White people to sit out of conversations about race and removes accountability from White people's and White institutions' involvement in racism." Details: <https://cssp.org/2020/03/recognizing-race-in-language-why-we-capitalize-black-and-white/>

demographics, especially younger women of color, are highly reliant on public transportation systems within dense urban regions in Canada during a period of adjustment as newcomers to Canada or longer (Heisz, et al., 2004). However, despite higher rates of reliance on transit than Canadian-born individuals, immigrants and visible minorities in Canada reported a low sense of safety compared to their Canadian-born counterparts since before the COVID-19 pandemic, which has only worsened since the pandemic. A report released by Statistics Canada before the pandemic found that:

—Immigrants and visible minorities generally had a lower sense of safety than other Canadians. This was especially true for Arab and West Asian women (e.g., Iranian and Afghan), one-quarter of whom said they did not feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhoods after dark, compared with 11% of other women” (Perreault, 2017).

A report released after the onset of the pandemic found that:

—Visible minorities perceived more frequent race-based harassment or attacks and felt these incidents had increased since the start of COVID-19. Approximately one in five visible minority participants perceived that harassment or attacks based on race, ethnicity, or skin colour occurred sometimes or often in their neighbourhood, double the proportion among the rest of the population” (Heidinger & Cotter, 2020).

If such a large proportion of the Canadian female population reports feeling unsafe in urban spaces as made evident through these reports, what does that say about our current understanding of the complex nature of fear and perceived threats to safety experienced by these women and the obstructions to their urban mobility? With increasing reports of racial and sexual harassment since the pandemic, how can we protect the freedom of movement among women of color who are victimized due to both their gender and race?

Studies also show that individuals with previous experiences of nonviolent incidents, witnesses of crimes or those with experiences of reporting incidents of sexual crimes to the police in Canada feel less confident in the police’s ability to ensure the safety of citizens, treating people fairly and being approachable than non-victims or individuals without the experiences mentioned above (AuCoin & Beauchamp, 2007; Prochuk, 2018). If women of color in Vancouver cannot confidently approach the police regarding their experiences of harassment or violence, how are

aspects of the criminal justice system in Canada impeding mobility justice in urban regions?

Mimi Sheller⁵, a pioneer in the field of mobilities research, writes: “Mobility may be considered a universal human right, yet in practice it exists in relation to class, racial, sexual, gendered, and disabling exclusions from public space, from national citizenship, and from the means of mobility at all scales” (Nicholson & Sheller, 2016). Sheller’s proposition can be used to understand how facets of one’s identity, such as gender and race, can create unique challenges for women of color in Metro Vancouver as they navigate the public transit system.

How do these challenges impact the ways in which young women of color are able to freely and independently navigate cities? How does fear of violence impact the ways in which they choose to or are able to use public transit systems? How do women of color relate to their environments and develop coping strategies while assessing their personal safety in transit? How do these strategies, repeated over time, impact their behaviors, decisions, mental and physical health and overall life circumstances? In search of an answer to these inquiries and more, this study was guided by the following research question: *How do self-identified female students of color at Simon Fraser University describe and assess their mobility needs and choices in relation to their perceived safety and fear of harassment and violence as experienced at the scale of the human body, while navigating public transit systems in Metro Vancouver?*

The Gaps

Existing research finds several negative impacts of experiencing harassment in public spaces, particularly among women, including alterations to their routines, behaviors and means of transportation (Fisher et al. 2017; Gardner et al. 2017). Since women of color are more likely to be victims of harassment or violent crimes in public spaces, their ability to navigate urban spaces independently and be fully involved in society are debilitated by such alterations more than their White or male counterparts (Bastomski & Smith 2017). In many cases, young, female students of color navigate

⁵ The concept of mobility justice and Sheller’s ‘principles of mobility justice’ are mentioned briefly in this section; however, they are discussed in detail in section 1.2.

various separate identities based on their race, gender, sexuality, religion, age, nationality/ immigration status, income etc., encountering social prejudices based on various intersections of these identities that they accept as “facts of life” (Gladu, 2017). Still, encountering such prejudices impacts their decisions regarding housing, transportation, careers and social lives, causing undue stress and preventing them from fully integrating into Canadian communities (Vasilopoulos, 2016; Mallinchrodt & Leong, 1992; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1991; Olivas & Li, 2006). On top of that, students’ varying schedules with part/full-time jobs, courses, and family and social life can make for a complex array of mobility needs for women of color who are students, requiring them to navigate public transit systems where they are exposed to various forms of social prejudice. Existing literature on migrant students’ experiences primarily addresses four topics: their problems as migrants, “culture shock” or their psychological reactions to encountering new cultural atmospheres, the impacts of social interaction and communication upon their adaptation to new cultures and the culture-learning process apparent in cross-cultural migration (Hammer, 1992; Ward et al., 2008). However, the concept of ‘mobility justice’ (see section 1.2.1) remains relatively new and on-going research in this field is attempting to reach a consensus among practitioners and researchers on how to use this framework for research and implementation in policy-making and city planning.⁶ Rarely have these two fields of research, one involving students who identify as women of color and the other involving mobility justice frameworks, coincided in research or academic literature. This is the first ‘gap’ in theoretical knowledge that this research project addresses and helps to fill.

Researchers studying mobility justice (see section 1.2.1) have used “interviews on the move, participant observation during travel, ethnography across mobile sites and sites of mobility, and collection of records such as space-time diaries, Global Positioning System (GPS) tracks, or drawings of subjective maps and routes” (Sheller, 2020). However, attempts to understand the experiences of people of color who are migrant students have typically only relied on traditional methods such as surveys or other quantitative methodologies (Mallinchrodt & Leong, 1992; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1991; Ward et al., 2008). Not only is there a lack of research regarding the

⁶ The METRANS Transportation Center in Southern California is conducting such on-going research. Details available at: <https://rip.trb.org/view/1862634>

experiences of women of color who are migrant students in the context of their urban mobility or using the mobility justice framework (as identified in the first knowledge gap), the alternative research methods mentioned by Sheller have not typically been used to understand the experiences of female students of color using urban transit systems, although these methods have been found to produce “a much richer array of qualitative data” (Sheller, 2020). This is the second gap in theoretical knowledge that this research project identifies and addresses and helps to fill.

The City of Vancouver has adopted The Women’s Equity Strategy⁷, in alignment with the Healthy City Strategy⁸, which aim to “increase levels of reported safety among women living in this region by at least 10% by the year 2025”⁹. The City has also adopted the Transportation 2040 Plan¹⁰, which is a long-term strategic vision for the city that will help guide transportation and land use decisions, and public investments within the city in the years to come. The complete report for the Transportation 2040 Plan¹¹ mentions the term “safety” 41 times in the entire document; however, nowhere in the report is safety discussed in terms of inequity or a lack of mobility justice. Mimi Sheller references a collective called The Untokening¹², whose work highlights that “safety is more than protection from cars”¹³ and that in order for

⁷ The Women’s Equity Strategy is a 10-year strategic plan to make Vancouver a place where all self-identified women have full access to the resources provided in the city and opportunities to fully participate in the political, economic, cultural and social life of the city. More details available at: <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/womens-equity-strategy.aspx>

⁸ The Healthy City Strategy is a long-term, integrated plan for “healthier people, healthier places, and a healthier planet”, comprised of 13 long-term goals for the well-being of the City of Vancouver and its people, including ambitious targets to reach by 2025. More details available at: <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/healthy-city-strategy.aspx>

⁹ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/womens-equity-strategy-2018.pdf>

¹⁰ The Transportation 2040 Plan is a long-term strategic vision for the city that will help guide transportation and land use decisions, and public investments. More details available at: <https://vancouver.ca/streets-transportation/transportation-2040.aspx>

¹¹ <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/transportation-2040-plan.pdf>

¹² The Untokening is a multiracial network serving folks involved with transportation, mobility and mobility justice whose lived experience is marginalized based on being Black, indigenous, a person of color, queer, Trans, woman, femme, youth, elder, disabled etc. More details available at: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/579398799f7456b10f43afb0/t/5fa5a55c0a0e424867de0a07/1604691298403/Untokening+Strategic+Planning+Report+-+small.pdf>

¹³ <https://dhi.ucdavis.edu/news/working-toward-mobility-justice-feminist-research-institute>

our cities and streets to truly be safe, they need to be safe for everyone. The Transportation 2040 plan is a significant strategy influencing decisions regarding transit planning in Metro Vancouver. However, it lacks a mobility justice or equity framework, or even an alignment with the Women's Equity Strategy in regards to safety. This reveals gaps in the City's planning and policy-making processes that fail to question, who exactly is going to be safer as a result of these strategies?

The Solution

I spoke with five female students enrolled at Simon Fraser University during the data-collection period for this project who self-identify as women of color and are reliant on public transit systems in Metro Vancouver (see details in section 2.2). Combining a series of qualitative interviews and the Body Map Storytelling exercise, with an intentional focus on the human body, embodied experiences (see Glossary) and obstructions to mobility justice at the bodily-scale (see section 1.2.1), I asked participants about their perceptions of safety and fear of harassment or violence while navigating public transit systems in this region. Incorporating the Body Map Storytelling exercise as a unique research methodology in combination with qualitative methods in this project has yielded a "rich array of qualitative data" (Sheller, 2020) and added to the body of knowledge regarding the usage of the mobility justice framework for understanding the experiences of women of color, as discussed further in Chapter 4.

I asked participants about the triggers behind their fear of harassment or violence, specific incidents when they experienced such fear as well as the impacts of experiencing such fear in transit spaces in Vancouver upon their behavior, self-perception, perceptions of safety, worldviews and overall public transit usage and mobility in Vancouver. As is characteristic of qualitative research projects, the information shared in this study are representative of the views and experiences shared by participants in the study and are not meant for statistical use. However, since the participants' self-identified as female students who are people of color using public transit systems in Metro Vancouver, their views, experiences and stories represent those within the larger demographic of "visible minorities" or "women of color" in Vancouver.

This project is aimed at understanding how women of color describe their perceived safety and fear of harassment or violence in Metro Vancouver using alternative research methodologies. Generating knowledge regarding the obstacles to mobility justice encountered by these women using an “intersectional lens” (see Glossary and Women’s Equity Strategy report) can help us to build a more equitable Vancouver where mobility justice for women of color is prioritized. A thorough understanding about such obstacles can help the City of Vancouver in meeting its goals for the Women’s Equity Strategy and the Healthy City Strategy while helping to fill gaps in theoretical knowledge regarding the experiences of women of color in Vancouver.

1.2. Conceptual Framework

Academic research such as this project typically follows an accumulative process where new understandings and insights can be gained by building upon existing knowledge or ideas (Maxwell, 1996; Miles and Huberman, 1994). By discussing the significant findings from existing studies that address the issues or problems embedded in the research question for a project, a researcher is able to provide clear examples of how their study addresses these issues and builds upon existing research (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014). The conceptual framework for this study, as discussed below, acknowledges findings regarding perceptions of safety and fear of harassment or violence experienced by women of color while using urban public transit systems. A structured discussion of these findings as identified through literature review and discussed in this section, helps provide a strong foundation for the research design for this study. It also provides an effective framework which can be used to interpret and analyze the data collected during this study in order to respond to the research question.

The first component of the conceptual framework for this study comprised a review of literature regarding the principles of mobility justice proposed by Mimi Sheller, which are founded on a combination of research in several academic fields, primarily mobility studies and gender studies. These principles were adopted in this study as the normative stance (see Glossary) or as the set of doctrines that ought to be emulated in order to attain mobility justice in Canada. A review of these principles in the Canadian context reveals the significance and relevance of studying the urban

problem being addressed in this study, which is the lack of and need for mobility justice for women of color in North American cities.

Next, an analysis of the concept of geographies of fear (Pain, 1997; Valentine, 2008) reveals how fear of violence among women of color takes on a spatial dimension in urban spaces as a result of experiencing this fear at a bodily-scale, as embodied or visceral experiences (see Glossary). Experiencing such fear repeatedly and carrying it around with them in their minds and bodies as they navigate the city, impacts the way women of color choose to and need to travel. This analysis shows that bodily traits such as race and gender make the human body the site upon which social prejudices such as racism and sexism are founded, where violence is directly experienced due to such prejudices, and where fear of violence is suffered by women of color. While mobility justice is impeded across various scales for women of color, from the global, national, urban and human scales, an analysis of the spatial dimension of fear of violence that focuses on the human body exposes how women of color are deprived of mobility justice at the human or bodily-scale in particular.

Finally, a review of scholarship regarding the Body Map Storytelling exercise reveals the benefits of using alternative methodologies for understanding mobility justice among women of color in a variety of geographical, cultural and social settings at the scale of the human body. A review of this method in the following sections show how mapping the human body in visual form, combined with verbal descriptions of embodied experiences, can reveal the ways in which female bodies of color experience fear of violence or harassment and assess their personal safety while navigating public transit systems and urban public spaces.

1.2.1 Bodies, Movement and Justice

Mimi Sheller's foundational work on mobility justice in the article *Theorising mobility justice* (Sheller, 2018), outlines the development of mobilities research in recent years, presents the principles of mobility justice (discussed below) and analyzes these principles in regards to the lack of social justice in society which create uneven capacities for mobility among individuals. A socially just society encourages equitable mobility and provides a legal framework for supporting the freedom and capacity for movement as a human right (Ornstein, 2017). However, social prejudices such as

racism, sexism, queer/ transphobia and a variety of other ways in which individuals face discrimination due to their manner of self-identification at the scale of the human body create unique obstacles that prevent them from navigating urban spaces with the same amount of freedom, independence and convenience as individuals who identify as White, cis-gender and/or male or those who are able to express their gender in ways that are deemed socially acceptable (Sheller, 2018; Cass, Shove & Urry, 2005; Lubitow et al., 2017; Levy, 2013). These social prejudices, founded on racist or sexist beliefs, often manifest in the form of violence upon women of color who are navigating urban public spaces. Criminal victimization statistics in Canada (from before the COVID-19 pandemic) reveal that women who identify as visible minorities as well as young women and students are more likely to be victims of violent and sexual crimes (Perreault 2015, 2017; Perreault & Simpson, 2014; Perreault & Brennan, 2010). However, crimes involving sexual assault are extremely under-reported in Canada (Conroy & Cotter 2017; Rotenberg 2017). A report released by the Canadian Index for Measuring Integration to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Canadians using crowdsourcing data from Statistics Canada found that “Female immigrants were almost twice as likely to experience discrimination in the past two years than male non-immigrants. Six in ten female immigrants were victims of discrimination, while one-third of male non-immigrants had a similar experience.”¹⁴ The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated the rates of violence and harassment and worsened perceptions of safety among visible minority women in Canada, as revealed in these reports. Since women of color are discriminated against in various ways depending upon the social prejudices that exist regarding their race, ethnicity, nationality and gender expressions, their bodies have different capacities for urban movement. In other words, different human bodies are able to travel through different urban regions in Canada with varying degrees of freedom, access, independence, convenience, safety and fear of harassment or violence. Mobility justice is defined as: the just and equitable movement of human bodies through space, where all people are able to

¹⁴ The Canadian Index for Measuring Integration (CIMI) is a resource for policymakers, researchers, settlement service provider organizations (SPOs) and local immigration partnerships across Canada and a tool for providing a credible framework for ongoing assessment of the state of immigrant integration in Canada. The CIMI's Report: “Impact of COVID-19 on Canadians, June 2020” is available at: <https://www.integrationindex.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Impact-of-COVID-19-on-Canadians-Crowdsourcing-surveys.pdf>

navigate streets, cities and nations with freedom and independence (Sheller, 2018; Kaufmann and Montulet, 2008; Elliott and Urry, 2010).

Sheller proposes that an individual's right to freely and independently navigate spaces through bodily movement should be protected by observing certain **principles of mobility justice** and the obstacles to freedom of movement should be understood at the scale of the human body since this is the scale at which such obstacles are directly experienced by individuals. Describing the principles of mobility justice, Mimi Sheller states:

Individual mobility shall not be involuntarily restricted by **threats of violence**, including enforced forms of clothing, segregated means of movement, or unevenly applying temporal or spatial limits; **Gender and sexual identity** shall not be used as the basis for restricting mobility or exclusion from public space; and **Racial, ethnic, or national profiling** shall not be used to police entire groups or stop particular individuals from exercising freedom of movement. (Sheller, 2018, pp.26)

These principles are presented as a set of doctrines that Sheller identified from her interpretations of the development of mobilities research and from which she developed principles about how mobility justice should be enacted. The obstacles to just mobility mentioned here include discrimination against race and gender, which are both bodily traits and used as identifiers of different human bodies. Since human bodies are distinguished and discriminated against due to these bodily traits and are often faced with violence enacted upon them as a result of such discriminations, these principles highlight the strong relationship between bodies, their capacities for movement within urban spaces and the obstacles to social and mobility justice that these bodies are met with. My study has focused on how women of color face obstacles to their mobility particularly at the bodily-scale by asking women of color using public transit systems in Metro Vancouver how their self-identification as women of color and their fear of gender-based and/or racist forms of violence impact their ability to travel freely and independently within these spaces. Sheller's principles of mobility justice were adopted in my study as the normative stance and as guidelines that should be emulated in Metro Vancouver in order to understand and implement mobility justice for women of color. This research project is guided explicitly by the assumption that the mobility justice principles outlined above ought to be instantiated

into municipal policies and strategic transportation plans adopted by the City of Vancouver.

1.2.2 Scary People and Scary Places

Race and gender are both social constructs and individuals either self-identify or are perceived by others as women of color or visible minorities for a variety of reasons (Whitzman et al, 2013; Lubitow et al., 2017). Since different human bodies are identified, differentiated between and discriminated against based on social constructs such as race and gender, these facets of one's identity thus inform the nature of one's fear of harassment or violence in urban public spaces and impacts behaviors among individuals attempting to safely navigate such spaces (Whitzman et al, 2013; Lubitow et al., 2017). Fear, a sensation experienced by the human body, is embodied literally by women of color or experienced physically and psychologically (see Glossary) while they decide which bus to take and which train station to avoid during what times of the day. The fear of harassment or violence experienced by different women of color depends not only on their visible minority status, but also on the different social prejudices and stereotypes associated with women from different ethnic groups (Creese & Kambere, 2002; Tettey & Pupilampu, 2005; Lubitow et. al, 2017; Alinor & Tinkler, 2021). My study rests on Sheller's claim that an individual's fear of harassment or violence (an embodied experience) and subsequent assessments of public spaces based on perceptions of safety in different spaces impact how their bodies are able to (and typically do) travel using public transit (Sheller, 2018). In many cases, embodied fear poses obstructions to the obtainment of mobility justice.

Women of color experience greater levels of fear of crime and violence than White women in urban transit spaces (Pain, 1994; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014; Ross, 2000), which are heightened among immigrant women with limited English language skills living in dense urban regions in Canada such as Metro Vancouver. Criminal victimization statistics find that individuals who identified as Arab or Black are most likely to report experiencing discrimination in Canada (Simpson, 2018; Heidinger & Cotter, 2020), although rates of reporting incidents to the police among immigrants are low compared to their White counterparts overall (Rotenberg, 2017). During the literature review for this study, I found that one of the primary reasons for not reporting incidents include internalized shame due to cultural stigmas, one's perceived

limitations in their ability to effectively communicate and report any experiences of assault or violence or to effectively seek help during emergencies (Cotter & Savage, 2019; Johnson, 2012; Sable et. Al., 2006). Other studies found that incidents of sexual assault are under-reported in Canada due to individuals perceiving their experiences to be too minor to report (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). In response to incidents of gender-based violence in Metro Vancouver in 2013, spokesperson for the Metro Vancouver Transit Police¹⁵ Anne Drennan stated:

–Quite a number of the gropers, sexual touchers—that kind of thing—on the system seem to target young ESL* student females,” Drennan said. –They are very loath to report these incidents, quite often because of cultural stigma or issues, and sometimes because they don’t have a lot of faith or trust in police” (Hui, 2013).

Although Drennan’s statement confirms statistical findings regarding women of color experiencing disproportionate rates of harassment or violence in transit spaces, and reveals the lack of reported incidents of gender-based or racialized crimes experienced by these women, this study found interesting results when participants were asked about their reasons for not reporting incidents to the police (see sections 4.2 and 4.3). Out of the five participants interviewed in this study, two of them identified as Black women and two others identified as being of Iranian/ Middle-Eastern descent. They were all hesitant about reporting incidents to the police, but none of them mentioned –cultural stigma or issues” or language barriers as their reasons for not reporting; instead they mentioned various other factors that are discussed further in Chapters 3 and 4.

The concept of *geographies of fear* used by feminist geographers can be used to analyze fear of harassment and violence experienced by women of color in transit spaces at a bodily-scale (Pain, 1997; Valentine, 2008). **The ‘geographies of fear’ refers to the ways in which women carry their fear of violence and harassment with them psychologically and physically in their bodies while navigating public spaces, creating mental maps of safe and unsafe spaces.** This fear manifests in their day-to-day lives as they develop self-policing behavior, a sense of hyper-vigilance

¹⁵ The Metro Vancouver Transit Police is a multi-jurisdictional policing agency dedicated to the provision of policing to the transit system in Metro Vancouver. <https://transitpolice.ca/about-us/> ; <https://www.translink.ca/about-us/about-translink/operating-companies/transit-police>

in specific geographical and environmental contexts associated with a lack of safety, and make adjustments to their manner of public transit usage and patterns of mobility based on assessments of safety. This implies that a woman of color must take various measures to ensure her safety and remain in a constant state of vigilance and self-policing while using public transit (Pain, 1997; Gardner et. al, 2017; Riger & Gordon 1981; Riger et al.1982; Stanko 1987). These behaviors, repeated regularly and instinctively by female bodies of color, become part of the experience of navigating the city and can cause long-term psychological harm to women while also shaping their patterns of mobility and manner of use of public spaces (Koskela, 1999; Stanko, 1995; Gardner et. al, 2017). Repeatedly feeling unsafe in urban public spaces has been found to negatively impact physical and mental health and well-being while also reducing social cohesion among immigrants in Canada (Heidinger & Cotter, 2020; Jenson, 2019). A deeper understanding of how this occurs for different individuals in their different human bodies can impact the way urban planners conceive of mobility needs and patterns, the way transportation engineers design transit routes and the way cities and nations implement policies to enable equitable access to mobility within urban regions.

The concept of a geographical or spatial dimension to the fear experienced by women of color also demonstrates how fear of violence can be projected onto physical, built environments by directly affiliating these spaces with previous experiences of fear or perceptions of unsafe conditions in these spaces. Since it is difficult to occupy the public realm at all if one is fearful of all men at all times, the association of fear with certain places thus enables women of color to preserve a sense of control over their transit experiences while they adapt their behavior and mobility patterns in order to avoid incidents of harassment and violence and the “dangerous men” who incite such incidents (Kern, 2019; Koskela, 1999; Stanko, 1995; Gardner et. al, 2017). However, what exactly are the factors that shape the ‘perceptions of unsafe conditions’ in transit spaces among women of color? Participants in this study shared several such factors, describing transit spaces containing signifiers of safety or a lack thereof, discussed in section 3.1.1.

Reported experiences of gender-based or racialized violence and the fear of becoming targets of such crimes have been found to significantly alter individual behavior (Fuller & Vosko, 2008; Aujla, 2018). Based on one’s self-perceptions and

worldviews regarding the social prejudices they are subjected to, due to bodily traits such as gender and race, individuals occupy public spaces with varying degrees of agency (Ahmed & Pollack, 2017; see section 3.2.2 and Glossary for definition of 'agency' in the context of this study) or a sense of belonging (Gardner et. al, 2017; Prince, 2014; Brown, 2018). These findings and statistics, supported by the concept of geographies of fear, demonstrate that the combined prejudices of sexism and racism faced by women of color thus result in disproportionate rates of harassment and violence experienced by women of color and reveal how a spatialized dimension to fear of violence can impact the mobilities of women of color. A review of this concept in a Canadian context reveals that mobility justice is far from being achieved in Canada and that a deeper understanding of how fear of violence impacts mobility among women of colour would greatly aid in the implementation of just and equitable individual mobility in urban regions.

Exploring the 'geographies of fear' among women of color, or the physical and psychological impacts of having a spatial dimension to their fear of harassment or violence, can lead to a deeper understanding about how their bodies are able to navigate public transit systems. The concept of 'geographies of fear' thus adds to the theoretical framework for this study, revealing how mobility justice is impeded for women of color as they navigate public transit systems using mental maps of safe and unsafe spaces based on the spatialization of their fear. The human body itself can be an effective source of information for how such fear is experienced and how it impacts mobility justice among different women of color in Metro Vancouver, which is discussed below.

1.2.3 Mapping Bodies and Telling Stories

The process of combining storytelling with visual drawings to understand people's lived experiences and their perceptions of life circumstances has long been used to facilitate healing and to gather information that is not revealed through traditional and chronological recounts of one's experiences (Gastaldo et al., 2012, 2013; Griffin, 2014; Lykes and Crosby, 2013; MacGregor, 2009; Devine, 2008; Schneider et al., 2014). The incorporation of this process as a research method in the form of the Body Map Storytelling exercise in the fields of mobility and gender studies has proven to be an effective method for understanding embodied experiences using

an intersectional analysis (Gastaldo et al., 2012; see Glossary for definition of Intersectionality). This exercise has been recommended by scholars as a supplementary tool, alongside safety audits and qualitative interviews, to understand mobility justice (Matos, Silva and Marie-Carmen, 2018; Schrier, 2012; Escalante and Sweet, 2014; Solomon, 2002; Kearney & Hyle, 2012; Brailas, 2020).

How do women of color describe the sensations, thoughts, experiences and memories associated with occupying public transit spaces in Vancouver? How do their bodies help them in presenting themselves in certain ways to manage others' perceptions about them, in their attempt to feel safer? What adjustments do they make to their body language, postures, speech, behaviors, actions, routines and overall public transit usage based on their perceptions of safety or fear of harassment or violence? Do women of color have the luxury of being a female flâneur (Kern, 2019; Wolff, 1985; Benjamin, 1999; Benjamin & Baudelaire, 1997; Tester, 2015), of being able to aimlessly walk through city streets, board buses and trains, blending into the crowd as an observer of urban life? Using the Body Map Storytelling exercise, I explored answers to these questions and more with participants in this study.

There are two essential elements of this exercise that are fundamental to its use in mobilities research; the first consists of participants drawing an outline of their body on paper and using images, symbols and text to depict their spatial and sensory experiences in various situations and urban spaces. Spatial experiences are based on the spatial awareness of one's position in relation to their surroundings (Lawton, 1994), whereas sensory experiences are formed through sensory input primarily from sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch (Degen and Rose, 2012). These sensory and spatial awarenesses transform into experiences and memories that impact one's navigation of urban spaces in two ways: through one's physical, bodily movement within urban spaces and through their intentional manner of assessing, remembering, dulling and/or intensifying the memories of situations and sensations experienced while moving within urban spaces (Degen and Rose, 2012).

Through this process of drawing, participants visually depict their body as a site which is being mapped and where images, symbols or text can be used to depict their sensory and spatial experiences as features of the map. While a verbal account of these experiences alone would reveal the ways in which participants consciously

formed connections between these experiences and any impacts on their mobility, the act of creating a visual representation of these experiences can reveal connections between spatial and sensory experiences and the ways in which they have shaped their patterns of mobility that may have hitherto gone unrealized even by the participant due to solely relying on spatial or temporal accounts of the situation or experience until then (Escalante and Sweet, 2014; Degen and Rose, 2012). For this study, a Body Map can reveal how women of color remember and interpret their bodily sensations while using public transit systems in Metro Vancouver and how these sensations have informed their behaviors, patterns of transit-usage and overall mobility using public transit in Vancouver.

The second element of the Body Map Storytelling exercise is a verbal de-brief of the experience of drawing the Body Map and an explanation of the pictorial or textual descriptions on the Body Map. During this stage, a Body Map is de-constructed' by the participant to reveal the meanings they have attached to their unique experiences as well as how and why they chose to depict them in the ways that they did while drawing. This de-brief is referred to as a testimonial or the storytelling segment of the Body Map Storytelling exercise and it provides an opportunity to fully understand how positioning the human body at the center of the research can reveal relationships between fear of violence, perceptions of safety and mobility needs and choices in ways that a temporal or spatially focused examination cannot. Using Body Maps and testimonials in this manner has been found to produce rich and analytical verbal descriptions from participants where they reveal an awareness of the human body in different forms- as a biological entity, as a space where emotions and sensations are experienced and as a social being exposed to social inequities (Keith & Brophy, 2004; Keith et al., 2002; O'Neill, 1998). The testimonial is therefore essential in supporting the Body Mapping exercise as it can help participants realize how the human body experiences fear of violence in unique ways. Using this exercise also helps researchers maintain an intersectional lens in the process of gathering and analyzing data since participants self-identify their perceptions in relation to their gender, race and other factors that they deem to be of significance for understanding their mobility. For this study, the testimonial has greatly clarified the visual data gathered from the Body Maps in the context of the unique spatial and sensory

experiences of the participants for this study as experienced while navigating Vancouver's public transit system.

Using the concepts mentioned above, this research is grounded within an intersectional analysis of the principles of mobility justice as the normative stance, a contextual understanding of how geographies of fear are experienced by female bodies of color and an examination of the Body Map Storytelling exercise to understand how sensory/spatial experiences of female bodies of color can impact their mobilities. This study is thus framed within a conceptual framework that connects female bodies of color, their fear of violence, perceptions of safety and subsequent mobility needs and choices. Since the research question for this project involves an exploration of embodied fear and perceived safety among women of color in relation to their public transit usage in Metro Vancouver, grounding this research in the theoretical concepts of mobility justice and geographies of fear and an intersectional analysis of their mobility needs and choices using the Body Map Storytelling exercise provides a strong conceptual foundation for responding to the research question for this project.

Chapter 2 explores in detail the research methodologies, including the rationale and research design, methods of data collection and analysis that were used to answer the research question for this project. The first half of Chapter 3, "Mobility and Fear", explores how fear of harassment or violence impacts overall public transit usage and the bodily movement of women of color in urban public spaces and transit systems in Metro Vancouver. The second half of the chapter, "Mobility and Safety", explores how perceptions of safety impact women of color in their physical, psychological and behavioral needs and choices regarding their mobility at the bodily-scale and their public transit usage in Vancouver. In conclusion, Chapter 4 discusses the findings from this project that respond to the research question as well as the implications of these findings in theory, policy and practice in the Canadian context.

Chapter 2. Methodology

2.1. Rationale and Research Design

Young women of color living in Canada's urban regions report a lower sense of safety than their male or White counterparts (Perreault, 2017; Simpson, 2018; Heisz, et al., 2004), increasingly so since the COVID-19 pandemic began (Heidinger & Cotter, 2020). The goals of this study are to understand how young women of color form perceptions of safety and experience fear of harassment or violence at a bodily-scale while navigating public transit systems in Metro Vancouver. Students at Simon Fraser University who are reliant on public transit and self-identify as women of color fit this demographic perfectly and, as a student at SFU myself, I was able to advertise a call for participants for this project to the student community at SFU through a university-wide study participation recruitment system¹⁶. I designed a poster (see Appendix A), containing a link to a brief online survey (see Appendix B), which was live on this recruitment system from December 17th 2020 to February 8th 2021. During this time, fourteen students provided their contact information and consent to be contacted by taking the survey. I selected five students based on my participant selection criteria (see Appendix C) and sent them the informed consent form for this study (see Ethics Statement).

Having a relatively small number of participants allowed me to learn about each participant's lived experiences in rich and descriptive detail and ultimately provided the opportunity for them to reflect on their experiences critically and deeply. A small sample size also allowed me to produce more in-depth analyses of the data collected, while working within the parameters of the Urban Studies program's timeframe. The conceptual framework for this study and research design informed one another; I intentionally designed the research advertisement poster (Appendix A) using language that did not necessarily require participants to have directly experienced harassment or violence while using public transit in Vancouver since I wanted them to explore how, if at all, their gender and race impacted their perceptions of safety and fear of

¹⁶ This is a platform for advertising research projects within the SFU student community that have obtained ethics approval and meet their selection criteria: <https://www.sfu.ca/gradstudies/life-community/people-research/grad-student-research.html>

harassment or violence during their participation in this study. An in-depth exploration of one's race, gender and lived experiences- especially concerning sensitive and potentially triggering issues such as harassment and violence- could not prudently be achieved through a survey, or using quantitative methods of data collection. To gain a well-rounded and thorough understanding of their experiences and perceptions which focused around their bodies, while being respectful of the deeply personal and sensitive nature of the information being shared, I planned my research design using a combination of semi-structured, qualitative interviews and the Body Map Storytelling exercise.

Qualitative interviews have been used in various ways as an effective strategy to understand how people situate their mobility needs within various structural and social systems (Røe, 2000). I interviewed each of the five participants three times; the first interview followed a semi-structured, qualitative interview questionnaire (see Appendix D), during which the participants' responses were recorded and later transcribed. Since all data-collection was conducted remotely due to restrictions posed by the pandemic, it was important to use the initial interview to introduce participants to the goals of this project and to ensure that they understood their central position as storytellers' sharing accounts of their lived experiences and as experts' of the information being shared. A tiered interview process also created a beginning', middle' and end' to the data collection period. This allowed me to begin by establishing a sense of verbal rapport and comfort with the participants during the first interview, progress more gradually into increasingly personal and analytical questions during the second interview and provide ample time for participants to reflect on their experience of participating in this study through a formal closure during the final interview. The first interview was the Mobility Assessment' (see section 2.2.1) during which I asked participants about their typical public-transit usage in Metro Vancouver and the impacts of factors like their race and gender upon their transit-usage (as well as various other factors mentioned by participants, such as ethnicity/culture, language, sexuality, accessibility needs, height/stature etc.).

During the second and third interviews, I facilitated the Body Map Storytelling exercise (see section 2.2.2 and 2.2.3). Body Mapping originated as a method of art-based therapy for women surviving with HIV/AIDS in South Africa in 2002 (Gastaldo et. al, 2012; Devine, 2008; MacGregor, 2009) and was adapted by Jane Solomon, who

created facilitation guides that would help individuals share narratives of their Body Maps through Storytelling (Gastaldo et.al, 2012; Médecins Sans Frontières: *Access Campaign*¹⁷). **Body Mapping can be defined as the process whereby an individual uses visual art-based techniques such as drawing or painting to create an image that visually describes their bodies, facets of their identity, their lived experiences and aspects of their lives.** Since Body Maps are created by one person, using symbolic or abridged references, their meanings and significance can be fully understood in the context of their Storytelling and overall life circumstances. Scholars in the field of mobility justice recommend using the Body Map Storytelling exercise as a supplementary tool, alongside qualitative interviews and safety audits, to gather information that may not otherwise be revealed through verbal or chronological recounts of participants' experiences, perceptions and worldviews (Gastaldo et al., 2012, 2013; Griffin, 2014; Lykes and Crosby, 2013; MacGregor, 2009; Schneider et al., 2014; Schrier, 2012; Escalante and Sweet, 2014).

Incorporating this exercise into my research design allowed me to build upon the information learned during the first interview (i.e. the Mobility Assessment) and delve deeper into certain aspects of participants' responses from the first interview, while guiding them in drawing their Body Maps to visually depict their fear of harassment or violence, perceptions of safe and unsafe spaces, and the impacts of their race and gender upon their transit-usage. The second interview was therefore less traditional in its format and comprised the Body Mapping segment of this exercise, where participants drew their Body Maps by hand. I prepared a series of prompts (see Appendix D and section 2.2.3 for details) or steps which I read aloud and shared on my computer screen one at a time, while participants drew or wrote their responses to the prompts in real-time. I encouraged them to focus on their bodies as the site of investigation where their gender and race are apparent, where they experience fear of harassment or violence, form perceptions of safety and develop behaviors to feel safer in transit spaces. This exercise was tailored to fit the parameters of my research question and the prompts for each participant were adjusted based on the information they shared during their Mobility Assessment. I encouraged participants to interpret prompts in a way that best suited their life circumstances; since they were sharing

¹⁷The "Body Maps: Art and Memory" is part of Médecins sans frontières's Access Campaign, 20 years in the making, Available at: <https://msfaccess.org/body-maps-art-and-memory>

personal stories about their lived experiences, empowering them to be in charge of how their Body Maps appeared helped maintain an intersectional lens in this process. To this end, I also discouraged participants from numbering or in some way organizing their responses based on the prompts (which were provided as numbered steps, see Appendix D), in order for connections to develop organically within the drawings. However, some participants decided to number their responses anyway, mostly because they were not sure if they could remember why they drew or wrote certain things by the time they participated in the third and final interview.

The last interview comprised the Storytelling segment of this exercise, which is an essential component since it has been found to produce rich and analytical verbal descriptions from participants where they reflect on the various roles of their human bodies- as biological entities, as the foundation for various aspects of their identities (such as gender and race), as the site where thoughts and feelings are formed and as a social entity exposed to social prejudices and inequities (Keith and Brophy, 2004; Keith et al., 2001; O'Neill, 1998). I followed a loosely structured qualitative interview questionnaire (Appendix D, Stage III) for this interview, allowing participants to explain how they had interpreted each prompt and what each element of their Body Map depicted or described, i.e. their testimonials (see details in section 2.2.3). Through this process, participants shared stories about how their various life circumstances- including their income, family structures, support systems, age, nationality, ethnicity, native language, sexuality, able-bodiedness, stature/ height, as well as gender and race- impacted their transit-based mobility in Vancouver. They also shared their views about the existing public transit system and transit police authorities in Metro Vancouver. With all participants, I approached the process of de-constructing their Body Maps as a collaborative effort; while some participants asked me to remind them of the prompts so that they could locate their respective responses, others jumped right in and began describing their Body Maps based on their own interpretations. With all participants, it took some time before both the participant and I realized that there were certain elements of their Body Maps that responded to more than one prompt and some elements that they had included out of their own volition and not in response to any specific prompt. During this conversational, storytelling- style interview, participants discovered subtle features- such as the choice of color or the positioning and relative scale of a certain word or image, and formed connections between

different elements of their Body Maps that they had not originally intended or noticed while drawing them. A combination of qualitative interviews and the Body Map Storytelling exercise thus allowed the research design and choice of methodology to be grounded in the conceptual framework for this study and yielded a rich dataset with layers of information in textual and visual form that allowed me to answer my research question.

2.1.1. Participants

Participants' Pseudonym	Country of Birth	Self-Identified Race/ Ethnicity ¹⁸	Self-Identified Visible Minority Status ¹⁹
Gita	Iran	Middle-Eastern/ Iranian	Somewhat apparent visible minority
Diana	Nigeria	West African/ Nigerian	Apparent visible minority
Ruby	Nigeria	West African/ Nigerian	Apparent visible minority
Anna	Canada	East Asian/ Chinese	Apparent visible minority
Reema	Canada	Middle-Eastern/ Iranian	Somewhat apparent visible minority

Table 1 Participants' self-identified country of birth, race/ ethnicity and visible minority status

All five participants in this study identified as women of color who are students at SFU, however their responses varied greatly when they reflected on how being women of color impacted their transit experiences, both in Vancouver and elsewhere. While their perceptions of safe and unsafe transit spaces in Vancouver shared many common themes, their fear of harassment or violence were based on some factors that were unique to each participant and were closely tied to how they viewed themselves or how they felt others perceived of them.

Two of the participants were born in Nigeria, identified as Black women and both had moved to Canada about two years ago; but while Ruby was living far away from her family in Nigeria, Diana was living with her husband and children in Vancouver and had even experienced using public transit in Vancouver while pregnant. These two participants shared many similar perceptions of safety and their

¹⁸ Self-Identified Race/ Ethnicities are taken from the List of ethnic or cultural origin as of April 1, 2021, available at: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/98-20-0002/982000022020001-eng.cfm>

¹⁹ Self-Identified Visible Minority Status refers to how participants described being perceived as a clearly evident or identifiable visible minority in Vancouver, based on their personal experiences and perceptions.

fear of harassment and violence were based on similar factors, especially in terms of their perceptions of the transit police in Vancouver (see Chapter 3.1.2). Their typical public transit usage in Vancouver varied based on where they needed to travel and the support systems they relied upon to feel safer.

Of the two participants of Iranian heritage, only Gita was born and raised in Iran while Reema was born in Ontario to an Iranian family who had moved to Vancouver when she was younger. Although both of them had non-English names (which is why they were both assigned non-English pseudonyms) only the participant born in Ontario mentioned that she has experienced feeling otherized' (see Glossary; Pennesi, 2016) because of her name. Studies show that racial/ethnic minorities in Canada encounter challenges as skilled labors due to discrimination against applicants with non-English names (Oreopoulos, 2011). Reema's experiences of otherization' indicate that women of color encounter challenges both in their day-to-day mobility as they attempt to reach their workplaces using public transit, as well as in professional fields, due to their racial/ ethnic identities.

Interestingly, the two participants of Iranian descent spoke very differently about their self-identified visible minority status. Gita had moved to Vancouver from Iran over eight years ago and spoke about her race/ ethnicity as a minor factor in the context of her experiences on transit and did not believe that her visible minority status was clearly apparent in Vancouver. Reema (born in Ontario) spoke extensively about how she was usually White passing' (Al-Qaragolie, 2020; see Glossary for definition of White passing) for most of the year but during the summer months, her slightly darker skin tone, combined with her dark hair and facial features, made her more clearly apparent as a visible minority. Reema also self-identified as a queer woman of color and spoke about how these different facets of her identity impacted her transit experiences. Reema spoke about experiencing a phenomenon defined by scholars as reactive passing', where individuals embrace an identity that is mistakenly ascribed to them (Renfrow, 2004), both in terms of her race/ethnicity as well as her gender expression (discussed in Chapter 3.2.2).

Anna was born in Vancouver but her parents are from China. She had travelled extensively around the world and had visited China briefly but had never lived there. Although she did not speak about her experiences of public transit in China, she spoke

at length about her experiences of public transit in “male-dominated countries” while travelling abroad, specifically in India, and how those experiences have informed or impacted her behavior in transit spaces, her worldviews and self-perception as a woman of color (see Chapter 3.1.1 and 3.1.2). Various other similarities and differences in their views were revealed through the interviews, as discussed in the following sections.

2.2. Data Collection

2.2.1. Mobility Assessment

Since I met the participants remotely for the first time during this interview, I began by briefly explaining the objectives of this study and the concept of mobility justice (see Chapter 1.1.1) as well as defining relevant terminology in the context of this study, such as safety and transit spaces (see Glossary). I followed an open line of inquiry (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014; Per Gunnar, 2000) to understand why participants self-identified as women of color and how they described their typical patterns of public transit usage in Vancouver based on their various mobility needs and choices.

Public transit usage had declined significantly over the past year for all participants and their typical routes and modes of transportation had changed since the pandemic began. Throughout all three interviews, participants spoke primarily about their transit usage before the pandemic since this reflected more of a typical scenario. During the Mobility Assessment, participants shared where they primarily travelled using public transit, how frequently and at what times of the day they typically used different modes of public transit, which routes they preferred and why, as well as various other factors that impacted their public transit usage in Metro Vancouver (see Figure 1 below).

The factors shown in Figure 1 are explained further in Chapters 3 and 4, however, the typical patterns of each participant’s mobility are shown on Mobility Assessment maps (see Appendix E) that concisely depict the information they shared during the first interview. These maps show the approximate locations of where they typically travel to and from, for what purpose and using which modes- including

walking, buses, Skytrains or ride-sharing services such as Uber²⁰. Several participants discussed why they preferred certain modes and routes at different times of the day and the inconveniences they encounter due to a lack of safe and affordable public transit options that met all of their mobility needs (discussed further in Chapter 4). Unfortunately, it was only possible to create four maps since Anna chose to speak about her transit usage without mentioning the names of any places or specific routes. However, her perceptions of safety and transit experiences are discussed along with the others' in the following sections.

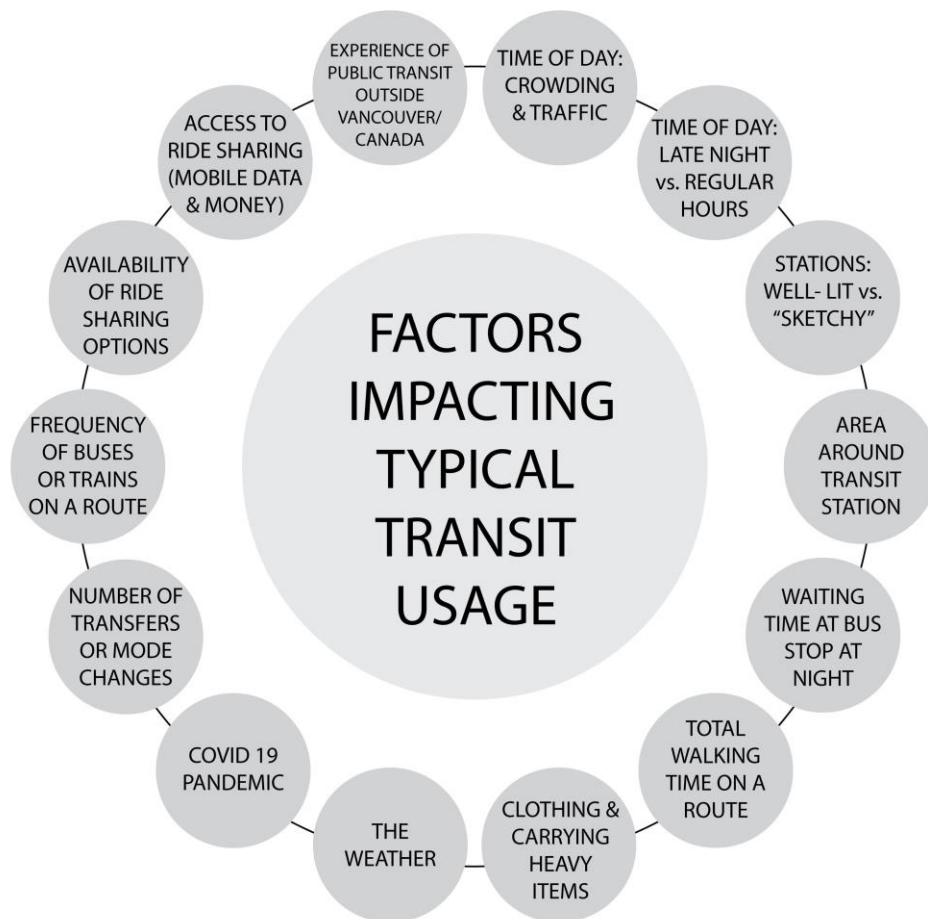


Figure 1 Factors impacting typical public transit usage among participants in this study identifying as women of color studying at SFU in Metro Vancouver

²⁰ Uber is an American ride-sharing service provider that launched in Vancouver in early 2020

All five participants mentioned that they typically use public transit for getting to and from school, work, shopping/ buying groceries or for social/ recreational purposes like visiting friends; only one participant mentioned church, children's daycare and volunteering purposes (see Appendix E). Two of the participants were employees at SFU besides being students there, so they used transit to commute to and from SFU's various campuses on a daily basis before the pandemic. However, the routes and modes they each chose on an average day would vary depending on the factors shown in Figure 1. Diana's typical transit usage had the most drastic change since the pandemic; on her Mobility Assessment map, the school symbol is crossed out because her classes at SFU's Burnaby campus have all been online since the pandemic began so she has not needed to commute there. The church symbol is also crossed out since she has been attending a church closer to her home which is more convenient to commute to since the pandemic started.

When I asked participants about their experiences of using public transit outside of Vancouver, the three participants who were born outside Canada spoke about their experiences of occasionally using transit in their home countries, and in only Ruby's case, about her experiences in one other country she had lived in. However, the other two participants who were born in Canada had both travelled abroad extensively and drew comparisons between the various transit systems they had used with the ones in Vancouver. All of the participants shared that the different cultures and social norms of the places where they had used public transit, including Vancouver, had shaped their mobility, their perceptions of safety in transit spaces, world views, self-perceptions as women of color and behavior in transit spaces in Vancouver.

2.2.2. Body Mapping

During the second interview, I introduced the Body Map Storytelling exercise to each participant as a research method used in various disciplines (see Chapter 1.2.3 and Appendix D). Using the facilitation guide provided by Matos, Silva & Marie-Carmen (Matos, Silva & Marie-Carmen, 2018) for the outline of the exercise, and incorporating strategies used in qualitative research involving participant-produced drawings (Kearney & Hyle, 2012; Brailas, 2020; Gastaldo et al., 2012, Escalante & Sweet, 2014; Keith & Brophy, 2004; Keith et al., 2001; O'Neill, 1998), I designed my

own facilitation guide to conduct this exercise in order to answer the research question for this project (see Appendix D, Stage II).

I began by data-tagging the transcripts from the Mobility Assessment with each participant, which involved conducting a close reading of each transcript and labeling each segment of data to succinctly categorize what that data is about, while retaining its original context (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014). For example, Ruby said during the Mobility Assessment:

Yeah (nodding and smiling), Stadium-Chinatown is pretty dark (laughs).
It's very sketch. I'm, I'm not a fan, no (shaking head).

- Participant Quote 1: Ruby's Mobility Assessment.

I data-tagged the sentence above as: "Unsafe transit space; Stadium-Chinatown Skytrain station: dark and sketchy at night", and categorized it under the larger theme of "perceptions of safety". In this case, the segment of data being categorized was only one sentence long, but overall these segments varied from a few words or phrases to an entire paragraph within a transcript.

Once all five transcripts from the Mobility Assessment had been data-tagged, several common themes emerged across everyone's responses. These themes, along with the themes identified through literature review, such as participants' identities as women of color, their fear of harassment/violence, the spatialization of such fear in transit spaces, and their perceptions of safety in transit spaces in Metro Vancouver, were the foundation for the Body Mapping facilitation guide that I designed for this study (see Appendix D, Stage II and details of the Data Analysis process in Section 2.3).

The facilitation guide includes a series of steps or prompts which I provided to the participants during the Body Mapping activity in the second interview, where each step built upon the previous ones. I shared one step at a time on my computer screen and read aloud the 'script' for each step with the participant, pausing for them to complete drawing or writing their responses before proceeding to the next. The first and last steps in the guide were the only ones taken directly from the facilitation guide written by Matos, Silva and Marie-Carmen (Matos, Silva & Marie-Carmen, 2018), which bookended the activity. Some of the most interesting data collected in this entire project came out of the first and last prompts (see more in Chapters 4.1.1 and 4.1.2).

Due to the personal and sensitive nature of some of the questions I asked during this activity (see Appendix D, Stage II), I paid careful attention to the organization of the steps for facilitating the Body Mapping process. Following Ritchie and Lewis's recommendations on breaking down in-depth or sensitive interviews into stages (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014), I sequenced the steps for this activity so that the concepts or themes identified from the Mobility Assessment and literature review could all be addressed at various points of this exercise.

Once I had introduced each participant to the format of the Body Mapping exercise and they had drawn their body outline, the first theme I addressed was 'perceptions of safety', which was a core component of my research question. In steps 2 and 3 I asked participants to draw what they believed to be signifiers of safe and unsafe transit spaces in order to understand how they 'spatialized' their fear of harassment or violence (see more in Chapter 3.1.1). The second theme I addressed was 'fear of harassment or violence', to which I dedicated several steps that were sequenced in order of how the participant may conduct a transit-based commute in Vancouver. Beginning with their preparations or behaviors before a trip in step 4, and during a trip in step 5, I transitioned into slightly more sensitive questions about any unpleasant conversations or interactions they have had in transit spaces that made them feel unsafe in step 6. These gradual transitions allowed me to ease the participant from a mundane or everyday level of conversation to a deeper, more analytical level (Robson, 2002; Rubin and Rubin, 1995; Spradley, 1979, Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014). Thus, in steps 7 and 8 I asked participants to focus deeply on the sensation of fear of harassment or violence in relation to their race, gender, or other 'unique factors of significance' which several participants had mentioned during the Mobility Assessment (such as their sexual orientation, able-bodied-ness, stature or height etc.).

Following this deeper level of questioning, I asked participants to focus specifically on their bodies in steps 9 and 10, to understand how their sensory and spatial awarenesses in transit spaces transform into experiences and memories through their bodies (Degen and Rose, 2012). I then asked the two most sensitive questions in this activity in steps 11 and 12 regarding their personal experiences of harassment or violence in transit spaces, making sure to customize my question for each participant based on what they had implied about this during the Mobility

Assessment. Since several participants also discussed their perceptions of transit police and a variety of support systems and accessories in relation to their safety in transit spaces during the first interview, I included steps 13 and 14. In order to guide the participant back into an everyday level of conversation or mindset by the end of the activity (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014) and give them some form of closure, I added steps 15 and 16. These two steps were also important since they allowed the participant to think about what their Body Maps represented, and whether they were satisfied with the messages they had relayed through their drawings. The last step in particular was essential since I wanted participants to feel a sense of ownership over their Body Maps and the information they had shared for this study.

Throughout the activity, I encouraged participants to interpret the prompts however they thought best suited them and their life circumstances, while following the notes/ considerations in my facilitation guide. At the end of the exercise, participants shared photographs of their Body Maps with me via email. Although I encouraged all participants to try to limit their drawings to one sheet of paper, some participants used more than one because they ran out of space, so I compiled all the drawings that each participant shared with me into single pages as shown on Appendix F. After completing this exercise and before conducting the final interview, during the span of approximately two to three weeks for each participant, I sent a few prompts for reflection (Appendix E) to encourage them to think about the Body Maps at their own pace and to record any new thoughts or feelings that surfaced during this time before they discussed the Body Maps in detail during the last interview, which was the Storytelling component of this activity.

2.2.3. Storytelling

In the third and final interview with each participant, I followed a semi-structured qualitative interview questionnaire (see Appendix D- Stage III). For each participant, I began the interview by sharing the photograph of their Body Map on my computer screen next to the prompts or steps I had asked them to follow during the Body Mapping exercise. The participant and I worked together to de-construct the drawings and to identify what they had drawn or written for each of these steps.

Some participants had asked during the Body Mapping exercise if they should be numbering their responses based on the steps I provided, but I discouraged them from doing this for two reasons. The first reason was to allow their personal narratives to emerge in the drawings in an organic, cohesive and layered manner rather than simply as responses to my prompts. The other reason was that I hoped, and not entirely in vain, that when the participant and I pieced together the different elements of their Body Map during the final interview, more stories, details and connections between stories would emerge regarding the experiences or perspectives they had already shared or depicted on their Body- Map. This is exactly what happened for almost all participants; Diana spoke about the eye she drew in the center of her body outline in red color (Appendix F) during the final interview and said:

I think the eye is just showing like the visible-minority. So you see me... but you don't see me, right? You see me as my color. You really don't see me as a person, like, I don't know how to explain it, or, the Black lady on the bus. Not the smiling lady on the bus, not the lady with the... very intellectual conversation, but the Black lady on the bus, you know, that kind of thing.

- Participant Quote 2: Diana's Testimonial

Although Diana originally drew the eye in response to a particular step in the exercise, it addressed multiple factors that went beyond that single prompt, including how she felt about being a visible minority in Vancouver, the difference between how she viewed herself and how she felt she was perceived by others as a Black woman, as well as her experiences of feeling invisible or hyper-visible (see more on this in Chapter 3.2.2).

Once I had satisfactorily understood the participants' intended meanings behind each element of their Body Map (see identifying responses in Appendix D, Stage III), I encouraged them to further analyze their responses. This included asking participants about why they had chosen to depict or describe certain experiences, thoughts or feelings in certain ways, considering their usage of certain colors, symbols and varying scales or relative positions of people and objects in the drawings. I then asked some clarifying questions based on the information they had shared throughout this study to ensure I had a thorough and accurate understanding of their experiences. I ended the final interview by asking participants to share their experiences of drawing the Body Maps and participating in this project overall, which were largely positive

(discussed further in Chapter 4). After ending the final interview, I emailed each participant, thanking them for their participation, encouraging them to ask questions regarding their participation in this study at any point and informing them that I would be sharing the findings of this study with them once they are available.

2.3. Analysis

All interview transcripts, audio and video recordings of the interviews, Body Maps and analytical memos collected during this study were stored according to the steps outlined in the Study Details and Informed Consent Form for this study in a password-protected SFU vault folder accessible only by myself and my senior supervisor. Since I transcribed each interview manually by listening to the audio-visual recordings and typing the conversation based on what I heard and saw, I included details such as body-language, tone of voice, pitch, facial expressions, hesitations and interruptions in order to identify topics that I wanted to learn more about in subsequent interviews or to clarify something that the participant had already shared (Martin & Flowerdew, 2013; Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014). After completing the first draft of the transcriptions, I re-listened to the interview recordings and double-checked each transcript against the respective recording, correcting typos and adding more analytical memos and observations into the transcripts in order to further familiarize myself with the data (Martin & Flowerdew, 2013). I transcribed each interview soon after it was conducted and before the next interview with the same participant, although most of the later stages of analysis did not begin until the data collection period was over.

Using the review and comment functions on MS Word, I tagged or labeled all ten transcripts from the first and last interview (the second interview contained very little conversation apart from me reading out the prompts for the Body Mapping exercise and answering questions asked by the participants to clarify the prompts). Data-tagging included closely reading each transcript and identifying the meaning behind every segment of data that conveyed a certain message, so that each segment could be labeled concisely under the appropriate category to convey what that data was about (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014; Flowerdew & Martin, 2013). I also used the line number and page number functions on MS Word to record exactly which line and page of each transcript contained the data segments I had labeled so that they could be easily retrieved as I continued the process of analysis and write-up. For

example, the first few tags or labels applied to Gita’s transcript from the Mobility Assessment were ‘COVID-19’, ‘transit usage-daily’ and ‘typical route-home to campus’ as shown below in the screenshot taken from her transcript:

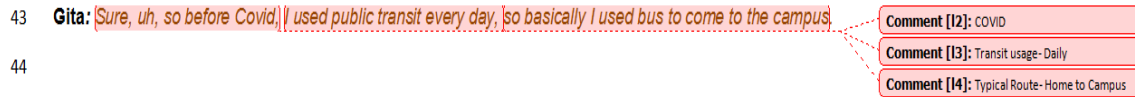


Figure 2 Data- tagging Process - I

I began recording these tags for all participants by stage of data collection, as shown below:

Themes from Stage I: Mobility Assessment

Gita:

1. COVID 19
2. Transit usage- Daily
3. Typical route- Home to Campus

Figure 3 Recording Tagged Data

In the process of data-tagging and recording these tags as shown in Figures 1 and 2, several common themes and sub-themes emerged across all participants’ responses. I used these themes and sub-themes to sort the data into a matrix as shown in Appendix H. This manner of sorting allowed me to group together themes with similar properties under the ‘column-headings and sub-headings’, during which process the ‘titles’ for the thematic charts emerged. The purpose of sorting the data in this manner was to analyze each theme in detail and conduct an in-depth review of the data, while creating a thematic structure or matrix which could be used to locate and retrieve data at a later time (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014). This matrix also allowed me to see more connections within the data, as I started adding new tags to the same segment of data that was previously categorized under only one theme. For instance, in the process of creating the data-sorting matrix (Appendix H), I realized I could add one more tag, i.e. ‘Mobility Needs & Choices- Mode’ to the same segment of data in Figure 2, as shown in Figure 4 below:

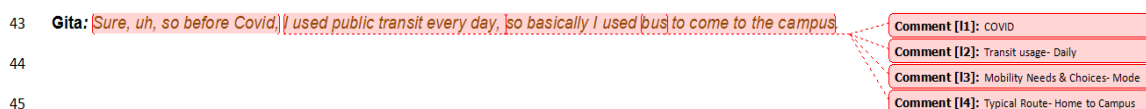


Figure 4 Data-tagging Process- II

In this way, the process of sorting the data allowed me to identify more common themes within the data. Once I had completed creating the matrix and gone over the entire dataset several times, I began creating thematic charts. These charts were essentially an expansion of the matrix on Appendix H, with further rows added below for each participant; the skeleton for one of the thematic charts is shown below:

1. Personal Information	Race/ Ethnicity	Age	Past Living Situation	Moving to Vancouver	Current Living Situation	Friends/ Family	COVID
Gita							Stage I: Took bus to campus daily before Covid. 2.43
Diana							
Ruby							
Anna							
Reema							

Table 2 Thematic chart skeleton

A thematic chart such as the one above allows large quantities of data collected in qualitative research to be summarized and organized by theme, while retaining the original context or meaning of the data (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014). Table 2 shows the same segment of data from Figure 2 being summarized and inserted into one of the thematic charts, recording which stage of interviews it was collected from, as well as the page number and line number of the transcript from which it was extracted (in this case: page 2, line 43 of Gita’s Mobility Assessment). By repeating this process of first identifying the appropriate thematic chart and column-heading for each segment of tagged data from the transcripts and then summarizing the data-segment to record them as shown in Table 1, I labeled, sorted and thematically charted all of the textual data from the interview transcripts. Most data-segments were charted under multiple columns in multiple thematic charts since they fit into multiple thematic categories. Throughout this process, I re-listened to the original interview recordings and re-visited the Body Maps to ensure that my summarization of the data segments retained their intended meaning and context. For certain sub-themes, I chose to keep the original quotations from the transcript rather than summarizing them in the charts since they were already very well summarized versions of the data segments. Also, in some cases (see Appendix I) I felt that

retaining my initial observations of certain affectations of the participants' tone and body language added to the meaning of the data. At the end of the thematic charting, I skimmed over the entire dataset once more to ensure that all of the data had been charted somewhere and that I had identified and recorded connections between each data segment wherever applicable.

The final step in my analysis was to use the charted data to begin answering my research question. Following Ritchie and Lewis's recommendations on data categorization for descriptive analysis, I reviewed each column within the thematic charts to identify the range of perspectives, behaviors or experiences that were shared by all participants which were tagged within that theme (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014). For instance, when I reviewed the hyper-vigilance' sub-theme under the behavior' column in thematic chart number 7 for all participants, I identified a range of behaviors that could be categorized as hyper-vigilant behavior (see Appendix I). In this Appendix, I have included only one comment shared by one participant that was charted under the sub-theme of hyper-vigilance', for the sake of brevity, since the original thematic chart is several pages long. I categorized her behaviors using the second chart on this Appendix, following the structure of categorization provided by Ritchie and Lewis (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014). In this way, I was able to display my data in a way that is conceptually pure, makes distinctions that are meaningful and provides content that is illuminating" (Ritchie & Lewis et. Al., 2014, p. 237). I began to use these categorizations/ classes of data to write about the participants' responses relative to one another, to display the full range of responses I received for each theme, while constantly connecting their Body Maps to the textual data and referencing relevant literature wherever it provided clarity and justification to the process of reporting my findings.

I used the analytical processes described above to then begin the formal write-up. Following these methods of data collection and analysis have grounded my data within my conceptual framework, making connections across the data and produced insightful findings, as described in the following chapters.

Chapter 3. En Route

3.1. Mobility and Fear

So how *did* participants describe the impacts of their fear of harassment or violence upon their public transit usage in Metro Vancouver? Decisions regarding transportation typically involve various compromises regarding the purpose of travel, the time of travel, choice of mode and whether to travel or not, depending on uneven access to resources and social standings among individuals (Levy, 2013). Participants shared how they made decisions regarding their transportation as a balancing act between their various mobility needs (as depicted on the Mobility Assessment maps in Appendix E), with a general preference for efficiency or convenience. They defined efficiency based on how fast they could go somewhere, but convenience could mean various things based on the specific circumstances of a commute and the factors impacting their typical transit usage shown in Figure 1 (see Chapter 2.2.1). Convenience often took priority over efficiency; for instance, several participants shared that if they are carrying heavy items during a day-time commute, they will choose the route with the shortest wait-time at any station, the least number of transfers between vehicles/ mode and with the least amount of walking involved, since this would be the most convenient route even if it is not the fastest, i.e. the most efficient route. However, when it came to decisions regarding public transit usage at night or in unsafe transit spaces (see Glossary) most participants would prioritize safety over both efficiency and convenience out of a fear of violence and harassment. To explain this, the two participants who identified as Black women both said that if they have to use public transit at night or using an “unsafe” route- involving a wait-time of thirty minutes or more at a bus stop in a poorly-lit, deserted street- they might avoid that trip altogether or call an Uber or taxi. During late-night commutes, participants were typically returning home at the end of the day, which made many such commutes unavoidable and inevitably involved taking an Uber to avoid taking public transit. Both Ruby and Diana’s Mobility Assessment Maps (Appendix E) reflect their choices in such cases, showing alternative routes between the same locations using public-transit as well as Uber/ ride-sharing, typically when returning home, based on the time of the day.

Although the notion of an individual's "travel choice" is a focal point in the planning stages of mainstream transport design, such choices exist in relation to social standings and access to resources among transit users (Levi, 2013). Gita explained this by sharing that when it came to her "travel choices" for late-night commutes, she often felt that she had no choice at all, regardless of her preferences for efficiency, convenience or safety, since her student status and consequent financial restrictions dictate her transportation choices. During her Mobility Assessment, Gita shared:

Sometimes it happens that I choose Uber over bus, but it's not because it's not safe, it's because there is no bus at that time... so usually I don't change, my mode of transit because of something with respect to safety, because there is not lots of options for me. So for example, if I want to take Uber, or, rent Evo, I do that sometimes, but it's not, you know, it's very expensive for a student, if you want to do that every day. So I just try to stick with the public transit and I usually don't change my mode.

- Participant Quote 3: Gita's Mobility Assessment

Several participants discussed the inconveniences of relying on Uber or taxis too often (discussed further in Chapter 4) due to a lack of safe and affordable transit options for late night commutes. All participants described how their race and gender determined their bodily safety and impacted their transit-based patterns of mobility in Metro Vancouver. The following sections discuss how creating a spatial dimension to their fear of harassment or violence and constantly 'policing' or monitoring their bodies enable participants to exercise a level of control over their mobility and regain a sense of 'choice' when it comes to their day-to-day travel.

3.1.1. Spatialization of fear

What is 'spatialization of fear'?

Many women living and working in urban regions in the West navigate public spaces and public transit systems alone and adopt various "coping strategies", which they accept as part of their life circumstances, in order to avoid male violence enacted upon their bodies (Riger and Gordon 1981; Riger et al.1982; Stanko 1987; Pain,1997; Valentine, 2008; Kern, 2019; Koskela, 1999; Gardner et. al, 2017). The mental association of violence with specific environmental contexts or physical spaces allows women to continue navigating their cities, by avoiding "dangerous places at dangerous

times”, or creating a spatial dimension to their fear of harassment or violence (Valentine, 1989; Pain, 1997; Kern, 2019; Koskela, 1999). Participants in this study shared their own coping strategies, including how they identify signifiers of safe and unsafe transit spaces, decide who typically occupies certain transit spaces, expect behaviors among strangers in such spaces accordingly and adopt tactics to create and navigate mental maps of transit spaces based on their perceptions of safety, thus spatializing their fear of harassment or violence.

What are signifiers of unsafe or safe transit spaces?

Participants in this study discussed how observing certain physical features, individuals and behaviors in transit spaces in Vancouver help them decide whom they may encounter in those spaces and under what circumstances they themselves may occupy those spaces safely. Ruby shared:

If I'm in like an area where I know that it's almost... kind of like bougie, like if I'm walking in the streets of Kitsilano at night, I wouldn't want to be... loud or rowdy. Especially if none of us lived in Kitsilano, that would be like a huge deal breaker for me. But if I was walking down the streets of Vancouver, downtown, I don't mind, like I would not care. So it's, it definitely, is where I feel like I belong to, where I feel like is most... where people will see me as a human being too as well and so if I'm walking down the streets of downtown Vancouver, that's totally fine with me. But if I'm walking somewhere like Kensington or, umm, West Van for example, where it's like rich people and like... a kind of protected area, then I wouldn't want to be... rowdy and noisy on the streets at night, for sure.

I would not be, rowdy, if I saw transit police (shaking head) for sure. At all (laughs). Like I would be the person that like, (lifts both hands up to her head) -eh yeah, like, let's like be quiet now”. There is the authority.

- Participant Quote 4: Ruby's Testimonial

Ruby's quote above was part of a discussion about how she typically behaves in transit spaces in Vancouver, especially when she is with a group of friends who may also be people of color or women of color (as she mentions, -none of us”). She speaks about how comfortable she feels in talking, laughing or being loud with such a group in public or transit spaces in Vancouver (her comments about transit police in quote 4 are discussed in section 3.2.2.) Her response in this quote reveals that she associates certain transit spaces and neighbourhoods with -bougie, rich people” such as Kitsilano, Kensington or West Vancouver, unlike Downtown Vancouver, where people are likely

to “see her as a human being” and where she feels more of a sense of belonging and acceptance. Observing the general atmospheres of different public spaces thus helps Ruby to determine who belongs there, who is allowed to be “loud or rowdy” in that space and how safe she is there. Specifically, her mention of “protected areas” and “transit police” implied that observing the physical features of transit spaces and gauging who typically has access to those features or occupies those spaces helps her determine her personal safety. Ruby and all other participants described the various items they look out for, such as physical features, attitudes and behaviors, body language among other passengers, the presence of certain individuals etc. as ‘signifiers’ of safe or unsafe transit spaces. In order to understand exactly what comprised these ‘signifiers’ of safety, I looked at her descriptions of unsafe transit spaces in Vancouver and why she associated those spaces with a lack of safety:

My first day in Vancouver (looking down, shaking head), I was, in front of the downtown SFU Campus. And someone said, oh yeah, don’t go to East Hastings, its hella dangerous, don’t be there at night. And I’m like... (Leaned back, frowning, surprised/ concerned expression), ok...

And so that, that registers (waving hands) that okay, East Hastings is dangerous at night...and I had to walk at some point down East Hastings and... I’m seeing needles on the floor, I’m seeing people who use drugs on the street. And so I’m like okay, this is not somewhere I wanna be, at night. (Emphasis on word ‘night’).

And seeing people scream at each other, and see people scream at me and so it’s like, I-don’t-wanna-be-here, at night... umm, the Stadium Chinatown, station as well, I sometimes will see drugs around there, I see needles on the floor, I’ve seen, just like strange arguments, just like tempers just like erupt. And so I’m like, okay (eyes narrowed, looking away, nodding) there’s a certain attitude that that place has, compared to for example the Commercial-Broadway station, or the... Yaletown or Olympic Village stops, they’re very different (head tilted, nodding), and so just because of that I can tell okay, this, this part of town is kinda sketch, there’s like, all these things I’m seeing, there’s like needles on the floor, there’s like, it’s trashy, in like appearance , it’s less maintained, there’s like, it’s, there’s obviously the broken window theory, at play here, it’s like oh this thing is damaged and not being fixed and so, to me, it’s like okay, so this place is not like, well-taken care of, compared to like Broadway or something. And so yeah, that’s basically how, it’s, it’s a mix of things I’ve seen and, things I’ve heard.

- Participant Quote 5: Ruby’s Mobility Assessment

In quote 5, Ruby described how observing the physical features of transit spaces, such as poor maintenance or signs of neglect, as well as the presence of objects like needles or drug paraphernalia, signalled trashy, sketchy or unsafe environments in transit spaces in Vancouver. She also mentioned ~~people~~ screaming at each other and at her”, ~~strange arguments~~”, ~~tempers erupting~~” and ~~a certain attitude~~” as the behaviors she has observed and sensed at East Hastings and the Stadium-Chinatown Skytrain station. She went on to explain that she has come to expect such behaviors in these spaces specifically, as well as in other transit spaces containing any of these signifiers of a lack of safety. Ruby’s comment corroborates scholarship regarding the unpredictability of behaviors exhibited by male strangers in public spaces, combined with the lack of control an individual has over whom she encounters in a public space and under what circumstances, leading women to expect male violence in certain places at certain times more than others (Pain, 1983; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2014; Ross, 2000; Koskela, 1999; Stanko, 1995; Gardner et. al, 2017). During the interviews, Ruby shared an experience when she was one of the last two passengers on a bus at night and the other passenger- a man who appeared to be intoxicated- began yelling at her and at one point physically approached her, at which the bus driver had to stop the vehicle and call the police until they arrived and escorted the man off the bus. Ruby therefore expects, and has personally felt victimized by, unpredictable and consequently more dangerous behavior among strangers in transit spaces where she observes signs of substance abuse and is more fearful for her safety in those spaces.

Reema shared a similar perspective while describing a segment of her Body Map (see Figure 5 and Appendix F) during the final interview:

So I drew a dude there wearing like a hood and he’s swearing, like, as, as much as I can like understand and can empathize with a lot of the people that are homeless and like obviously affected by the like drug epidemic in Vancouver, I still don’t feel safe, like I, like the volatility of, of these individuals because they’re unable to control their emotions and reactions at that time, it does make a person feel unsafe, so I just wrote like, ~~“Fuck!”~~ like, cause I’ve literally been at a bus stop where I’ve heard people, maybe with Tourette’s (arms raised, shrugging) or something, just swearing, like ~~“fuck! Blah, blah!”~~ a bunch of like swear words and stuff. So for me that causes anxiety, it makes me feel unsafe cause you never know what’s gonna happen, right, like sometimes people are completely harmless and other times, out of the blue, accidents happen.

- Participant Quote 6: Reema’s Testimonial

Reema's description further demonstrates that despite her understanding that a person who is homeless, or under the influence of or addicted to drugs or alcohol, or with a mental health condition, is simply another human being struggling with their own issues and worthy of her empathy, they are simultaneously one of the signifiers of an unsafe transit space for her.

Ruby mentioned the 'broken window theory' during the interview, which is a controversial theory that gained popularity in a 1982 article (Wilson & Kelling, 1982) regarding public space usage and urban policing. Since then, this theory has been widely discredited as it was found to be the basis of many racist policies (Kamalu & Onyeozili, 2018). The broken windows theory states: ~~any~~ any visible signs of crime and civil disorder, such as broken windows, vandalism, loitering, public drinking, jaywalking, and transportation fare evasion, create an urban environment that promotes even more crime and disorder (Wilson & Kelling, 1982). It gained popularity among police precincts, particularly in New York City, during the Michael Bloomberg administration as mayor and at the height of the ~~stop-and-frisk~~ "stop-and-frisk" public safety initiative²¹. Police authorities detained hundreds of thousands of people, targeting people of color and visible minorities, close to 90% of whom were released without charges after nothing illegal was found on their person. Scholars have identified how people of colour, particularly Black and Latino communities, have experienced increased policing of minor social disorders, unjustified and aggressive policing of minor misdemeanours and long-term negative impacts on their communities due to the application of policies based on this theory (Kamalu & Onyeozili, 2018). However, Ruby's reference to this theory reveals how it has maintained cultural significance despite its negative consequences and is discussed further in section 4.2.

Several participants drew individuals and behaviors that they described as signifiers of unsafe spaces on their Body Maps. Figure 5 shows three images, cropped from Ruby, Diana and Reema's Body Maps (Appendix F) to demonstrate signifiers of unsafe transit spaces in the form of individuals under the influence of substances and/or displaying belligerent behavior. Ruby drew a male figure in red, holding a bottle of alcohol (apparently a bottle of Johnnie Walker, based on the diagonal design of the label and the initials "JW"). The text written in black inside this figure in red reads:

²¹ <https://www.nyclu.org/en/publications/stop-and-frisk-during-bloomberg-administration-2002-2013-2014>

“drunk, belligerent people or using substance”. Reema’s figure also has text attached to it, in the form of a speech bubble with the word “Fuck!” and symbols below it to depict swear words being yelled out (the same hooded, male figure she referred to in quote 6).

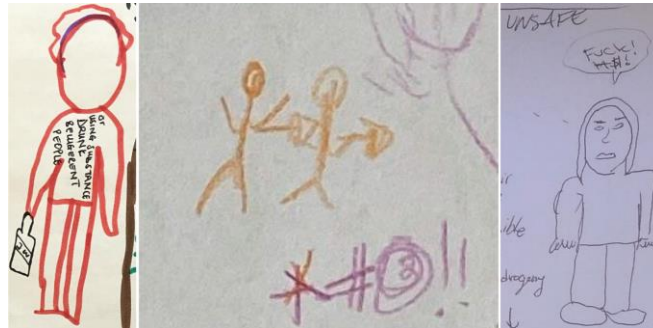


Figure 5 Segments of Body Maps drawn by Ruby (left), Diana (center) and Reema (right)

Diana described her drawing (Figure 5, center) of the two figures in orange (drawn inside her own body outline in her Body Map in Appendix F) to show two people brawling in a transit space, along with the symbols “#@!!” to depict swear words, saying:

A lot of men yeah. And then they are loud so most likely they are all college boys that are either drunk or something. Then I put night, usually night, there is night there. Then I think on this side I added that they are either using rough language, so that is the meaning of the “#@!!”, so they are using rough language. And then umm... then these two people inside my body, they are fighting, so maybe there is a brawl or something, that’s not very comfortable for me.

- Participant Quote 7: Diana’s Testimonial

The common features in these three images in Figure 5 and the participants’ descriptions of them were that they all depict the presence of one or more male figures exhibiting threatening behavior by swearing loudly, yelling or fighting and are likely to be under the influence of substances. Observing such behaviors or individuals with whom they associate such behaviors in transit spaces were described by participants as signifiers of unsafe transit spaces.

I also asked participants to describe signifiers of safe transit spaces and all of their responses contained the following common themes: good lighting, cars and people passing by, especially other women and women of color, open stores visible

from the transit space and the presence of security cameras or security personnel. Diana drew a motion-sensor enabled automatic street light in the top left corner of her Body Map because they help her feel safe when she's waiting at a bus stop at night. Ruby and Reema both find Skytrain stations to be generally safer than bus stops since they're larger spaces dedicated to public transit and usually contain security cameras. Both Ruby and Reema mentioned that this indicated there may be more room to run away from a threat and have the incident be recorded on camera. Emergency phones on Skytrain station platforms and the emergency button on board Skytrains were mentioned by a couple of participants as the makings of a safe transit space, but the others said they had never relied on those systems for safety and to them, buses and Skytrains could be equally safe or unsafe depending on the circumstances. Ruby and Reema mentioned that being able to see familiar pieces of infrastructure like the Harbor Center building or the "East Van cross"²² from a transit space makes them feel safer as well since they act as signifiers of 'safe spaces' in the city. These signifiers enable participants to assess the safety of transit spaces through tangible factors like lighting, the presence of a potentially "dangerous" individual or the visibility of familiar infrastructure in the city like the East Van cross from that transit space, thus creating a spatial and much more navigable dimension to their fear of harassment or violence. Having a spatial dimension to such fear allows them to create mental maps of physical spaces, or "geographies of fear" (Pain, 1997; Valentine, 2008) where harassment or violence is more likely to occur and which can be avoided if and when they are fearful for their safety.

How do signifiers of unsafe transit spaces impact mobility among participants?

I asked Ruby how observing signifiers of unsafe transit spaces impact her, to which she responded:

I do plan out my... umm... trips based on... stops that I think are safe. I know that some stops at night are more quiet. Waterfront, regardless of the time, always has security there, so it's always something I can stop

²² The 'East Van Cross' is the colloquial term for the 'Monument for East Vancouver', which is a public art project commissioned in 2009 by the City of Vancouver as part of the Olympic and Paralympic Public Art Program, to artist Ken Lum. Details available at: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/public-art-brochure-monument-for-east-vancouver.PDF>

at Burrard... I'm not, I can't say, the same for Burrard all the time, or, Stadium-Chinatown, so I will not stop... at those ones at night, I will go all the way to Waterfront.

- Participant Quote 8: Ruby's Mobility Assessment

In quotes 5 and 8, Ruby compared the very different atmospheres of Skytrain stations like Waterfront, Commercial-Broadway, Yaletown or Olympic Village, versus Burrard or Stadium-Chinatown Skytrain stations; while the former have more security cameras, better lighting and more security personnel, the latter contain signifiers of unsafe transit spaces, such as poor lighting, run-down appearances and a noticeable absence of security personnel or cameras. Ruby's avoidance of spaces that she believes to contain signifiers of unsafe transit spaces, such as the Stadium-Chinatown Skytrain station or Burrard Skytrain station at night, is demonstrated using an excerpt of her Mobility Assessment Map (Appendix E) as shown in Figures 6 and 7 below.



Figure 6 Segment of Ruby's Mobility Assessment Map (shows route she currently takes)

Figure 6 is taken directly from her map in Appendix E, to depict her current choice of route based on her perceptions of safety as described in quote 8. However, based on her responses, I depicted the route could be taking if she had gotten off the Skytrain at

the Burrard station instead to catch a bus home from there sooner, as shown in Figure 7.

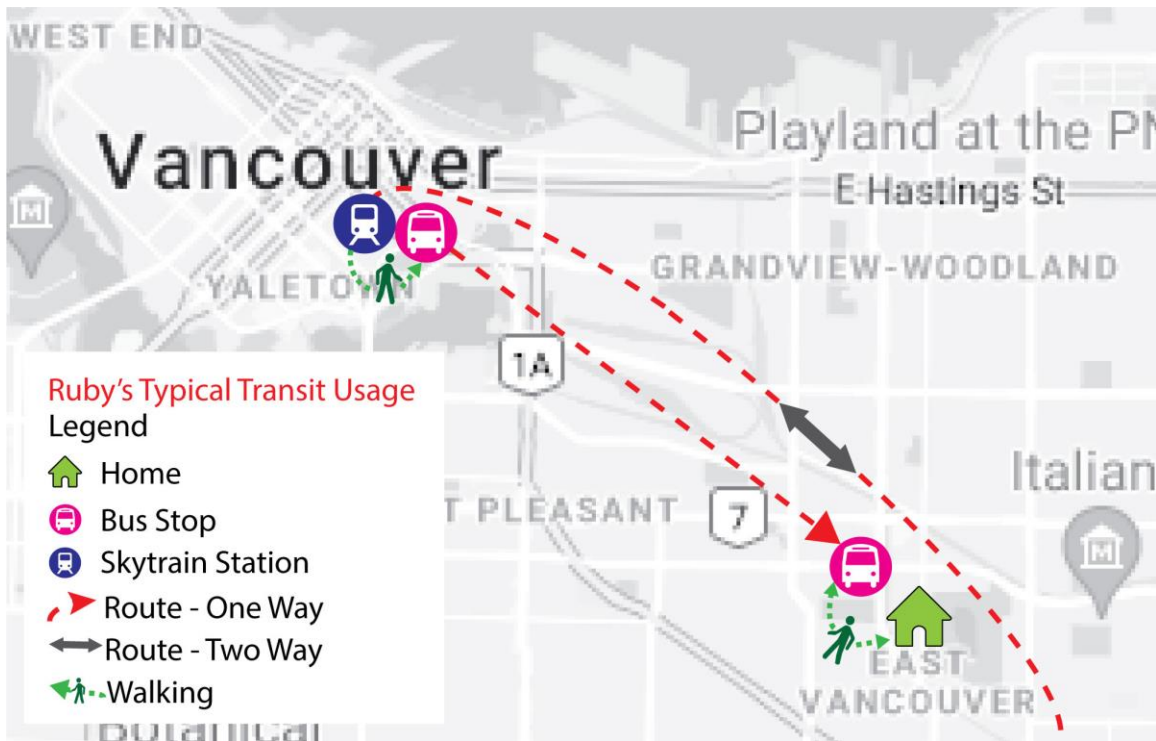


Figure 7 Segment of Ruby's Mobility Assessment Map (shows route she could be taking)

Quote 8 was part of Ruby's Mobility Assessment, where she was describing her route home from Metrotown; rather than stopping at the Burrard Skytrain station (Figure 7) and catching her bus from there sooner, she waits until she is at the end of the Expo Line²³ to get off the train at the Waterfront Skytrain station and risks missing the last bus home (in which case she calls an Uber instead, as shown in Appendix E). For bus routes with more infrequent buses running at night, arriving a few minutes too late can be the difference between catching and missing the last bus home. Figures 6 and 7 demonstrate how Ruby's identification of signifiers of unsafe spaces at the Burrard Skytrain station and spatialization of her fear of harassment or violence, causes her to choose a longer, more inconvenient and potentially more expensive route home when she has to call an Uber for the final leg of her journey.

²³ The Expo Line is part of the three automated rapid-transit Skytrain lines in Metro Vancouver that connects Downtown Vancouver with the cities of Burnaby, New Westminster, and Surrey. Expo Line schedules available at: <https://www.translink.ca/schedules-and-maps/skytrain#expo-line>

Although Figures 6 and 7 depict Ruby's transit choices, several participants echoed these responses and explained their reliance on Uber, Evo and taxis for late night commutes or commutes in unsafe transit spaces, either because buses and trains are not running at that time along that route or because they do not feel safe taking public transit at that time. Ruby and Gita mentioned that in many such instances when they need to return home late at night they would prefer to have a safe bus or Skytrain option since they are paying for public transit every month anyway, rather than paying extra for Uber or taxis on a regular basis. They both spoke about how this additional expense on Uber and taxis can add up quickly on their monthly expenses, which can be frustrating for students on a budget who are trying to save money. Several participants also shared that they have had experiences of choosing not to attend events or take part in an activity that involved a late night commute due to the lack of safe bus and Skytrain options for their route and because they did not want to spend more money on Uber or a taxi. Studies show that international students in Canada encounter difficulties with social integration due to financial stress (Vasilopoulos, 2016; Mallinchrodt & Leong, 1992; Sandhu & Asrabadi, 1991). Although the nature of the challenges encountered by participants in establishing relationships with local communities (Olivas & Li, 2006; Ward et al., 2008) could not be fully explored in this study due to the focus on their transit-usage, it can be assumed that there are certain impacts of these challenges on their transition into new communities in Canada. For women of color such as some of the participants in this study who are immigrants and new to Vancouver, attempting to form new connections in the communities that they are now a part of, such decisions and financial stress can negatively impact their long-term relationships in academic and professional circles as well as their social integration and sense of belonging within communities in Vancouver. Since many international students are coming to Canada for the first time for higher education and have therefore never used Vancouver's public transit system, it is natural to calculate their expenses towards transportation in Vancouver based on the cost of public transit options offered by Translink- which is widely advertised as one of the safest public transit systems in North America (something that Reema pointed out in a sarcastic tone during one of her interviews). However, like Gita and Ruby, international students may end up having to spend much more on their day-to-day transportation in Vancouver than they anticipated due to the additional expense on

Uber and taxis - which can be regular occurrences for students commuting to and from evening classes and events at SFU's various campuses.

Reema spoke extensively about how she despises and avoids Phibb's Exchange in North Vancouver, since it is located right off the highway, with no storefronts in the vicinity, poor lighting regardless of the time of the day, no washrooms or security cameras and infrequent bus routes. Diana explained that she avoids routes where she might have to wait at a bus stop near large expanses of wooded areas, with no signs of activity or dedicated spaces for recreation or rest- such as benches, paved areas, basketball hoops, stair sets or rails for skating etc., very few cars and a few male pedestrians, if any, and poor lighting, since these are all signifiers of unsafe transit spaces for her. Several participants mentioned that they plan their routes or take steps to avoid being in transit spaces where the only other people are likely to be male or appear to be homeless or intoxicated, especially at night (discussed further in Chapter 3.2.1).

By repeating this process of mentally assigning certain individuals, behaviors, physical objects or features in transit spaces with safety or a lack thereof, participants continue to develop their mental maps of safe and unsafe transit spaces based on signifiers of safety with every trip. The spatialization of their fear of harassment or violence thus allows them to avoid spaces that make them feel uncomfortable, anxious or fearful and develop coping strategies on a regular basis as they continue to navigate the city using public transit. Section 3.2 outlines how the spatialization of fear informs their behavior in unsafe transit spaces, through careful monitoring and policing of their bodies.

3.1.2. Police-State Bodies

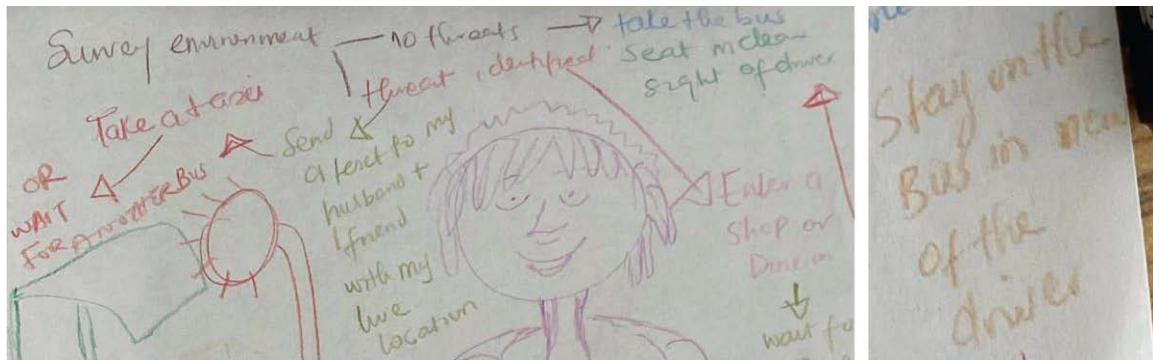


Figure 8 Segments of Diana's Body Map

(Left) –Survey environment – No threats--►Take the bus seat in clear sight of driver...”
(Right) –Stay on the bus, in view of the driver”

Figure 8 shows two cropped segments of Diana's Body Map (Appendix E), which Diana explained as follows:

So I'm either sitting facing the security camera directly, so that whatever happens there is evidence. Or I'm sitting right where the driver can actually see me. And then to prove that they can see me, again I'll smile at them and they smile back through the mirror. So I know that wherever I am seated at that point, he can see me.

- Participant Quote 9: Diana's Testimonial

Quote 9 and the images in Figure 8 were taken from Diana's final interview and her Body Map, where she explained the steps she takes to feel safe while boarding a bus in Vancouver. I had asked participants during the Mobility Assessment how they felt about reporting experiences of harassment or violence to the police and they all responded with various degrees of hesitation (discussed below). Instead, they all preferred to take steps, such as the ones mentioned by Diana: –sit facing a security camera” and –sit in view of the bus driver”, as well as a few others, such as sitting near exits, carefully monitoring their behavior, body-language, clothing and posture, carrying items that help them feel secure etc. Participants felt most safe during their transit experiences when they were either being surveyed and ‘policed’ by external authorities such as bus drivers, security cameras or the police themselves or when they were carefully monitoring and ‘self-policing’ their own bodies. Participants’ descriptions about existing in these two states of policing simultaneously is what

inspired the title for this chapter; police-state bodies are bodies that are constantly in a state of policing in some form.

The following pages discuss why participants were hesitant about reporting their experiences to transit or police authorities in Vancouver followed by some of the ways in which participants described policing their own bodies in transit spaces in order to protect themselves from harassment or violence. The majority of the processes and steps they follow to ensure their bodily safety are discussed in section 3.2.

Why bother reporting?

I asked all participants how they felt about reporting incidents of harassment or violence in transit spaces to the police. They responded by describing various reasons why they would rather not report anything to the police, which included the following:

1. They were unsure about whether or not some of their experiences could be called assault or harassment, and
2. They did not sustain any serious, physical injuries during these experiences, therefore:
3. They did not consider many of their experiences of harassment to be very serious, and,
4. They did not believe the police would find their experiences to be serious even if they had reported them;
5. They were fearful of escalating an already unsafe situation by contacting authorities using emergency silent alarm systems on board transit vehicles;
6. They generally lacked faith in the police's ability to address an unsafe situation in a timely manner or at all;
7. They had personal experiences of interacting with transit police in Vancouver which were unpleasant;
8. They had personal experiences of harassment or violence in transit spaces outside Vancouver which they had not reported; and
9. They had heard about conflicts between police officers and people of color in the media and from other people they know.

Criminal victimization reports in Canada show that young women and students who are not employed full-time are more likely to be victims of violent and sexual crimes (Perreault & Simpson, 2014; Perreault 2015; Perreault and Brennan 2010; Rotenberg 2017). However, crimes involving sexual assault are extremely under-reported in Canada (Conroy & Cotter, 2017). Only about 5% of sexual assaults are reported to the police, and only 11% of the cases that are reported eventually lead to a conviction (numbers to be used with caution, as recommended by authors Conroy & Cotter, 2017; Rotenberg, 2017). Participants in this study were generally hesitant about reporting personal experiences of harassment to the police, but they all said they would speak up or report an incident of assault that they witness, with low expectations about the outcome of filing a police report. Diana said:

If I'm going to do anything, if I'm going to report to an authority figure, like the police or whatever, or if I'm told to say...what happened, I will definitely give my side of the story, but it's either/or. ..I'm really not looking out for...any... that they are going to do anything basically. So if they do something about it, fine. If they don't do anything about it, fine. It doesn't bother me anyway. If I need to give a statement that's fine. But I... will necessarily not go out of my way hoping that um, um, big corporations will, um, own up to their mistake or step in and do the right thing. Yeah.

- Participant Quote 10: Diana's Mobility Assessment

Court outcomes of police-reported sexual assaults in Canada from 2009 to 2014 show that incidents of sexual assault are 26% less likely than physical assaults to proceed to court once reported to the police (Rotenberg 2017), which reflect that Diana's hesitation and low expectations for any outcomes from the reporting process are not without reason.

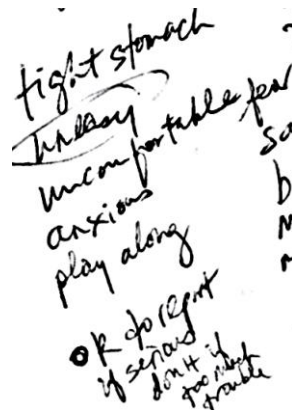


Figure 9 Segment of Anna's Body Map (Appendix F)

Criminal victimization statistics also show that the two primary reasons for which incidents involving violent or sexual crimes are not reported to the police are because they are considered too minor to report, or because the police may not take the incident seriously (Perreault & Simpson, 2014). Ruby shared two separate incidents when she was standing alone at a bus stop in Vancouver when a man threw the butt of a cigarette towards her (in one case, it was still lit), but she did not report either incident. Ruby, Anna and several participants were hesitant about reporting their experiences because most of the harassment they have experienced or witnessed in transit spaces in Vancouver were unlikely to leave evidence in the form of physical injuries and therefore might not be taken seriously by the police even if they were reported. Anna wrote on her Body Map “okay to report if serious. don’t if too much trouble” (see Figure 9) and explained that even when something is defined as harassment or assault by law, the process of reporting it can be so onerous that it is simply easier to put up with ‘less serious’ forms of harassment. Anna’s experiences abroad may have helped shape these perceptions as well; while travelling in India, she faced verbal, physical and sexual harassment on a daily basis while using public transit; but, due to language barriers, unfamiliarity with their legal system and doubts about whether anyone would even believe her, she didn’t consider reporting anything since she wasn’t physically injured. Anna made sure to explain that although her experiences in India were much more severe in nature than any harassment she has encountered in transit spaces in Vancouver, her decisions regarding reporting these incidents were based on similar factors: would the police believe her or take her seriously? Would they be able to do anything by the time they arrived? Although several participants described some of their experiences in transit spaces as harassment, such as inappropriate physical contact, sexual/racist remarks, or general “creepy”²⁴ behavior, participants typically deemed them less worthy of reporting to the police due to insufficient evidence, specifically in the form of physical injuries. Participants described how they would rather change seats, switch buses, move to a different Skytrain car, take a longer and more inconvenient route or avoid public transit entirely for some time than report such incidents to the police. The harmful effects of such decisions on their mental health was revealed in some of the participants’

²⁴ Creepy: participants defined creepy behavior on public transit to include leering, sitting or standing very close to them and making inappropriate physical contact without consent, making sexual or racist remarks to or around them and generally making them uncomfortable by displaying overtly lecherous behavior. See Glossary.

responses; Anna wrote on her Body Map “stress, decrease in mental health” (see Appendix E) and explained that countless experiences of such ‘less serious’ forms of harassment in transit spaces can take a toll on a person’s well-being. Although all participants acknowledged that being repeatedly exposed to such subtle forms of harassment induce anxiety, stress and fear, they also accepted these as part of everyday life, or “facts of life” (Gladu, 2017) and, until their participation in this study, had not really considered the impacts of such experiences on their public transit usage and overall mobility in Vancouver.

Participants’ responses in this study aligned with reports that find that individuals with previous experiences of nonviolent incidents, witnesses of crimes or those with experiences of reporting incidents of sexual crimes to the police in Canada lack faith in the police’s ability to address crimes in a timely or appropriate manner even if they did report some of their experiences (AuCoin & Beauchamp, 2007; Prochuk, 2018). Reema, Ruby and Diana were the participants who expressed the highest degree of aversion to the idea of reporting something to the police. These three participants were also the ones who had direct experiences of interacting with police authorities in Vancouver for different reasons.

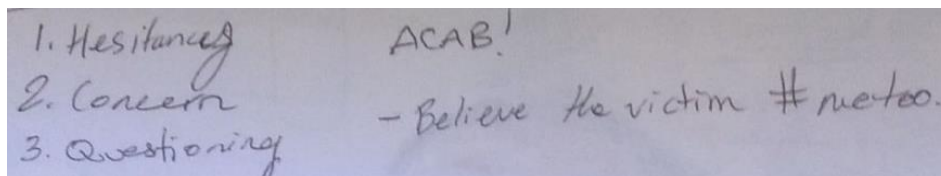


Figure 10 Segment of Reema’s Body Map (Appendix F)

Reema wrote the words “hesitancy,” “questioning” and “concern” on her Body Map (see Figure 10) to explain how she felt when she noticed a man on a Skytrain who was doubled over in his seat and at first appeared to be ill but turned out to have been masturbating. She described her thought process during this incident in the passage below:

I was like... I could call them, I could press the emergency strip but, when are they gonna get here, he’s probably gonna get off the train! So...part of the hesitancy is like, well, are they gonna show up? Because they never seem to be there when you need them and... part of like, that’s the main thing, it’s like hesitancy, how fast are they gonna go, is it gonna escalate the situation where it feels unsafe, um for me or

other people? So that's why I think, why I wrote hesitancy and concern...

- Participant Quote 11: Reema's Testimonial

Reema, Gita and Anna all shared that in many cases, when they experienced being verbally, physically or sexually harassed in transit spaces in Vancouver, they chose not to report to the police because they did not think they would receive any real help in time. Several participants also mentioned that they were fearful of escalating a situation or aggravating the harasser further by attempting to call for help using the emergency silent alarms on buses and Skytrains, since they can be almost impossible to activate during such situations without the harasser noticing, as revealed in quote 11.

Three stories shared by Reema and Ruby regarding their experiences of interacting with transit police in Vancouver are described below:

Story 1- Reema and the Police

Out of the two experiences shared by Reema, the first was when she was younger, returning home from college by bus at night. Both Reema and another woman whom Reema described as Caucasian²⁵ and fairly attractive, had forgotten their bus passes, but the bus driver was kind enough to let them board the bus anyway. Right before the bus took off, transit police officers came on board to conduct a random check. They went to the White woman first and when she told them she had forgotten her bus pass, they moved along without further questioning. However, with Reema, they disregarded her pleas when she explained that her father had dropped her off to college so she didn't bring her bus pass; they asked to see her student ID and wallet and then told her that since she had her wallet she should pay for a pass and then return to the bus. She protested, asking why the other woman was allowed to stay on but she wasn't, and pleaded further, showing her textbooks, explaining that she was a college student so she didn't have much money on her person. They made her get off the bus anyway and Reema, defiantly refusing to pay more money towards public transit after this unpleasant interaction, called her father to pick her up while she waited at the dark and deserted bus stop. She realized when reflecting on this

²⁵ See footnote 3 in Chapter 1.1

experience that it may have been subconscious discrimination on the police officers' side, partly because the other woman was White (as were the police officers themselves) and partly because she was attractive. While Reema was lucky enough to have her father pick her up, many others in her position would have had to pay for that bus pass regardless of how they felt after such an interaction. It would also be remiss not to mention how Reema went from being in a safer space-on the bus taking her home- to a less safe space- alone at the bus stop as a young woman of color at night- simply because the transit police got involved.

Story 2- Reema and the Police

The other interaction with transit police that Reema shared was when she was taking the bus down from SFU's Burnaby campus along with other SFU students. She recognized one of them as a student with Tourette Syndrome who was known within the SFU community as an individual with no ill-intentions, but simply unaware of the socially unacceptable nature of his behavior and the discomfort he causes to others with his comments about race or politics, due to his mental health issues. On the bus, Reema suspected he may have done something of this nature and her fears were confirmed when two transit police officers cornered him intimidatingly at the bus stop where they all got off. Reema said the student became visibly agitated as the two large male police officers put their hands on their gun holsters. She felt compelled to intervene²⁶ before it escalated further. For a few scary and confusing minutes, the police officers tried to block Reema out by yelling at her to stand back, but she stood her ground, yelling back, saying she knows him as a SFU student with mental disabilities, that he's not unsafe or violent and that he's just misguided and says inappropriate things due to his condition. Eventually they took their hands off the holster and began to warn the other student to watch his words, at which Reema interjected, saying he won't be able to because he can't help himself and that they need to remember his face so they can be prepared to handle it because they will get this call again.

²⁶ Reema, a visible minority woman of Iranian descent born in Canada, felt compelled to intervene and actually did intervene. Would Gita, a visible minority woman born outside Canada or Black women living in Canada be able to intervene in the same situation? See more on Bodies and Agency in section 3.2.2.

Outside of this experience, Reema mentioned that she has seen transit police officers in Vancouver question, harass and pull over people of color more than others. She wrote “ACAB”²⁷ and “Believe the victim” on her Body Map (see Figure 10) because she does not think that increasing the number of security personnel necessarily leads to safer transit spaces since they are not well-trained in mental health issues and sometimes display prejudiced behavior. The text “#metoo” in Figure 10 was Reema’s response to the final prompt during the Body Mapping exercise, her “personal symbol or slogan” (see Appendix D, Stage II) and is discussed in Chapter 4.

Story 3- Ruby and the Police

Ruby was once waiting for her friend at a bus stop downtown, wearing her backpack and checking her cellphone, wishing the bus would come soon since it was getting dark, when a police car suddenly stopped near her. While the police officer kept an eye on her from inside the vehicle, neither spoke to the other. His presence did not feel protective to Ruby, but rather watchful and suspicious of what she was doing, which made her uncomfortable. She realized that while that space was unsafe to her because it was isolated and dark, the police officer saw it as unsafe because she was there. When her friend arrived and they left the bus stop together, Ruby realized that as a Black woman standing alone in a dark and deserted alley, her body was the real ‘unsafe space’ to be occupying at that moment. She explained that although she typically considers the presence of police in transit spaces to be a signifier of a ‘safe transit space’ (see section 3.1.1), she has seen many interactions in the media between police officers and people of color- especially Black people- ranging from miscommunication and harassment to violence and police brutality²⁸, so she generally avoids any direct interactions with the police. She explained that there is a power dynamic between a police officer and a civilian any time they interact, and in her case, as a young, Black, female, foreign student, she is likely to be the weaker or smaller person.

²⁷ ACAB: Slang; acronym for the colloquial phrase ‘All Cops Are Bastards’

²⁸ <https://endingviolencecanada.org/eva-canada-statement-on-police-brutality-and-systemic-racism-against-black-and-indigenous-communities/>



Figure 11 Segment of Ruby's Body Map (Appendix F).

To depict this dynamic, Ruby drew two figures on her Body Map (see Figure 11) where the larger figure on the left in blue and red represents a police officer and the smaller figure in brown is her. Next to them she wrote “I’d feel smaller in a weird way but also safer” and explained during the interview that while there is some comfort in knowing there is someone hopefully being trained to protect her, giving that person the responsibility for her safety is a great deal of power to release to someone she does not really trust. When she sees a police officer in Vancouver, she knows they haven’t done anything to her, but she also knows that if they do then she will have to handle it; to depict the duality of how a police officer can be the signifier of both safety and a lack of safety for her, she wrote “the glass is both half full and half empty” in Figure 11. Ruby’s lack of faith in the police’s ability to address situations with “valor, professionalism and duty”²⁹ unmarred by discrimination, was the primary reason for her avoidance of the police in general.

In Chapter 1, the quote taken from a statement made by a spokesperson for the Metro Vancouver Transit Police, Anne Drennan said: “They (young, ESL female students) are very loath to report these incidents, quite often because of cultural stigma or issues, and sometimes because they don’t have a lot of faith or trust in police” (see Chapter 1.1.2). However, as seen through the responses shared by participants in this study, the reasons for not reporting are not quite as simple or as foreign as “cultural stigma or issues”. Although language barriers and cultural stigmas are some of the reasons for which some women of color hesitate to report to authorities, clumping together the experiences of all women of color, all immigrant women or all women with English language barriers into “cultural stigma” can make

²⁹ <https://www.cityofvancouver.us/police>

their experiences all appear to be the same, make their issues seem more foreign and “difficult to understand or solve”, ‘otherizing’ this demographic further (Pennesi, 2016). Participants’ responses also reveal that a lack of faith in the police or in any positive outcomes from reporting are hardly secondary to “cultural stigmas” or what happens “sometimes”, but in fact one of the main reasons for not reporting. Understanding the differences between the experiences of women of color and how their various cultural and ethnic backgrounds inhibit them from reporting or speaking up by actually hearing from different women of color, can help us remove obstructions to mobility justice and improve the transit system in Vancouver.

What does self-policing involve?

Racial and gender minorities navigating public transit systems report using strategies to avoid unwanted attention and adjusting their transit usage, while simultaneously being in a constant state of vigilance, or ‘hyper-vigilance,’ in order to avoid discrimination, harassment and violence in transit spaces (Lubitow et. al., 2017). Hyper-vigilance in unsafe transit spaces among participants was well-documented in the Body Maps; Anna wrote in hers “be alert” and explained that to this end, she does not use earphones or listen to music in such spaces. Diana does the same or has only one earphone on, so that she can look out for suspicious behavior. Reema wrote “hyper-sensitive” and “always on alert” to describe her behavior in unsafe transit spaces and described looking around and over her shoulders frequently to see if she is being followed, checking the time and route on her phone to stay focused and making sure to appear engaged with her surroundings at all times. Ruby wrote: “look alive, look around, look at everyone, make eye contact, look at your phone, check your outfit, just make sure that you’re being aware” on her Body Map. Ruby and Reema both mentioned that they used to be carefree and naïve, walking around at bus stops while listening to loud music on their earphones at midnight, until they started reading Reddit³⁰ forums where people share tips on being safer in Vancouver and advocate the exact opposite of such behavior. Now, they keep their phones safely tucked away in an accessible place for emergencies, look straight ahead, appear highly engaged with

³⁰ Reddit is an American social news aggregation, web content rating, and discussion website. Registered members submit content to the site such as links, text posts, images, and videos, which are then voted up or down by other members. Available at: <https://www.reddit.com/>

their surroundings and try to be on high alert. Ruby explained that especially since the George Floyd protests³¹ (Ross, 2020) she tries to be extra cautious on public transit, making sure to condition herself to behave in ways to ensure an uneventful commute. She never sleeps on public transit, keeps her bag close by and has read all public transit rules, making sure to follow them at all times. Ruby makes sure to take off hoodies or hats in transit spaces at night to avoid looking like “that sketchy Black teen in a hoodie” (Alinor & Tinkler, 2021), even if she is the only one on the bus at night. She fully expects to be reduced to a stereotype based on her race (Creese & Kambere, 2002; Tettey & Puplampu, 2005) and watches her environment for any signs of a scuffle that could involve the police in any way, while planning alternative routes if she has to get off the bus or Skytrain at any point to avoid being around the police during such incidents (discussed further in section 3.2.2). Ruby appeared physically exhausted during the interview as she explained the effort involved in avoiding unsafe transit spaces; in most cases, she is too far along a route to go back and change her route entirely and either has to wait for another bus or Skytrain at an inconvenient location or has to walk a lot more regardless of what she is carrying or wearing. Stuck between a rock and a hard place, having to choose between remaining in an unsafe transit space or leaving it to find a different route and potentially opening herself up to more danger, Ruby usually just avoids making direct eye contact with the person making her feel unsafe in a confined transit space or moving vehicle (such as the man on the bus screaming at her, see section 3.1.1) while watching carefully for any signs of escalation.

The mental preparation for violence and harassment in transit spaces and the checklist-like set of steps followed by participants to avoid such incidents are described in section 3.2.

³¹George Floyd Protests are ongoing protests against police brutality and racism that began in Minneapolis in the United States on May 26, 2020

3.2. Mobility and Safety

3.2.1. Safety Checklists

Kern writes about the 19th century concept of a flâneur to explain the “hidden costs of fear” encountered by women while navigating public urban spaces (Kern, 2019). A flâneur is an observer of everyday urban life, walking about at a leisurely pace through public squares and typically portrayed as a male figure in literature (Wolff, 1985; Benjamin, 1999; Benjamin & Baudelaire, 1997; Tester, 2015). However, due to the significant social, psychological and economic burdens of dealing with sexism and racism, women of color are not able to occupy or navigate their paths through public urban spaces with this sort of carefree and adventurous spirit since their urban trajectories often include “endless precautionary measures that steal valuable time and energy” (Kern, 2019). Such measures, intended as efforts to stay safe while navigating public transit systems in Vancouver, were described by all participants in this study in various ways throughout the interviews. Although Kern writes about the concept of a flâneur to highlight the ways in which all women face obstacles to their urban mobility, the same concept when connected to Sheller’s principles of mobility justice reveals how women of color are even less likely to be female flâneurs in contemporary contexts. In many cases, their race or visible minority status combined with their gender makes any hopes of flâneuring (Hank, 2020) around urban public spaces using public transit systems a distant dream. Kern’s discussion about the hidden costs, such as the obstacles encountered by all women in safely navigating urban public transit systems, thus strengthens Sheller’s discussion regarding mobility justice and highlights the even more complicated nature of these hidden costs for women of color.

Ruby used the phrase safety checklists to describe the combination of these measures as an on-going list she mentally maintains, updates and instinctively relies upon before leaving her home to take public transit, while walking to a bus stop or Skytrain station, after arriving there or while waiting for the bus or train, after boarding the public transit vehicle, all the way until arriving at her destination. Although some participants appeared to have reflected on their checklists more than others before their participation in this study, based on the connections they made between the steps they followed that comprised their checklists, all of them shared the

psychological and emotional toll it took on them to incorporate these steps into their daily routines, behaviors and patterns of mobility. This section discusses participants' safety checklists, which were the steps they took to avoid harassment or violence in transit spaces in Vancouver (before the pandemic), the significance of their bodies for many of these steps and the obstructions to mobility justice experienced as a result of maintaining and relying upon these checklists on a regular basis.

i. Planning ahead:

All participants try to plan their day-to-day activities so as to avoid using public transit late at night, after about 10.00 or 11.00 PM. In line with scholarship regarding women's urban mobility (Pain, 1983) this was the first item on everyone's checklist in order to feel safe- *avoid late night transit usage*.

Planning for a public-transit based trip began by checking bus and Skytrain schedules on the Transit/ Translink app, their website or on Google Maps³². Ruby tries her best to memorize the entire route she chooses, including where she has to walk in between transfers, so that she can arrive at her destination even without access to her phone if she has to. While looking closely at her route, she asks herself questions such as: "what is close to this street/ bus stop? Are there any stores I can wait inside if it is unsafe at the bus stop? How quickly can I run and be back in time to catch the bus? Should I just take an Uber instead?" Diana does the same, especially when taking public transit at night; she compares routes and usually chooses the one with the least amount of walking in between stops since many bus stops at night are potentially unsafe transit spaces.

³² Google Maps is a web mapping platform and consumer application offered by Google. <https://www.google.com/maps>

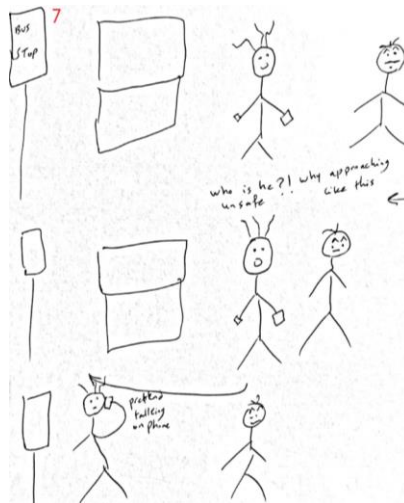


Figure 12 Segment of Gita's Body Map (Appendix F)

ii. Cellphones:

Anna didn't have a cellphone until recently so she's used to spending some extra time planning out her trip in as much detail as possible before taking transit, similar to Diana and Ruby. Now that she does, Anna, like all other participants keeps her cellphone in an easily accessible pocket but out of sight unless she needs to check something, especially when she is in an unsafe transit space. Gita keeps a tag with emergency contact numbers attached to her cellphone casing and all participants try to ensure their cellphones are fully charged, with sufficient mobile data, before embarking upon a public transit-based commute. In Image 7 of Gita's Body Map (see Figure 12), Gita depicted a situation where pretending to be talking on her cellphone made her feel safer, which is a common "hoping strategy" used by women in unsafe transit spaces (Kern, 2019; Pain, 1983). In the image, a man approaches her, invading her personal space and making her physically uncomfortable in a deserted bus stop at night. In response, she pulls out her cellphone, writing next to the image "pretend (to be) talking on the phone" and explained that she has faced several such encounters and usually speaks in a calm voice in Farsi while doing this- to let the man know that she is in contact with someone who may know her whereabouts without revealing that she is feeling unsafe or vulnerable or any personal information about her.

iii. Packing/ Carrying Items

Diana wrote on her Body Map: “pack light”, Anna wrote in hers: “don’t carry valuables” and Reema drew and labeled her “Pacsafe³³ purse”; several participants mentioned that what they are carrying can be significant to their safety. Diana explained that packing light and compact is not only efficient, but also allows her to run away from unsafe transit spaces quickly. Anna explained that before leaving her home to take transit, she usually looks for and removes valuable items from her backpack in case the bag is lost or stolen. Anna and Reema both carry backpacks with safety features built into them, which is why Reema likes to use the *Pacsafe* brand (see more on safety accessories and support systems in section 3.2.3).

iv. Timing

Images 4 and 5 on Gita’s Body Map (Appendix F) succinctly portray an internal conflict that all participants expressed in various ways before walking over to a bus stop or Skytrain station at night or while waiting in an unsafe transit space. In Image 4, Gita wrote “49th Ave or late night on campus; dark, unsafe, alone” to describe an unsafe transit space. She wonders: “maybe I should have taken Evo or Uber; check the app for bus schedule” (Image 4) and “maybe I should have stayed inside and come to the bus stop 2 minutes before the departure” (Image 5). Diana shares this conflict and wrote in her Body Map: “leave home to get to the bus stop just in time”, explaining in her interview that she tries to leave five minutes before Google maps’ navigation feature suggests in order to avoid missing the bus, but often ends up wishing she had waited a little longer to leave her home since this means waiting in potentially unsafe transit spaces for longer. However, despite their best efforts, buses and trains don’t always have aligned schedules, are not always on time and having classes or plans in the evening often involves being in unsafe transit spaces for all participants regardless of how they time their departure. Even if there are shops nearby, the conflicts that arise in such situations are manifold: is the path from the bus stop/ train station to the store familiar or safe? Is it worth taking this path to go and wait somewhere potentially safer? Is the store even open? How long will it take to walk back from there so that they don’t miss the bus/ train? Will they be able to wait inside that store without buying anything? What kind of store is it and what if everything inside is too expensive? If

³³ Pacsafe is a brand of travel equipment with emphasis on anti-theft features: <https://int.pacsafe.com/>

waiting somewhere is going to cost money, is it better to just call an Uber or taxi instead? The pressure to time their departure exactly right and the threats to their safety if they are not able to, add to the participants' stress during their day to day transit usage.

v. Clothing:

All participants spoke about the how mindful they are about their clothing, shoes and overall appearance before using public transit, especially in unsafe transit spaces and at night. They mentioned avoiding wearing flashy or expensive-looking clothes, taking off valuable jewelry before boarding public transit and generally trying to “dress down to fit in” as Anna wrote in her Body Map. Ruby and Reema are more aware of their clothing when they know they will be using public transit and they consider carrying a jacket or a coat to wear over a dress or a skirt to be part of basic safety, especially at night. Reema and Anna both said they usually dress in traditionally masculine clothes, like jeans and a t-shirt; however, Reema identifies as queer and her clothing choices are a bit more complicated than the others'. When she has short hair and dresses too boyishly, she gets mis-gendered (see Glossary) as male, but when she dresses too femininely, her curvy figure attracts unwanted attention from “creepy” men. While she feels that she is fairly White-passing throughout the year, during the summer months her darker skin tone along with her dark hair and middle-eastern facial features, give away her “visible minority” status more clearly. In transit spaces, outside of gay Pride celebrations³⁴, Reema avoids wearing rainbow-motifs or showing too much skin and generally dresses androgynously. She wrote in her Body Map: “become less noticeable, shrink; covered clothing/ modest” (Appendix F). For Reema, choosing what she wears every day before she takes public transit involves an exploration of her race, sexuality and gender, their intersections and the threats they pose to her safety (Renfrow, 2004; Lubitow et. Al., 2017). She also talked about being mis-gendered and feeling more or less visible based on her appearance (discussed in section 3.2.2).

³⁴ Gay Pride celebrations are annual celebrations in support of the LGBTQ+ communities

vi. Shoes:

Wearing shoes that they could run in easily was important to all participants in regards to their safety in transit spaces. Ruby feels that heels are okay during the day but sneakers are the safest option if she's taking transit at night in case she has to run; on her Body Map, she wrote: "if night, wear running shoes; tie laces so I don't have to stop". Reema drew on her Body Map the *Blundstone*³⁵ boots she typically wears when taking public transit and wrote next to it "sturdy, strong, kicking boots", explaining that wearing these shoes makes her feel better-prepared, knowing she can kick a potential attacker and hopefully distract them for long enough to run away. Anna wrote next to her feet on her Body Map "running shoes" and Diana explained during the interviews that she's almost always in running shoes anyway for her work, but she is also aware of how they make her feel safer knowing she could run away from an attack faster while wearing them. The overall consensus among all participants was that wearing running shoes on public transit makes them feel safer.

vii. Hair:

For Ruby and Diana, their hair was a source of pride since it was a symbol of their identities as Black women but also something that often attracted unwanted attention in public spaces in Vancouver. They both get a lot of stares in transit spaces, especially because of their hair. Diana shared:

Maybe people are just curious, some people really stare (her eyes widened) at my hair because it's different at different times. Sometimes I have it in cornrows, sometimes I have it in plaits, sometimes I have it all blown out like this, so, sometimes people are just... staring. And you're wondering, okay, what is going on in your mind? (chuckles) about me, I don't know... Sometimes I just say, "hey, hello, how are you doing today?" (in a stronger, more confrontational voice) and then, sometimes they are shocked, that I can answer back. Sometimes, some of them say, "ehh, you speak Enggg-lish" And I'm like, yes I do speak English (laughing)... I am not a (unintelligible word)... But that's okay. They're like, they don't just expect someone from Africa to be able to speak English, and I'm like, well, English is an, is a very, official language in so many parts of Africa, so that's not a big deal. And then, they're like, oh, okay yeah you sound educated. Yes, I am educated, I'm a ____³⁶. And like, oh my god, blah blah blah and all of that, so, that is some people.

³⁵ Blundstone Footwear is an Australian footwear brand: <https://www.blundstone.ca/>

³⁶ Diana's profession was not mentioned to protect her confidentiality

- Participant Quote 12: Diana's Mobility Assessment

The connection that Diana drew between her hair and her language revealed how her visible minority status impacted others' perceptions of her and the kinds of interactions she sometimes had in transit spaces. Although her hair, a physical feature, was what drew unwanted attention and sometimes made Diana uncomfortable, her manner of addressing this discomfort by speaking up, specifically her language, was what prompted surprise. Creese and Kambere's research shows how Black women of African origins who had migrated to Canada and resided in Vancouver, such as Diana and Ruby, experienced social exclusion, condescending comments and challenges in their daily life as well as in their pursuit of employment, due to perceptions of 'otherness' associated with their African accents (Creese & Kambere, 2002; Tettey & Pupilampu, 2005). Western views on African languages and particularly the assumption that African people are not able to speak English well (Creese & Kambere, 2002) combined with Diana's visible minority status impacts the way people perceive of her and behave towards her in transit spaces in Vancouver - as expressed in some people's surprise upon hearing she is educated, well-spoken and employed in a respectable profession.

Ruby shared a refreshing story about her hair and wearing her Blackness with pride in Vancouver:

I had like an afro, and it was hu-uge (laughs). And I went on transit every single time, and I'm like I'm gonna take up space and you're gonna see it... if you (shrugs, hands in the air) touch it, I will probably kill you but you're gonna see it (laughs, scratches ears coyly, "joking-but-not-really" tone). Right? And so it was interesting to be (nodding)... like when I got on the bus, I did notice like the looks. Everyone was like, oh-kay, that's a big head of hair (laughing). And it's like, yea-ah (bows head slightly as though silently acknowledging the stares)... I'm on the bus and now you can see me. And that's fine.

- Participant Quote 13: Ruby's Testimonial

Studies show that wearing natural hair in public spaces enable collective identity formation among Black women living in North America (Garrin & Marcketti, 2018; Banks, 2000), promoting self-assertion and African pride. Ruby's story revealed how wearing her hair in an afro allowed her to openly and proudly stand in her femininity and Blackness in a space that was not always safe for her, where she did

not always feel like she fully belonged. Although Ruby's hair and the color of her skin symbolized an "inherent threat", as Diana described with her experiences of similar situations, Ruby's choice to wear her hair in an afro gave her a sense of pride about her race and gender while simultaneously making her visible minority status even more apparent in a transit space in Vancouver (see more in *Bodies and Agency*). Ruby and Diana's responses combined reveal the simultaneous sense of pride and cultural identity as well as potential threats and fear of harassment or violence associated with wearing their natural hair in public spaces. These responses reveal how Black women's experiences in these contexts are unique even compared to other women of color, thus building upon findings regarding perceptions of safety (Simpson, 2018; Heidinger & Cotter, 2020). Like other women of color, Black women carefully control their appearance and behaviors, including when, where and how their hair appears, to form a sense of control over their transit experiences and perceptions of safety (Koskela, 1999; Stanko, 1995; Gardner et. al, 2017). However, due to the cultural and racial connotations associated with Black Power Movements and Black hair (Garrin & Marcketti, 2018; Banks, 2000), the consequences of suppressing their sense of pride and identity are certainly unique to Black women.

Reema wrote on her Body Map "shorter hair made me invisible", referring to how she has experienced being mis-gendered in Vancouver when she wears her hair short. Gita also wrote "black hair" on Image 3 of her Body Map to portray her Iranian heritage. The ways in which the participants wore and styled their hair thus impacted how others viewed them in transit spaces, the judgments people made or prejudices they held regarding their race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality as well as their overall safety in such spaces.

The participants' responses regarding the role of their hair, a physical, bodily feature, in their safety and overall public transit experiences in Vancouver reveal how their bodies are exposed to different forms of social prejudices based on their race, ethnicity, nationality or gender expression (Whitzman et al, 2013; Lubitow et al., 2017). Even Diana and Ruby, who are both Black women, encounter slightly different forms of stereotyping (Alinor & Tinkler, 2021) based on how they wear their natural hair in public spaces in Vancouver. These responses highlight the trouble with clumping together the experiences of different women of color as similar or the same simply because they are all categorized as visible minorities. This also reveals the

significance of understanding the obstacles to mobility justice encountered by different women of color (Sheller, 2018) using alternative research methods such as Body Map Storytelling (Gastaldo et al., 2012, 2013; Griffin, 2014; Lykes and Crosby, 2013; MacGregor, 2009; Devine, 2008; Schneider et al., 2014) that apply an intersectional lens of analysis (Crenshaw, 1991; Sheller, 2017).

viii. Earphones

Gita always wears earphones in transit spaces, so she can be listening to music or podcasts but also to prevent herself from hearing disturbing conversations and remarks around her and to signal to others that she's not interested in talking. Ruby, Reema and Diana prefer to have their earphones on when they are in an unsafe transit space, sometimes even if they are not speaking to anyone or using their earphones to listen to anything. Doing so allows them to stay alert (see section 3.1.2) while also feeling "enclosed" within their personal space, or the space immediately around their body.

ix. Mentally preparing for unsafe situations

One of the most dreaded, yet necessary items on everyone's checklist included preparing mentally for being harassed, attacked or in some way exposed to danger while in transit spaces. When Ruby knows she will have to be in an unsafe transit space, such as East Hastings street at night, she tries to imagine scenarios where she might be exposed to racist or sexist attacks, wondering how to react if someone "calls her the n-word that day", at what point she should call the police and whether to run away or fight back if someone pushes or attacks her. She reminds herself to be prepared to walk very fast or run unencumbered by inconvenient clothing, shoes or luggage while making sure her friend's number is set on speed-dial in her cellphone. She tries to find shops or places near her intended bus stop or Skytrain station where she can temporarily wait (in case the transit space is unsafe), but still be able to run back and catch her bus or train in time. Ruby's musings left a lot unsaid as well; what shops can she safely go inside to wait? Will the shop really be a safer place for her, a young Black woman alone at night³⁷? What if she does not want to spend

³⁷ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2020/05/27/stop-calling-the-police-on-black-people/?sh=4a2b6b1864c0>

money while hiding from a harasser, does she have to accept this cost anyway? How do other women of color in her position handle this when they can't afford such expenses? Anna said she also mentally prepares for harassment or violence in transit spaces, especially since hearing about incidents of anti-Asian hate-crimes³⁸ since the pandemic started, but also in general. She wrote in her Body Map: “yell for help; thinking and keeping calm will help me survive longer”, as reminders for herself when preparing to be in an unsafe transit space. Anna said she likes to leave notes at home before heading out to use public transit, especially if it is late at night, and Reema said that it is pretty standard protocol for her and her friends to text one another after they have safely reached home from a social gathering using public transit.

x. Surveillance

All participants described the importance of surveillance in regards to their safety in transit spaces. They are constantly surveying their environments for signs of danger, and constantly being- or hoping to be surveyed by security cameras or the police in order to feel safer (see Figure 8 in section 3.1.2). Diana took a flow-chart-like approach in the top-left corner of her Body Map, where she wrote “Survey the environment → No threats → Take the Bus; OR Survey the environment → Threat detected → send text to husband/ friend with live location, take a taxi or wait for another bus; OR Threat detected → Enter a shop or drive-in, wait for threat to abate, check phone for bus/ train schedules” (Appendix F). She explained that she does not want to scare her friends or family even if she does detect a threat, but simply wants them to be alert and be accessible over the phone in case she needs their help. Diana accepted the responsibility to scrutinize her environment and explained that her ability to identify threats in transit spaces can be the difference between a life and death situation (Heidinger & Cotter, 2020). Anna wrote in her Body Map: “Look for weapons” and explained that in unsafe transit spaces, she looks around for mundane objects – like a light trash can – that she can lift and throw at someone before running away. All participants said that before entering any bus or Skytrain, they conduct a quick scan of the vehicle to check if anyone looks ‘creepy’ or ‘sketchy’ and chooses a seat far away from them. If the only other person on the vehicle appears to be ‘creepy’ in an unsafe transit space, all participants said they will move to a seat closer to the bus driver,

³⁸ <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/data-shows-vancouver-had-highest-number-of-anti-asian-hate-crimes-in-north-america-in-2020-1.5419915>

move to a different Skytrain car or try to be in direct view of a security camera or a bus driver. If none of these are possible, they will simply stand or sit near an exit so that they can leave the vehicle quickly to wait for the next bus or train. The step on the checklist for surveillance thus includes being surveyed both from external sources and from within themselves as they carefully monitor their bodies in such spaces (see section 3.1.2).

xi. Avoidance/ Behavior

All participants described their typical behaviors when they are in unsafe transit spaces and the most prevalent coping strategy that was common for everyone was avoidance- of people, places and situations- in order to feel safer (Pain, 1997; Valentine, 2008; Riger and Gordon 1981; Riger et al.1982; Stanko 1987, Lubitow, 2017). When Diana is in an unsafe transit space or just walking on the street, she generally avoids standing or walking too close to groups of men, especially if they all appear to be White. If she is on a bus or Skytrain and needs to use her computer, she will go to the back seat to avoid prying eyes and quickly put away her computer once she's done using it. She generally avoids being in a bus or Skytrain at night when the only other passengers are male or appear to be homeless or intoxicated. If she is walking over to a transit station and notices a group of men being loud, she will maintain physical distance from them and cross to the other side of the street. Diana has experienced hearing racist comments around her in transit spaces made by White men, without knowing if they were directed at her, so she generally avoids being around people who are likely to make such comments based on her experience. Diana explained this behavior apologetically, saying she does not mean to sound racist, but that she has personally seen young men who are usually White, visibly intoxicated, swearing loudly, brawling and smelling of marijuana in transit spaces in Vancouver. While they may not intend to cause any direct harm, their behavior still causes her to feel anxious, stressed and unsafe.

All participants generally prefer Skytrains where they can move between cars without leaving the vehicle so that they can avoid unsafe situations with more ease. Ruby avoids taking certain bus routes at night, but if she has to take them, she sometimes gets off the bus a couple of stops past her intended stop and walks back to her destination in order to avoid being followed by anyone 'creepy' on the bus. All

participants said that once they have done a quick scan and decided to board a bus or Skytrain, they typically walk straight to the back of the vehicle and try to find a window seat.

Ruby said she basically hides, while being very aware of anyone getting too close to her, and if she can't find a window seat she prefers to stay near an exit. When Reema feels like someone is invading her personal space or making her physically uncomfortable in a confined space like a moving public transit vehicle, she asks politely for them to move so that she can get up and move to a seat that is outside of their direct line of sight or in clear view of the bus driver or a security camera. Reema wrote on her Body Map: "I don't feel safe, get away from that individual", to explain her avoidance behavior when she is in unsafe transit spaces. She has also seen other women behaving in the same way in such situations where they will change their seat to move next to her, and she explained that her presence is probably seen as a signifier of a safe space by other women. She avoids being under the influence of drugs or alcohol before boarding transit, or if she is then she makes sure to not be alone. All participants shared that they have been exhibiting and relying on such intentional avoidances of all of these factors since before the pandemic. Anna, who is of Chinese/ East Asian descent, has experienced some discrimination in terms of distancing herself in shared spaces in Vancouver since the pandemic began. Hearing about incidents of anti-Asian hate-crimes³⁹ (Heidinger & Cotter, 2020) has made her even more cautious about avoiding people and places that contain signifiers of 'unsafe transit spaces'.

xii. Transit Police

The two participants who identified as Black women described items on their checklist that depended upon the presence of police personnel in transit spaces. When Ruby is walking into a Skytrain station, she will pull out her compass card, making sure it is visible in her hand long before she reaches the turnstile. She does this to signal to transit police personnel that she is not going to break any laws or jump over anything to enter without paying because she noticed that when she just walks in without doing this, police officers tend to watch her suspiciously until she swipes her card and enters

³⁹ <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/data-shows-vancouver-had-highest-number-of-anti-asian-hate-crimes-in-north-america-in-2020-1.5419915>

the station. She wrote on her Body Map: “stand upright; you’re representing Black people to others” and “they can’t see you now but if anything happens they will” (see Figure 13) and explained her heightened sensitivity toward and avoidance of any behavior that might be perceived as stereotypical of a Black teen breaking the law, especially in the presence of transit police (Jones, 2020). She said she tries to condition herself to never put her feet up inside a transit vehicle and to never occupy more space than she is allowed, just in case an onlooker perceives her behavior as an offence and decides to call the police (discussed further in section 3.2.2). Ruby’s heightened awareness of transit police leads her to be on the lookout for their presence, just as much as she believes they are about hers. When Ruby is out in public spaces in Vancouver with other Black friends, simply talking, walking or exchanging hugs, she always notices when a police car drives by and tries to observe the police officer’s behavior. She has seen them observing her with a quiet wariness, and while she knows she is not breaking any rules- as she shared in a self-assuring tone during the interviews, she reciprocates their gaze with the same wariness, until the moment passes.

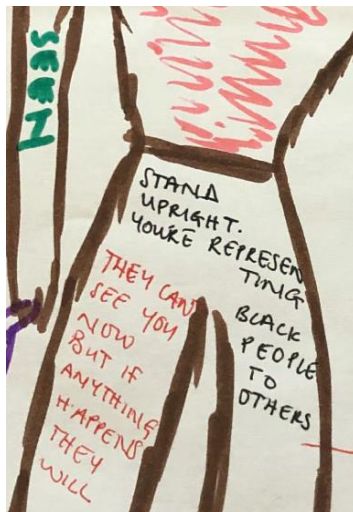


Figure 13 Segment of Ruby’ Body Map (Appendix F).

As revealed in participants’ responses regarding their safety checklists, participants are far from being able to flâneur around in Metro Vancouver using public transit systems (Kern, 2019). As women of color, the nature of their fear of harassment or violence is based not only on their gender, but also on their race, nationality, social prejudices or stereotypes associated with their race or ethnicity and a variety of other

factors unique to each participant. Thus, the “hidden costs” (Kern, 2019) of their fear are perhaps higher and hidden further than what Kern described as the experiences of all women. The safety checklists described in this section allow them to feel a sense of control over their bodily safety during transit-based commutes. However, they also impact their patterns of behavior, self-perception and worldviews in significant ways. An exploration of how the “hidden costs of fear” mentioned by Kern manifest within social situations involving different dynamics of power, agency and safe access to urban public spaces among different individuals can strengthen discussions of urban mobility and deepen our understanding of mobility justice in Canada among women of color. Although all participants in this study identified as women of color, their unique race/ ethnicities and unique life circumstances determined how much power or agency they felt they had in various transit spaces in Metro Vancouver, which are discussed in the section below.

3.2.2. Bodies and Agency

Women of color who have migrated to Canada as students and have temporary employment statuses or part-time employment such as the participants in this study, navigate complex relationships and face discrimination at their educational institutes and workplaces based on socio-political and economic factors regarding their race and gender (Fuller & Vosko, 2008). Many such women of color are employed as teachers or in adjunct teaching roles at the same institutes where they are enrolled as students, such as a few of the participants in this study. This further complicates the dynamics of power within student-teacher relationships and leads them to encounter challenges in their roles due to their race and gender (Aujla, 2018). These experiences of discrimination inform the ways they view themselves and how they believe they are viewed by others, impacting their behavior in transit spaces as well as public spaces in general (Fuller & Vosko, 2008; Aujla, 2018). Reema’s story regarding one of her interactions with transit police in Vancouver (see Story 2 and Footnote 26 in section 3.1.2) shows how she intervened into a situation involving another student and police personnel in a transit space. Although I did not have the opportunity to ask the other participants if they would have done the same as Reema if they were in her situation (since she shared this during the last interview conducted for this study), it is worth considering Reema’s choices and actions in light of her nationality as a Canadian.

Although her race or visible minority status exposed her to social prejudices, her nationality simultaneously provided her with certain privileges and instilled in her certain confidences even as a woman of color. Gita, also a woman of color of Iranian descent but born outside Canada (unlike Reema), was much more hesitant about interacting with the police in Vancouver compared to Reema and had no such incidents to share. Both Reema and Gita are visible minority women in Canada, of Iranian descent, but they experience different types of agency based on the different intersections of their identities in terms of their race, ethnicity, nationality and gender (Ahmed & Pollack, 2017). This reveals that the self-perceptions and worldviews that women of color develop as a result of facing various forms of social discrimination (Fuller & Vosko, 2008; Aujla, 2018) have varying impacts over the sense of agency or power that they believe they have while occupying public spaces (Ahmed & Pollack, 2017). This also reveals why categorizing the experiences of all women of color or all visible minority women as the same can perpetuate existing knowledge gaps in the field of mobility justice in Canada (Pennesi, 2016; Lubitow et. al, 2017; Sheller;2018).

Diana mentioned that she has experienced direct racism and discrimination in Vancouver while seeking employment, but regarding her transit experiences, she shared a story that shared some common themes with two other stories, as described below:

Whose seat is it anyway?

Gita's story: She was sitting in one of the priority seats in an almost empty bus and there was a White man about the same age as her also sitting in a priority seat. An elderly White woman boarded the bus from the back-door, looked around and walked past all the empty seats, past the White man – who stood up to offer up his seat – to Gita, asking for Gita to give up her seat instead. Gita thought the woman's behavior was odd, since her seat was not closer to where the woman was standing, nor was it the only available priority seat by any means, but she gave up her seat anyway. She was not sure what to call this experience and did not pursue the matter further.

Ruby's story: She was sitting on a regular seat in a very crowded bus where all the seats were filled, both regular and priority. At one point a White, middle-aged

woman with no apparent accessibility needs boarded the bus, looked around and walked directly over to Ruby. She pulled out a piece of paper saying she had a doctor's note and needed to sit down, at which Ruby gave up her seat immediately. The woman sat down and right away, she began chatting with the person in the seat next to Ruby's in a very familiar manner. At that point, Ruby looked around the bus and realized two things: that she was the only Black person on that bus and now she was also the only person standing. Ruby was not sure whether the woman really had a doctor's note but while she remained standing alone, she felt uncomfortable and embarrassed, like this should not have happened.

Diana's story: Diana was pregnant at the time and was new to Vancouver when she was taking the bus, standing next to the priority seats, several of which were still empty. Another woman on the bus told Diana that she should sit down instead, but before Diana could respond or react, a White man responded, saying "but she's only pregnant, not disabled". Hearing this, Diana resolved to remain standing, for two main reasons: she was indeed able-bodied and young enough to stand and she was also new to Canada, did not know all the transit rules and did not feel confident enough to challenge his statement and sit down, thus breaking some rule she was not aware of.

All three participants, when sharing these stories, were hesitant about labeling these experiences as harassment or racism/ sexism, since they were unsure about why each of these incidents occurred even as they shared them. They were also unsure about whether such things only happened to them or to others as well. In each of these stories, the participants were deprived of a seat in some way and regardless of the intentions of the other passengers, they experienced discomfort and embarrassment despite not having done anything wrong or broken any transit rules. It is worth noting that out of only five participants, three of them had an experience like this to share. It is also worth noting that only the three participants born outside Canada shared experiences like this.

Gita's story alone, without the other two stories, seems quite harmless at first; the older woman may have had some personal reason for why she wanted Gita's seat, which perhaps had nothing to do with Gita at all. Similarly, hearing Ruby's story alone could be explained away as a harmless incident; perhaps the woman pretended to have a doctor's note just to sit next to her friend and did not want to admit this, or

perhaps she really did have a doctor's note and only noticed her friend once she sat down. However, considering these stories in relation to one another, combined with a review of the other experiences shared by the participants and scholarship regarding race, gender and power dynamics in Canada, beg the questions: did the other passengers view the participants, at least in Gita and Ruby's case, as people who could be expected to move, change seats, be the only person standing on the bus, or be generally inconvenienced- without much complaint? In Diana's case, would the man have said "she's only pregnant" if Diana was White? There is a considerable amount of scholarship on aversive racism and implicit racial biases against Black women in their pain assessment and treatment recommendations (Penner et. al, 2010, Mahabir et. al, 2021). When the White, male passenger assumed Diana should be able to stand since she was only pregnant, even though he was not necessarily a doctor, his perspective was not born in a vacuum; it was simply an expression of how pregnant Black women are not perceived to be as vulnerable or prone to pain as their White counterparts by Western society in general, and how their pain is also seen as lesser or more endurable and therefore less deserving of sympathy (Fitzgerald & Hurst, 2017). Diana's story represents how Black women encounter unique challenges – such as Diana's experiences of micro-aggression (see Glossary) described here or in other experiences she shared (see quote 12, section 3.2.1) – in their day-to-day navigation of the public transit system in Vancouver because of their race, even compared to other women of color. Kern writes about the unique set of challenges encountered by all pregnant women navigating urban public spaces, especially public transportation systems, mentioning "curved staircases, random steps, steep escalators, broken elevators or escalators, sharp turns, narrow tunnels, revolving doors, turnstiles, no space for strollers, rude comments, glares and of course thousands of commuters and tourists" (Kern, 2019). As demonstrated through Diana's story, for Black women and visible minority women, there are an additional set of challenges on top of these due to social prejudices and stereotypes regarding their race.

Although three out of five participants shared a similar story, all of them shared these stories either as co-incidents or as unique occurrences that probably only happened to them. Since Anna and Reema, both born in Canada, did not share any such stories, it may be inferred that the three participants who did share these stories felt even an even lower sense of agency or power (Ahmed & Pollack, 2017) in transit

spaces than women of color who were Canadian by nationality. Participants' recollections of these stories therefore also portray how women of color often diminish their experiences of discrimination or harassment and do not instinctively identify the ways in which their bodies are deprived of power and agency in transit spaces in the same way they instinctively take steps to protect their bodies through hyper-vigilance or self-policing. These stories also reveal that individual mobility among participants is in fact impacted and involuntarily restricted by their gender, race, ethnicity and nationalities (Sheller, 2018). Consequently, their ability to exercise their freedom of movement using public transit systems in Vancouver according to the Sheller's principles of mobility justice is in fact impeded at the bodily scale.

Stereotypes

Reema shared experiences of seeing creepy men sit down next to other women of color, making them visibly uncomfortable, until the woman changes her seat or leaves the space entirely. Reema has noticed this happen a lot when the woman appears to be of Asian or South-East Asian descent, and she thinks this is because women from these regions are stereotypically perceived as more docile or submissive (Creese & Kambere, 2002; Tettey & Pupilampu, 2005; Lubitow et. al, 2017; Alinor & Tinkler, 2021) and therefore less likely to complain about inappropriate encounters or harassment in transit spaces. Reema drew a scenario like this on the bottom-right corner of her Body Map (Appendix F), writing "scared; power in numbers" where she depicts herself walking over to other women in such situations, saying "hey, girl hey!" to help them feel safer. She explained that there is strength in numbers and her walking over to a woman who is feeling threatened and pretending to know her can help deter the harasser and make both women feel less threatened in each other's company (see more on this in section 3.2.3).

Ruby mentioned the impacts of Black stereotypes on her self-perception and behavior in transit spaces. Her choices to take off her hoodie when entering a transit vehicle at night (see "clothing" in section 3.2.1), or to condition herself to never put her feet up inside a transit vehicle (see "hair" in section 3.2.1) reflect her assumptions about how she expects to be stereotyped based on her appearance and behavior in relation to her race and gender. She said taking these steps help her feel safer; even if someone around her is prejudiced against her, her bodily safety may not be as

threatened as it could be if she makes sure, to always, behave or appear a certain way.

Hairy Perceptions

Scholarship regarding social and political perceptions of Black women's hair in Canada reveal discriminatory practices in the Canadian workforce based on such perceptions (Prince, 2014; Brown, 2018). When the Canadian workforce is on its way to work however, they take public transit with Black women, which is where interesting dynamics of power and visibility unfold. Several participants in this study shared that they have experienced feeling hyper-visible' as well as invisible' in transit spaces in Vancouver. Participants explained that feeling hyper-visible' meant that people stared at them when they entered a transit space for no apparent reason and feeling invisible' was when people intentionally blocked them out of their line of vision, refused to look directly at them or interact with them. Diana and Ruby, both Black women, said that they wear their hair in different ways at different times and people often stare at them, making them feel hyper-visible' in transit spaces to the point of making them uncomfortable.



Figure 14 Segment of Ruby's Body Map (Appendix F).

Ruby said she feels most seen' when she wears her hair in an afro (see Figure 14). Wearing her natural Black hair makes her more clearly apparent as a Black woman and more likely to be stereotyped or threatened by harassment or violence, while at the same time making her feel more proud of her Black heritage by wearing her hairstyle with pride, which supports research findings regarding the role of wearing natural hair in public spaces in Black women's collective identity formation in North America (Garrin & Marcketti, 2018). Ruby shared feeling hyper-visible' and invisible' at the same time when she boards a bus on certain routes:

My friends and I always say, you know how to feel Black in Vancouver when you sit on the bus, you can always have like a spare seat for your bag, cause no one's gonna sit next to you (shakes head, laughs, leans back)... you will always have a spare seat and so, it's really interesting how I'm hyper-visible... at the same time... (raises hand, indicates blocking) intentionally blocked out, so it's like I see, there's this seat, next to this Black person... But I'm just going to block it out cause I don't wanna sit there... And I'm like... fine by me (shrugs, raises both hands, laughs) I have a seat for my bag... you know...

- Participant Quote 14: Ruby's Mobility Assessment

Ruby explained the quote above, saying when there's a crowd of people entering a bus and she's the only Black person on board, almost always all the seats fill out on the bus except for the one next to her, even before the pandemic. She explained that people can definitely see her, perhaps more so than others because of her Blackness, but they all avoid looking directly at her or sitting next to her, which makes her feel both hyper-visible and invisible. On her Body Map, Ruby wrote: ~~they~~ "they can't see you now but if anything happens, they will" (see Figure 13), to explain that the way others perceive of her can change drastically depending on her environment. When a White man is being belligerent in a transit space, no one really associates his behavior with his race, but when there is a Black person behaving in the same way and Ruby is also in that space, she can sense everyone looking at her, fearfully and almost expectantly, as if she is also about to start screaming at any moment. When there is a Black homeless person on a Skytrain, people almost instinctively distance themselves from both that person and Ruby, which communicates to Ruby that she is seen as just one of the two Black people on that train- one normal and the other not- but both the same really. Both Diana and Ruby, who are Black women, mentioned that they try to maintain physical distance from groups of White men in public or transit spaces in Vancouver, even during the daytime, since this is usually the demographic of people who make them feel either hyper-visible or invisible. Ruby's description of simultaneously being in a state of ~~hyper-visibility~~ and ~~invisibility~~ is supported by scholarship regarding the shifting scales of visibility experienced by people of color in public urban spaces in Canada (May, 2015; Ahmed, 2007). As Ruby described, situations where she is sharing a public transit space with another person of color being belligerent, are the ~~the~~ moments when the body appears out of place and are moments of political and personal trouble" (Ahmed, 2007). These are the moments

that cause women of color, particularly Black women, to exist in the turbulent mental state of feeling concurrently hyper-visible and invisible due to their race and gender.

Reema had also experienced feeling hyper-visible or invisible in transit spaces because of her hair, but for different reasons. When she had short hair, men would approach her or flirt with her less frequently in transit spaces and there were times people addressed her with male pronouns or called her “dude”, assuming her to be male, which made her feel invisible since she was being misgendered and treated a certain way based on this assumption. However, with longer hair, she appears more obviously female-presenting and people pay more attention to her, she gets more creepy stares and expects more threats. While her short hair exposes her to fewer threats to her safety based on her gender presentation, it also renders her ‘invisible’ by hiding her gender. With longer hair, her gender expression matches her identity but exposes her to unwanted attention and harassment. For these reasons, Reema sometimes prefers to be ‘invisible’, wearing clothes that show as little skin as possible, at the expense of being mis-gendered. It is worth noting here that although this study has limitations in its ability to account for gender expression and/ or sexuality due to the focus on race and gender specifically, Reema’s experiences reveal how these issues are intersectional in nature and require an intersectional analytical lens in order to understand the full scope of how women of color experience hyper-visibility or invisibility in public spaces.

The participants’ responses demonstrate how women of color experience threats to their safety in transit spaces in Vancouver based on their hair and what it symbolizes regarding their race or gender, impacting the ways people perceive of them and behave with them. Their bodies and their hair are thus social and political agents (Prince, 2014; Brown, 2018) that are subject to “multiple forces vectoring their shifts into and out of visibility” (May, 2015) in urban public spaces in Canada. The “multiple vectoring forces” experienced by participants in this study manifest as social prejudices and stereotypes that their bodies are subjected to in these spaces. These stories reveal the social and political roles of their bodies and their hair as women of color and the obstructions they encounter to their freedom of movement using public transit systems (Sheller, 2018) in Vancouver due to their bodily features.

Managing Perceptions

The participants explained various ways in which they use their bodies to manage how others perceive of them, in order to feel safer in transit spaces. Gita and Anna explained that when they feel uncomfortable or threatened by someone in an unsafe transit space, they prefer to appear uninterested using their body language rather than speaking directly to the person harassing them out of a fear of escalating the situation further. Participants said they will look down at their phone, cross their legs, face away, put on earphones or even call someone on the phone- rather than declining the harasser verbally or more directly, out of fear of provoking him into aggression or violence. When Ruby is getting off a bus in an area that appears unsafe, she will frown and try to look very angry or call someone on the phone. She explained that she feels safer knowing that she looks angry, busy and generally less approachable than if she appeared to be alone, vulnerable and like an easier target. Anna shared this perspective and wrote on her Body Map: “walk quickly and with purpose to project assertiveness; use fist and eyebrows to project aggression; use elbows to attack”. Anna explained that in India, she was getting harassed daily even though she made sure to wear modest clothing that covered her body completely, until she encountered a White woman who was confidently walking around wearing a tank top. This woman told Anna that the key was to appear confident and even aggressive, so Anna started using her body language to express assertiveness or aggression in transit spaces in India. As a result, she got harassed less and she uses the same strategy in Vancouver when she is in an unsafe transit space. It is worth noting here that the White woman’s experiences of harassment in India were not the same as Anna’s, due to strong cultural affinities towards White or “Western” migrants (often referred to as expats) in Indian societies and discriminatory attitudes towards migrants who are from the global South or East, particularly Black or East Asian migrants (who are often referred to as immigrants rather than the more colloquially respectable label of an “expat”) (Khanna, 2020; Mishra, 2015). However, the interaction between these two women regarding their safety in a transit space, in a country foreign to them both, reveals a critical junction where the experiences of women of color meet mainstream intersectional feminism. White feminism that disregards the different dynamics of power and privilege experienced by women of color compared to White women in urban public spaces have been found to contribute to the further marginalization and

exclusion of women of color from feminist movements (Agenew, 1993). Anna's experiences of harassment in India (or anywhere for that matter) are different than White women's and the overly-simplistic solution of appearing to be angry or aggressive ignores the different privileges and agency (Ahmed & Pollack, 2017) that White women are privy to compared to Anna. However, the mere fact that Anna felt emboldened in the presence of another woman in a transit space and that their interaction, despite their many differences, made Anna feel safer in that space, is significant (discussed further in section 3.2.3).

Reema shared that she tries to always keep her dominant right hand free in transit spaces so that she can punch someone to defend herself if she needs to. When Reema and her partner used public transit systems in other countries while traveling abroad, they generally tried to be discreet, refraining from holding hands or appearing to be intimate in any way, to avoid creepy looks from other passengers who might be fetishizing their behavior as well as harassment and violence from homophobic people. In various ways, participants communicated that although unsafe transit spaces often pose threats to their bodily safety, they also use their bodies to defend themselves, feel safer and reclaim their agency and sense of control. Unfortunately, this often comes at the expense of their mental health and well-being, since it involves conditioning themselves to exhibit passive-aggression, aggression or some other uncharacteristic behavior.

Accessibility

Reema was the only participant who shared experiences of having accessibility issues while using public transit in Vancouver; she has had several injuries in the past and spoke about a time when she was visibly mobility impaired and was using a cane to walk around, saying:

I wasn't able to walk properly and had to use a cane for, I think two months, I had to, even just getting around campus, I had to get to the transit, I'd either have the choice of uhh walking all the way towards Cornerstone, or I could go down the set of stairs that I fell down, haha, to get to the bus. And then, that's if there, and luckily there were some elevators here and there but it just became like a maze like a zig-zag of routes to take to minimize like pressure on my foot so, again, like that's just a foot injury. I cannot imagine someone who is in a wheelchair.

Some of the places are just far to walk for people or a very isolated area so I can't imagine how someone say in a wheelchair, would like roll two blocks to get to a bus stop, which would then take them to a Skytrain, which potentially might not have an elevator working... Sometimes the Skytrains are being updated and there's no telling until you get there, and say you're someone who's disabled and you live like two minutes away and now you can't take the elevator to take transit to work, what do you do? Like... it's, it's a tricky thing to mitigate but, it's, it's tough... it's really hard to be disabled in this city.

- Participant Quote 15: Reema's Testimonial

Reema went on to explain that once she had boarded a Skytrain or bus, there were fewer concerns regarding accessibility since finding accessible seats on board was not typically an issue. However, identifying the right bus stops or Skytrain stations that are accessible and operating and then navigating her way to them was the real issue. She explained that there was often construction or maintenance work being done at Skytrain stations which requires pedestrians to take detours that may not be accessible, especially if an individual with a mobility impairment is not prepared to take a detour or had no prior warnings about changes in their route. During the pandemic, Translink announced that bus operators would no longer be assisting passengers with mobility devices to secure themselves into front-facing berths⁴⁰, which reveals the lack of resiliency in the accessibility measures that do exist in transit spaces in Vancouver and confirm Reema's assessment about the difficulties in being mobility impaired in this city. Reema's experience reveals that on top of facing racism and sexism, women of color in Vancouver with mobility impairments encounter an additional obstruction in their public transit usage due to accessibility issues, which deprive their bodies of the agency to be in charge of their commutes and form travel choices'. Reema's response in quote 15 also reveals how barriers to mobility justice encountered by women of color are intersectional in nature and depend upon various aspects of their identities that require an intersectional analysis to fully understand, as discussed in the section below.

⁴⁰ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/disability-advocate-denounces-translink-change-to-front-facing-wheelchair-spots-1.5519409>

3.2.3. Safety Accessories and Support Systems

Sisterhood and Intersectional Feminism

Women of color experience different forms of threats to their bodily safety due to differences in social perceptions of and prejudices against different ethnic groups and genders (Creese & Kambere, 2002; Tetley & Pupilampu, 2005; Lubitow et. al, 2017). Feminist scholarship advocates an intersectional approach in understanding the nature of these differences in order to remove obstacles to mobility justice among women of color (Crenshaw, 1991; Sheller, 2017), even more so in the post-COVID era (Sumihira, 2020). Participants in this study shared various ways in which they rely on the presence and visibility of other women of color in transit spaces as a source of support in regards to their safety. They also described ways in which their own presence is a source of support for other women of color in transit or public spaces.

Being in a group with other women of color in transit spaces was mentioned by several participants as something that made them feel safer during commutes, allowing them to occupy public spaces and navigate transit routes with more confidence and a heightened sense of power or agency (Ahmed & Pollack, 2017). Diana shared a story about taking a bus in Vancouver with a group of friends who were all Black or people of color. They entered and sat together near the exit and were talking amongst themselves, at which a White woman asked them to move to the back of the bus because they were 'crowding her space'. One of Diana's friends in the group said "if you feel we are crowding your space, and you feel there is more space at the back of the bus, why don't you go to the back of the bus?" At this remark, other passengers on the bus looked supportively at Diana's friends, and they remained where they were, which helped Diana feel safer.

All participants also said that seeing other women, especially other women of color in an unsafe transit space (see section 3.1.1) makes them feel less fearful of harassment or violence, especially when they are traveling alone. Reema talked about seeing other women of color in transit spaces who appear to be clearly uncomfortable because of something a creepy male passenger is doing (see stereotypes in section 3.2.2). Women in such situations often walk over to sit next to Reema because, she assumes, her presence is seen as non-threatening and even as a source of support as

a fellow woman of color. She also tries to approach other women in such situations, appearing to know them and saying hello. Reema does this to help the other woman know that she has a friend around if she needs any help and to let the harasser know that his target is not alone.

Going out and using public transit with other people, friends, family or other women of color, or having someone wait with them at a 'sketchy' bus stop or Skytrain station at night was mentioned by several participants as invisible support systems that made them feel safer. Despite the differences in the nature of the threats to their bodily safety experienced by women of color, the participants' experiences reveal that a sense of sisterhood between women of various visible minority groups or racial backgrounds is a source of support and safety for women of color in transit spaces.

Anna's story about encountering a White woman in India who helped her to present herself more aggressively through her body language to be safer in transit spaces (see Section 3.2.1), along with responses shared by other participants regarding the presence of other women in transit spaces reveals how women of all races can and do support one another in overcoming obstructions to mobility justice and uphold intersectional feminism (Ahmed & Pollack, 2017; see Glossary). While it is true that the White woman's suggestion to Anna disregarded her own White privilege (Agnew, 1993) and such solutions are often not based in intersectional feminism, the way Anna received this suggestion, chose to remember it and apply to her commutes in Vancouver as a helpful coping strategy" (Riger and Gordon 1981; Riger et al.1982; Stanko 1987; Pain,1997; Valentine, 2008; Kern, 2019; Koskela, 1999; Gardner et. al, 2017) is what I, as a researcher and a woman of color myself, am choosing to focus on. Despite the increasingly complicated nature of how feminism and intersectionality are being defined and implemented across the world (Agnew, 1993; Nadeau, 2009), Anna's lived experiences and her own descriptions of how sisterhood across women of different races have helped her are presented as the most significant factor in understanding the role of intersectionality and sisterhood in her case. In other words, if Anna says she felt safer due to and since the time of her interaction with the White woman in India, then her expert opinions on her personal experiences ought to be believed and validated as a fundamental step in establishing mobility justice among women of color. This analysis therefore shows that there may be hope for sisterhood and intersectional solidarity among women of all races as significant factors that can help create safe and equitable urban transit spaces.

Technology

The significance of technology and recommendations to improve safety oriented smart-phone apps that help passengers more easily identify, respond to and report incidents of harassment or violence are prevalent in studies regarding women's safety in transit spaces (Ceccato, 2017; Loukaitou-Sideris et. al, 2020). Section 3.2.1 discussed how participants used their cellphones to feel safer in transit spaces, especially in an already threatening situation. Ruby makes sure her friend's number is set on speed-dial on her cellphone, so that she can contact someone quickly in case she is in a dangerous situation. In addition, participants described how they rely on software and applications such as Google Maps, Transit⁴¹ as well as the Next-Bus SMS Service⁴² offered by Translink. The street view, navigation, live update and route planning features on Google Maps allowed participants to plan out their routes and view satellite images of the transit stops along their route. Participants mentioned that the photos they see of any transit space on the street view feature is a representation of how that space is likely to be in reality, and determines how participants prepare to be in that space using signifiers of safe/unsafe spaces, self-policing behavior and safety checklists. For instance, Diana and Reema both mentioned they like to plan out an escape route in case they encounter a dangerous situation in a transit space. Before leaving her home and while looking at Google Maps to plan her routes for the day, Diana tries to find routes where she can wait at bus stops with shops or diners nearby, especially at night; if she feels unsafe, harassed or uncomfortable waiting at that stop, she can enter the shops nearby to wait for the harasser to leave or for the situation to abate. Also before the trip, she uses the street view feature to assess the safety of that space based on the physical characteristics of that space- such as lighting, benches, proximity to shops and cars. Anna, Ruby and Reema spoke about watching videos and lectures or reading about common situations of harassment or violence, specifically on social platforms like Reddit, which helped them feel better-prepared to be in unsafe transit spaces. Although purely design oriented solutions may not address all challenges encountered by women of color in transit spaces (Kern, 2019), the incorporation of technological solutions into safety

⁴¹Transit is a mobile app providing real-time public transit data. <https://transitapp.com/>

⁴²The Next-Bus SMS Service allows individuals to request real-time bus schedules and transit information in Metro Vancouver via text messages. Details: <https://www.translink.ca/rider-guide/mobile-services>

planning is still significant as part of a larger approach to addressing the obstructions to mobility justice among women of color.

Safety Accessories

Several participants mentioned that carrying mundane, inconspicuous objects on their person that could be used to defend themselves if they were attacked helped them feel safer before boarding public transit vehicles, especially in unsafe transit spaces. They keep their keys accessible and sometimes in their hand when they feel threatened in a transit space as something they can use to fight back with if they are attacked. Ruby said she knew passengers weren't allowed to carry weapons on public transit, like pepper sprays, from reading a Reddit forum about safety in Vancouver, so she carries a half-filled water bottle which she can swing easily and hit someone hard enough to distract them before running away if she is attacked. Diana always carries some sort of metal in her pocket out of habit, so keys that come with a lanyard are usually what she always has on her person; she jokingly said that she could also use the lanyard as a rope if she ever needed to. Others carry a flashlight, a Swiss army knife or an umbrella as accessories that help them feel better prepared for emergencies. A couple of participants also carry backpacks with built-in safety features while using public transit, such as a light-stick, poncho, RFID tags, embedded steel wires in the straps to prevent slashing etc. Participants also described how they pack their most valuable items in their backpack to keep them closest to their body so that nothing valuable is stolen or lost. Choice of shoes was also important, as discussed in section 3.2.1.

In various ways, participants shared how 'travel choice' (Levi, 2013) is hardly as simple as it sounds when it comes to how women of color make decisions regarding their urban mobility (see quote 3 from Gita's Mobility Assessment). They develop mental maps of safe and unsafe transit spaces based on signifiers of safety or a lack thereof, thus spatializing their fear of harassment or violence, which informs where they feel safe and how they choose to make decisions regarding their public transit usage. Remaining in a state of hyper-vigilance and policing their bodies helps them cope with their fear of harassment or violence while continuing to rely on public transit as their primary mode of transportation. Developing 'safety checklists' and relying on various support systems and safety accessories also helps participants feel

safer in transit spaces. However, constant self-policing, hyper-vigilance and the maintenance of such checklists have negative impacts on their mental health, in the form of increased stress and anxiety (see Anna's Body Map, Appendix F). The presence of police personnel in transit spaces also impacts perceptions of safety among participants, since this can be both a signifier of safety as well as a lack of safety. Participants also shared that feeling hyper-visible and invisible in transit spaces can occur simultaneously and can inform how safe or comfortable they feel in occupying transit spaces or public spaces in Vancouver. They encounter social prejudices and stereotypes based on their race and gender, which impacts the ways in which they are perceived by others and how they behave in order to manage others' perceptions of them in transit spaces. These responses reveal that listening to how women of color describe their own lived experiences regarding their race, gender and safety while using public transit and analyzing their experiences through an intersectional lens are paramount to advancing our understanding of mobility justice among women of color in Canada. The research implications and findings from this study, along with some key realizations and insights that participants shared during the final interview are described in the fourth and final chapter.

Chapter 4. Conclusions: Arriving and Looking Ahead

4.1. Research Implications

4.1.1. Theory

One of the gaps in theoretical knowledge in studies involving the experiences of women of color or migrant students identified at the onset of this report was the lack of alternative or non-traditional methodologies in these studies that could generate a rich array of qualitative data (Hammer, 1992; Ward et al., 2008; Sheller, 2020). This section begins by discussing how the usage of the Body Map Storytelling exercise as an alternative and non-traditional research methodology for understanding the experiences of women of color can help fill this theoretical gap. Before ending the final interview, I asked all participants how they felt about participating in this study and especially about doing the Body Map Storytelling exercise, to which Ruby responded:

It helped me to connect a lot of things that I had just like thought about in passing or things that I did like almost without thinking, and to actually put it down, it's like oh these things are actually how I live my life, like this is real. This is actually how I... be outside (laughing).

So it's like okay this is interesting. It's, it's nice to see what I do... on paper. And see like, oh this is how I live and like explain to someone oh yeah I think before I get on the bus and I'm trying to be... and so, for me it's like okay I took what I had learned from that post that I read on Reddit and like actually implemented it into my life like in ways that...

Like I'm seeing now that like oh my gosh, this is a part of me now. This is why I carry my water bottle everywhere, this is why I... always make sure that my phone is charged for example I, I try... for when I'm going to be outside, this is why...I'm on the lookout for like where the cop... where the security officials are...or if the bus driver is friendly, or how people on the bus look, it's like... almost validating in that sense of like I've learned these things over time.

And being in a space like Vancouver that has very interesting... community, um, around, very interesting, it's like okay this is what... I'm putting into practice here. And this is what I'm... having to do now that... I'm getting on the bus, but it would be very different if I had a car and was driving everywhere. But this is how my life is right now, yeah.

- Participant Quote 15: Ruby's Testimonial

Ruby's response to this question in the quote above reveals how an exploration of her transit-usage, fear of harassment or violence and perceptions of safety with her body as the focal point, or the site' of examination, allowed her to connect the dots between things she did almost unconsciously or instinctively in transit spaces. Some of these connections included realizing how reading a post on Reddit (see section 3.1.2) had impacted her behavior in transit spaces, such as always carrying a fully-charged cellphone or her water bottle at least half-filled wherever she goes, while looking out for security officials, checking if the bus driver is friendly and watching other people's behaviors carefully in transit spaces. In response to the same question, Diana said:

Well it was very insightful...it's like almost like a reflection of... (looks up) things you do unconsciously but you really don't know, um, there are deep hidden and unconscious meanings to them. So... and then I guess it just helped me to compartmentalize my thoughts more. And be more...aware... right? And it just, again, on a stronger note... allowed me to... realize the world that I'm living in. But still try to make a very strong decision for which... even though it colors everything I do, but not to color how I decide to live my life, that kind of thing, so...yeah... Yeah, I guess that's what came out of this, it was... soul searching (laughing) or something like that (looks away laughing) but yeah.

- Participant Quote 16: Diana's Testimonial

Similar to Ruby's comments about connecting the dots between "things she did without thinking" in transit spaces, Diana was able to "self-reflect", "soul-search" and realize unconsciously attached meanings behind mundane activities and decisions regarding her transit-usage in Vancouver. Diana and Ruby both essentially felt that they better understood why they did some of the things they do every day while navigating public transit systems in Vancouver, after speaking about their experiences and doing the Body Map Storytelling exercise.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the things that Ruby has "learned over time" are layers of her mental map'- assigning different transit spaces as safe and unsafe, an extensive safety checklist' and a host of coping strategies- including policing her body, being hyper-vigilant and developing a list of support systems and safety accessories she relies upon to feel safer in transit spaces. The concept of geographies of fear', which refers to the ways in which fear of harassment or violence is physically embodied through body language and behaviors as well as psychologically experienced through thoughts, emotions and memories among women of color,

therefore holds true for Ruby and other women of color with experiences similar to hers. While Diana shared her experiences of learning similar things over time, she also spoke about how this activity has helped her to “compartmentalize her thoughts and be more aware” (quote 16). Diana said she is still going to make the conscious decision to not allow the nature of the world to “color” how she lives her life. From speaking to Diana throughout this study, I’m inferring this to mean that she is aware of the dangers of social prejudices in the world such as sexism and racism, perhaps slightly more so since participating in this study, but she is not going to let other people’s perceptions and judgments about her change how she wants to live her life. Reema said:

I mean, I loved it, personally (smiling), like, I... it was kind of therapeutic honestly to draw things out and like... and talking is great but sometimes it’s nice to mix it up with like something you can draw and like... it’s interesting to me how things kind of manifest on a piece of paper. Umm...and how you can kind of put your, embody yourself onto that picture, so... um...yeah it was kind of, it was a really interesting, self-reflective piece, that I really enjoyed doing actually (laughing).

- Participant Quote 17: Reema’s Testimonial

Reema’s descriptions about seeing “things kind of manifest on a piece of paper” that allowed her to “embody herself onto that picture” were very similar to how Ruby felt about “putting it down on paper” and realizing “this is how she actually lives her life, this is real, this is how she is” and it is a “part of her” now. All participants’ responses revealed how the tangible nature of the Body Maps and the process of drawing the Body Maps (with their body outline and depictions of their behaviors, choices, perceptions and other things relating to their lives and lived experiences), allowed them to feel validated in and have deeper realizations about their public transit usage and experiences on transit in Vancouver.

Perhaps the most rewarding part of conducting this study for me as the researcher was hearing from the participants about how Body Mapping their experiences had allowed them to draw something by hand after a long time, perhaps years. They talked about the nostalgic effect this had on them, since using colors and pens to draw by hand are seldom required in their adult lives, which helped them relax into the activity and enjoy it more. I believe the act of drawing by hand allowed participants to self-reflect and find the connections that they did, as discussed above. Body Map Storytelling has been used as a tool for advocacy, research and promoting

inter-generational dialogue, as well as for therapeutic and biographical purposes (Gastaldo et. al, 2012; Solomon, 2002). The stories shared by participants in this study reveal how Body Map Storytelling can be used in the field of mobility justice as a research method to deeply understand the experiences and obstructions to mobility justice among women of color in Vancouver and can promote healing and self-reflection while chronicling their experiences and stories.

These stories also highlight the importance of incorporating more alternative research methods such as the Body Map Storytelling exercise into mobilities and gender studies, in order to generate richer understandings of qualitative data (Hammer, 1992; Ward et al., 2008; Sheller, 2020). Gastaldo et. al. write: “Body mapping is a way of telling stories, much like totems that contain symbols with different meanings”. If trained practitioners incorporate this method into their qualitative research or into public engagement strategies, the stories and experiences of women of color shared through this activity could help inform municipal transit policies (discussed further below). Alternative research methodologies such as the Body Map Storytelling exercise can help us to hear directly from women of color and amplify their voices while maintaining an intersectional lens of analysis. When we better understand the obstructions to their public transit-usage and urban mobility, we can better recognize who feels safe in which transit spaces and why. Our cities are not safe until everyone is safe, and incorporating alternative methods like this can help improve the overall safety, equity and accessibility of Vancouver’s transit system and public transit spaces.

The other gap in theoretical knowledge identified in Chapter 1 was the lack of research that uses the mobility justice framework to understand the experiences of students who identify as women of color in Canada. The responses that participants shared for the last prompt of the Body Mapping exercise (see Appendix D, Stage II) revealed some interesting insights that address and help fill this gap. In response to this prompt, Diana drew a triangle in the top-right corner of her Body Map (circled in red in Figure 15 below), to symbolize how she feels regarding her race, gender and feeling hyper-visible or invisible. She explained:

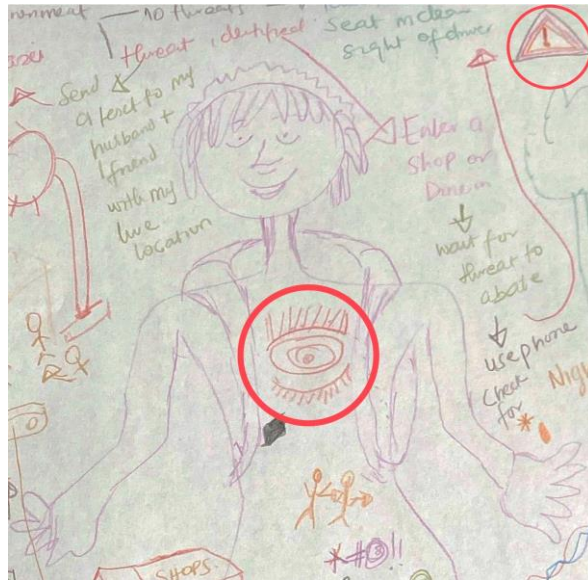


Figure 15 Segment of Diana's Body Map (Appendix F)

You see that there is a black triangle, before the red triangle? That's my color. So... it's, in itself, it's a danger, for some people...just the way we're having Asian, umm, hatred right now, there are some people that just... don't like them, so that in itself is an inherent threat. And, so meaning, going out every day, wearing my skin, can be a threat to me.

So, as much as... I would like to take everything as normal, and I still have to remember that and take that into context, into everything I do. So, going on the bus, might just not be, ordinary going on the bus. It might be... going on the bus when it is safe. Going on the bus when umm...when you are sure that there is no direct or indirect, conscious or unconscious threat to your life, you know? Um... having a regular conversation might not just be having a regular conversation. It might be a conversation where you have to watch your own words, to prevent triggers. It shouldn't be that way... people should actually be more conscious, but, at this point it's more like self-preservation. You're not just trying to right the world, you're trying to make sure you stay alive to enjoy the world, you know?

So that's what... that means. So being in my own skin... it's already a danger, to, myself, from whomever it is that might be walking with me, at that point... Pink is for being female (smiling, remembering)...Yeah. Black, my color, pink is for... oh that's very observant. And the red is the danger itself. But the pink is that I'm female. Women are more vulnerable to attacks. And the Black is my-, so, being Black and being female... yeah.

- Participant Quote 18: Diana's Testimonial

In quote 18, Diana spoke about how she wishes others would perceive of her rather than how she feels they actually see her. Figure 15 shows the eye she drew in the center of her body outline (also circled in red) to depict how she is immediately identified as a visible minority due to her race and then as a woman. She explained that rather than being seen as the Black lady on the bus, she wishes people would see her as the smiling, friendly lady on the bus making intelligent conversation, which is why she drew her body outline with her smiling, arms outstretched, open and welcoming. This is also why she chose purple for her body outline, which is her favorite color, rather than black, which is associated with her race.

Diana's quote reveals how women of color in Vancouver experience threats to their safety during mundane activities like making conversation or while dressing or behaving a certain way in transit spaces. Since their bodies are "inherent threats" to their safety, women of color create mental maps of safe and unsafe spaces, police and control their speech, clothing, behavior, body language and maintain safety 'checklists' in order to feel safer, or in an attempt at "self-preservation" as Diana put it. This reveals how individual mobility and the right to exercise freedom of movement among women of color is in fact involuntarily restricted by threats of violence based on their gender and race (Principles of Mobility Justice ; Sheller, 2018, pp.26). The very act of living in the body of a woman of color and occupying public spaces can be "inherent threats to one's safety" while simultaneously being the source of one's self-image, identity, cultural and ethnic pride as well as the instrument of self-defence and self-preservation. A mobility justice framework is therefore relevant and necessary in research involving the urban mobilities and perceptions of safety among women of color and migrant students.

In response to the same final prompt in the Body Map Storytelling exercise, Reema wrote "#MeToo" (see Figure 10, section 3.1.2) and explained her response, saying:

Yeah I think that's the believe the victim, '#MeToo', I think that's it... Yeah... that's something I have a very firm belief in, so um... yeah... I put out my own little story, um, about the first time, umm... which was, it was not horrible (shrugging) but it was like, I've been sexually assaulted but like nowhere near the amount of some of the more horrible things that could happen, that have happened to other women, so... I've been very lucky, umm comparatively but I... I have friends

who have been umm raped and... quite horribly assaulted so... for me it's, it's really important to, to, put those stories out.

- Participant Quote 19: Reema's Testimonial

Reema's response highlights the importance of sharing the stories of harassment and violence experienced by all women and references the "MeToo" movement⁴³, a global campaign against rape culture, victim-blaming and sexual harassment and violence founded by women of color. Research shows that women of color reporting incidents of sexual violence to the police, particularly rape, are often taken less seriously within the criminal justice system in Canada (Ruparelia, 2017) and immigrant women who arrive in Canada, already traumatized by war or oppressive governments may be less likely to report sexual or physical violence to the police or authorities out of a fear of further victimization or even deportation (Bhuiyan et. al, 2014). Although Reema has been able to share her stories of sexual assault, not many women of color are able to do the same; worse still, as statistics reveal, even when such stories are shared they are rarely believed or brought to justice. With more research that uses the mobility justice framework to hear and understand these stories, we can allow more such stories to come to light in order to better understand how mobility justice is impeded among women of color in Canada.

In quote 15, Ruby talks about how Body Mapping has helped her realize that her reliance on public transit as her primary means of transportation in Vancouver, and the "interesting community" in this region, with unique social, cultural and political beliefs and practices, impact how she behaves and responds to incidents of harassment or violence in transit spaces in Vancouver. Ruby's responses throughout this study indicate that comparing between one's experiences of harassment or violence in different geographic regions/ urban transit systems can inform behaviors, impact feelings of victimization and the likelihood of reporting incidents to the police among women of color in Vancouver. In response to the same final prompt in the Body Mapping exercise, Anna shared:

⁴³ The #MeToo movement is a global, social movement against sexual abuse and sexual harassment where people publicize allegations of gender-based violence: <https://metoomvmt.org/get-to-know-us/history-inception/>; <https://canadianwomen.org/>

–Empowered” and –resilient”. Yup... they would’ve been, yeah, what represents... me. Even below that, –more needs to be done”, there’s –valued”, –heard” and –validated.”

- Participant Quote 20: Anna’s Testimonial

Echoing the sentiments of the #MeToo movement, Anna’s explained her choice of the words –empowered” and –resilient” as her state of mind and her armour against the sexist and racist social prejudices, actions and systemic inequities that exist in the world around her. She chose these words as her –personal slogan”, wishing to be remembered and represented through her Body Map as an empowered and resilient woman of color. She explained that if more people heard, validated and valued the stories of women of color, perhaps more could be done to make our cities and transit systems safer.

The responses shared by participants throughout this study reveal the need for more research in the field of mobility justice focusing on the experiences of women of color and migrant students, using alternative methodologies such as Body Map Storytelling. The implications of this study in policy-making and practice regarding urban and transit planning in the Metro Vancouver region are discussed in the following section.

4.1.2. Policy and Practice

The policy gap identified in Chapter 1 was a lack of alignment between the Transportation 2040 Plan and the Women’s Equity Strategy, which signals a lack of knowledge sharing between municipal policies adopted by the City of Vancouver. The Transportation 2040 Plan mentions its visions to –eliminate traffic-related fatalities, and address concerns of personal security” (Transportation 2040 Plan, pp. 9). However, the notion of –personal security” is as mythical and misguided as the concept of –travel choice” (discussed in section 3.1) since it means different things for different individuals based on their gender, race and various other facets of their identity (Sheller, 2018; Cass, Shove & Urry, 2005; Lubitow et al., 2017; Levy, 2013). –The Untokening”, which is a multi-racial collective mentioned in Chapter 1 (see footnote 12 on page 6) that works to address mobility justice and equity among marginalized

communities, mention in their 2020 Strategic Planning Report⁴⁴ that it is important to break down the silos of knowledge between city planners or policy-makers and leaders in mobility justice movements. Their report also advocates shifting the methodologies and praxis in planning and research, which aligns with the discussion in section 4.1.1. The suggestions mentioned in this report are echoed by participants' responses in this study and help reveal how breaking down silos of knowledge and promoting knowledge sharing across transit planners and practitioners and social justice collectives can result in mutually beneficial outcomes for these different groups.

As seen in the responses shared by participants in this study, women of color often do not conflate their gender and race, particularly their race and visible minority status, with their public transit usage and mobility. On one hand, they are all checking their respective boxes for race/ethnicity wherever a form or survey requires them to. On the other hand, they are reading Reddit forums (see Chapter 3.1.2) about how to stay safe while using public transit in Vancouver or taking surveys about their public transit usage and perceptions of safety regarding the transit system. They did both of these without always realizing the connections between their gender or race and their behaviors in transit spaces or decisions regarding public transit usage –i.e. things they “did almost without thinking” as Ruby put it, (see participant quote 15, section 4.1.1). Conducting further research, following alternative methodologies and intersectional analytical frameworks such as those used in this study, can help researchers understand the depth of the connections between the public transit usage and overall urban mobility, fear of harassment or violence and perceptions of safety among different women of color. Learning from such studies can allow planners to inform their strategic plans regarding urban transportation in Canada based on a richer, deeper and more complex understanding about the obstructions to mobility justice encountered by marginalized communities. The Transportation 2040 Plan currently mentions “personal security” without so much as acknowledging the various ways in which different persons are able to experience security in urban spaces and the uneven access to safe transit experiences among different people and demographics due to marginalization based on facets of their identity such as gender, race, class etc. (Lubitow et. al, 2017). Several participants in this study shared that in many cases they

⁴⁴<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/579398799f7456b10f43afb0/t/5fa5a55c0a0e424867de0a07/1604691298403/Untokening+Strategic+Planning+Report-+small.pdf>

were not sure whether they could call some of their experiences harassment and in several other cases, even though they definitely considered something to be harassment they chose to not report the incident or contact authorities when it occurred (see section 3.1.2). The complicated and layered nature of their experiences and life circumstances, as well as the impacts of the various facets of their identity on how they responded to incidents of harassment deserve better than to all be stuffed down together under one box, labelled: “women of color”, “immigrants” or “ESL students”. With the rising rates of violence against women of color in urban spaces especially since the COVID-19 outbreak, women of color need to be “heard”, their experiences “valued and validated”, and “more needs to be done” as Anna put it (see Participant quote 20, section 4.1.2). Public transportation is one of the most prevalent sites of such violence, without safe access to which women of color are unable to meet their day-to-day needs in urban regions such as Vancouver. Hearing their stories and incorporating a mobility justice framework into significant transit planning strategies such as the Transportation 2040 Plan can allow planners and policy-makers in Vancouver to remove obstacles to mobility justice in the city and meet its goals in terms of equity, diversity and inclusion as outlined in the Women’s Equity Strategy.

Research Limitations

The scale and remote methods of this study were not ideal. Due to the constraints of the program within which I conducted this study as well as the onset of the COVID-19 outbreak during the course of this project, I was only able to interview five participants using remote methods. Interviewing more participants using in-person facilitation of the interviews and Body Map Storytelling exercise and perhaps even forming subsequent focus groups from the pool of participants may have led to much more interesting results. Alternatively, conducting similar studies but with specific emphasis on age, sexual orientation, able-bodiedness etc. as well as gender and race may have led to interesting results as well. Despite these limitations, the research findings from this study show that following alternative research methods such as Body Map Storytelling and positioning participants as “experts” on their lived experiences and on the data being collected can lead to diverse ways of understanding our urban issues. A deeper understanding about the experiences of different women of color could be achieved by following research methods such as those used in this study, on a larger scale or with a focus on other facets of participants’ identities.

4.2. Research Findings

The stories shared by participants, analyzed in the context of statistics and scholarship referenced throughout this study, culminate in the following set of findings:

- 1. Women of color spatialize their fear of harassment/ violence and navigate ‘mental maps’ of safe/ unsafe transit spaces:** All participants in this study assess the overall safety of any transit space in Vancouver based on signifiers of safety’ which include: physical features, the presence of certain individuals as well as behaviors or attitudes among people in these spaces. Identifying these signifiers allows them to quickly assess the safety of a transit space and take steps to find transit-based routes where they can avoid being in unsafe spaces. This is how women of color spatialize’ their fear to form navigable mental maps’ of safe and unsafe transit spaces. Although scholarship reveals that all women may do this to some extent, for women of color these mental maps are more complex since they are exposed to discrimination based on both gender and race.
- 2. Signs of a safe transit space include:** Participants mentioned that proper lighting, busy streets, open stores, seeing other women- especially other women of color, visible security cameras and emergency phones in Skytrain stations, familiar infrastructure or landmarks visible from the transit space and visible security personnel or ways of contacting security personnel/ police without alerting the harasser’s suspicions were considered to be signs of a safe transit space in Metro Vancouver.
- 3. Signs of an unsafe transit space included:** Participants mentioned dark or poorly-lit transit spaces, poor maintenance or signs of neglect (such as unclean floors, broken lights or signage etc.), drug or alcohol paraphernalia, presence of a homeless person or someone visibly intoxicated, hearing or seeing loud yelling/ cursing and fights and the presence of one or more men who are behaving in a “-creepy” manner, i.e. conversing, making physical contact, flirting or making sexual advances without consent, especially at night or in deserted areas The two participants who identified as Black women also mentioned the presence of a group of men, especially if they are all White or appear to be intoxicated and/ or in a transit space that is also dark or isolated can signify a lack of safety.
- 4. Self-policing and following mental ‘safety checklists’ improve perceptions of safety:** All participants shared how they police or strictly monitor their own bodies- including their clothing, hair, body language/ behavior, language/speech etc. (see Chapter 3.1.2) in order to manage

perceptions about themselves, to appear less vulnerable and more alert and to identify threats to their safety. Participants also follow a set of steps in order to feel safer; while some participants do this consciously, even referring to these steps as “lists” or “safety checklists”, others spoke about these steps as part of their day-to-day routines. Participants also shared that policing their bodies and following these checklists can have long-term, negative repercussions on their worldviews, self-perception, behavior and mental health.

- 5. Harassment/ violence in transit spaces not mentally associated with safety of the transit system:** All participants spoke about their personal experiences of harassment in transit spaces in Vancouver as part of everyday life in the city. They did not consider these incidents to be reflective of the safety standards of the transit system, even when they occurred inside a bus or a Skytrain.
- 6. General hesitation in reporting incidents of harassment/ violence to police:** All participants were generally reluctant about reporting their personal experiences of harassment or violence to the police. Some participants said that if they witnessed wrong-doing in a transit space (particularly when they themselves were not being targeted personally or affected individually by the incident of ‘wrongdoing’ or crime), they might speak up or report it but with very low expectations of any positive outcomes.
- 7. Black women’s experiences unique even compared to other women of color:** The two Black women who participated in this study shared unique factors that impacted their fear of harassment or violence and perceptions of safety, compared to other participants. These factors included:
 - a) hearing about Black women encountering higher levels of threat, violence and police brutality in the media which intensified their own fear of harassment or violence
 - b) taking steps to avoid stereotypes that are assigned to Black women in order to feel safer in transit spaces
 - c) feeling hyper-visible or invisible due to their race (more so than other participants)
 - d) experiencing unique dynamics of power and agency between themselves and White passengers or police personnel
- 8. Avoiding an unsafe transit space can involve taking longer, more expensive or otherwise inconvenient routes:** Some participants described that avoiding an unsafe transit space, such as Ruby’s avoidance of the Chinatown-Stadium Skytrain station at night, can involve taking a longer and more inconvenient route. Participants shared that they rely on

ride-sharing modes of transit such as Uber and Evo or taxis for commutes at night, due to a lack of buses and Skytrains operating at that time or because the ones that are still running along their required route are not perceived to be very safe at that time. Frequent expenses towards ride-sharing services or taxis can create significant financial stress upon international students who are women of color, negatively impacting their social, academic and professional integration into Canadian communities and sense of belonging in Canada.

9. **Unreported, minor experiences of harassment impact mental health negatively:** Constant policing of their bodies, following their safety checklists' and still encountering many incidents of less serious' forms of harassment (which participants did not report due to the less violent nature of most of these incidents) cause anxiety and stress among participants, creating negative impacts on their mental health overall.

10. **Avoiding stereotypes impacts behaviors, mental health, sense of identity and safety:** Ruby described how passengers on a transit vehicle or an enclosed transit space display changes in their body language and attitudes towards her when another Black person is being belligerent or disruptive in that space (while no such changes are exhibited towards White passengers when a White person is being belligerent- see Chapter 3.2.2). She shared in both her Body Map and the interviews that she feels like she is always representing Black people in public or transit spaces in Vancouver and takes steps to avoid being seen as a "stereotypical Black teen", such as monitoring her clothing, hairstyle, body language, behavior etc. in transit spaces (discussed in Chapter 3). Since she is extremely aware of how her appearance and behaviors can sometimes highlight her race and open herself up to more danger, she tries to manage people's perceptions about her; however, this can involve compromising either her sense of pride rooted in her gender and race/ ethnic background or her sense of safety based on social prejudices such as sexism or racism. These behaviors and choices cause her to feel stressed and anxious during many of her commutes using public transit in Vancouver, and can place a tremendous burden upon her mental health as she tries to balance aspects of her identity while trying to remain safe from harassment or violence. Ruby's experiences are a reflection of how women of color in Vancouver, particularly Black women, constantly anticipate being stereotyped based on their race or gender and condition their bodies to behave and appear a certain way to manage others' perceptions about them, which impacts their self-image and mental health in negative ways.

- 11. There is a need for more research that uses a mobility justice framework to understand the urban experiences and mobilities among women of color:** Sections 4.1.1 and 4.1.2 discuss how participants' responses in this study and literature reviews reveal a need for more research that attempts to break down silos of knowledge between urban planners, practitioners and proponents of mobility justice. Ruby's mention of the controversial broken window theory' included in section 3.1.1 and Reema's mention of the term White-passing' in section 3.2.1 reveal how women of color who are students at higher education institutes have certain vocabularies to express some of their experiences regarding their urban mobility and perceptions of safety. However, not every woman of color in Canada has access to resources that would allow them to be knowledgeable about such terms and concepts. Further research using a mobility justice framework that acknowledges these aspects can help women of color to share their experiences effectively.
- 12. Alternative research methods with an intersectional analytical lens can help participants explore their race, gender, fear of harassment/ violence and perceptions of safety in transit spaces:** The incorporation of the Body Map Storytelling exercise alongside qualitative interviews in this study has allowed participants to reflect on their sensory and spatial experiences (Lawton, 1994; Degen & Rose, 2012; see Chapter 1.2.3 and 2.2.2) in transit spaces, their memories of these experiences and what they choose to take away from the stories they shared. Drawing their Body Maps by hand allowed them to have a sense of ownership over their stories and their representation in this study, while also helping them to find connections between the stories they shared through the nostalgic, childhood act of drawing a picture by hand. Combining alternative research methods such as this exercise can therefore help establish and maintain an intersectional lens in the research, improve the richness of the data collected and help participants explore deeply personal issues regarding their bodies, gender, race, fear, safety and mobility. Further research using such alternative methodologies and analytical frameworks can help women of color realize the connections between their fear of harassment or violence, perceptions of safety and urban mobility using public transit systems. More research, as mentioned in findings #11 and 12, can help policy-makers, urban planners, and practitioners in these fields to implement municipal strategies regarding transit planning based on a richer and intersectional understanding of the obstructions to mobility justice encountered by marginalized communities in Canada.

13. **This research challenges and unsettles the dichotomy of public/private spaces as well as the concept of a universal transit user, thus contributing to literature on feminist geography.** While women of color in Metro Vancouver navigate public transit systems, they simultaneously navigate private, mental maps that spatialize their fear of harassment or violence. Navigating between public and private spaces in order to use transit, they use their speech, hair, body language and companionship or sense of sisterhood with other women of color to create bubbles of privacy and safety within public spaces. Even between different women of color, mental maps of safe and unsafe spaces and perceptions of safety vary, which in turn impacts their varied usage of public transit systems, thus showing that there is no 'universal' or generic transit user. Strategies, policies, campaigns or efforts to address the lack of safety on public transit that disregard the psychologically 'spatialized' and physically embodied nature of fear of harassment or violence among different individuals thus fail to acknowledge the uneven access to safe spaces among transit users. The findings from this study thus challenge traditional notions of safety based on public/private divides, where privacy created by infrastructure or the built environment inherently implies safer spaces than the dangerous world "out there", open to the public. Instead, this study calls for a deeper examination of safety, using an intersectional lens and in light of the mobility justice framework.

4.3. Conclusion

Who feels safe, where and why? How does one's body help them to feel more or less safe and in control of their transit experience or mobility? How are the urban trajectories of different human bodies shaped by their gender, race and various other aspects of their identity? Finding answers to these questions and helping such connections come to light by hearing from women of color can lead to a better understanding about the nuances and complications regarding the hurdles that women of color encounter in their day-to-day public transit usage in urban regions in Canada. Examining municipal policies, strategic plans regarding transportation, transportation planning and design standards and safety standards for transit systems, in light of social and political injustices such as racial or sexual discrimination, can help bring such connections to light. The stories and perspectives shared by participants in this study and the research findings from this study thus augment the existing body of knowledge in the field of mobility justice in Canada, while revealing the need for further research in this field using intersectional and alternative research methods.

Conducting more research using the mobility justice framework and alternative research methodologies to understand how women of color experience their urban mobility in Canada can help break down silos of knowledge between the fields of urban planning, transportation planning and design, and gender studies.

Urban safety is an ever-changing concept. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed and exacerbated social and political injustices around the world and has complicated the concept of safety in urban public spaces even further. But our cities or our public transit systems cannot be considered safe until they are safe for all. Safety in regards to public transit needs to be addressed in terms of equity and mobility justice as well as infrastructural and design-based approaches. With more and more transit-oriented development in urban regions around the world, safety in public transit systems is paramount to the overall safety of our cities and for all individuals living within them.

Transit-related safety or the right to individual urban mobility is a feminist concern and a racial concern. We have to break down the way we think about safety on public transit to include ethnographic and feminist approaches in order to understand how different bodies are faced with different obstacles in their daily transit-based mobility as well as how they are able to overcome these obstacles or cope with them in unique ways. Our cities are changing rapidly and the social demographics within urban regions are diversifying. Women of color are a rapidly growing minority group in Canada who experience disproportionate rates of harassment or violence in transit spaces and report a lower sense of safety in Canadian cities. Hearing, validating, respecting, understanding and taking lessons from the stories regarding the public-transit experiences of women of color can deepen our understanding about the obstacles to mobility justice in Canada. Implementing transportation strategies and policies based on an intersectional analysis of such experiences can help urban public transit systems of the future be more equitable, accessible and safe for all.

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- Harassment on Translink is the blog that was the cornerstone of a multi-phase project created in direct relation to the City of Vancouver's Healthy City Strategy, most specifically their sixth ("Getting Around") and eleventh ("Being and Feeling Safe and Included") draft goals. Available at: <https://translinkharassment.wordpress.com/>

The Center for the Study of Social Policy is a national, non-profit policy organization based in the US that connects community action, public system reform, and policy change to create a fair and just society in which all children and families thrive. Available at: <https://cssp.org/2020/03/recognizing-race-in-language-why-we-capitalize-black-and-white/>

The Metro Vancouver Transit Police is a multi-jurisdictional policing agency dedicated to the provision of policing to the transit system in Metro Vancouver. <https://transitpolice.ca/about-us/> ; <https://www.translink.ca/about-us/about-translink/operating-companies/transit-police>

The “Body Maps: Art and Memory” is part of Médecins sans frontières’s Access Campaign, 20 years in the making, Available at: <https://msfaccess.org/body-maps-art-and-memory>

The platform for advertising research projects within the SFU student community that have obtained ethics approval and meet their selection criteria: <https://www.sfu.ca/gradstudies/life-community/people-research/grad-student-research.html>

The ‘East Van Cross’ is the colloquial term for the ‘Monument for East Vancouver’, which is a public art project commissioned in 2009 by the City of Vancouver as part of the Olympic and Paralympic Public Art Program, to artist Ken Lum. Details available at: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/public-art-brochure-monument-for-east-vancouver.PDF>

The Expo Line is part of the three automated rapid-transit Skytrain lines in Metro Vancouver that connects Downtown Vancouver with the cities of Burnaby, New Westminister, and Surrey. Expo Line schedules available at: <https://www.translink.ca/schedules-and-maps/skytrain#expo-line>

Pacsafe is a brand of travel equipment with emphasis on anti-theft features: <https://int.pacsafe.com/>

The Women’s Equity Strategy adopted by the City of Vancouver builds on the foundational work started with the City’s 2005 Gender Equality plan and sheds light on many of the barriers which continue to limit the full participation and contributions of all women, including those who identify as women. Details: <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/womens-equity-strategy.aspx>

The Transportation 2040 Plan is a long-term strategic vision for the city that will help guide transportation and land use decisions, and public investments for the years ahead. Details: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/transportation-2040-plan.pdf>

Definitions in Glossary:

Ethnic Origin of Person:

<https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&Id=103475>

Gender of Person:

<https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p3Var.pl?Function=DEC&Id=410445>

Gender-Based Violence:

<https://canadianwomen.org/the-facts/sexual-assault-harassment/>

Hyper-vigilance:

Zawilinski, L. (2020). Hypervigilance. In *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences* (pp. 2101–2103). Springer International Publishing.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-24612-3_902

Intersectionality:

Kim, G. J.-S., & Shaw, S. M. (2018). *Intersectional theology : an introductory guide*. Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan M. Shaw. Fortress Press; K, Crenshaw. (1989): 139 –67. *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. University of Chicago Legal Forum 1

Public Space:

Walzer, M. (1986) Pleasures and Costs of Urbanity. *Dissent*, 33, 470-47)

Stereotype:

<https://pressbooks.nsc.ca/nscsociology/chapter/chapter-7-race-and-discrimination/>

Systemic Discrimination/ Inequity:

Abella, Rosalie Silberman. (1984). *Equality in Employment: The Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment*. Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada

Victim-blaming:

Andrew, B., Brewin, C. R., & Rose, S. (2003). Gender, social support, and PTSD in victims of violent crime. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, (4), 16, p.421-427;
https://crcvc.ca/docs/victim_blaming.pdf

Appendix A. Call for Participants Poster

Are you a **female student at SFU?**

Do you identify as a **POC (person of color)?**

Do you rely on **public transportation in Vancouver?**

If you answered **YES** to the above, click [here](#)
to participate in a research project!

How To Participate?

Click on the link above & enter your email
to learn details about the study.

Take part in 3 remote interviews, each lasting 1 hour.

Collect **\$20 per interview.**

What Is The Project About?

Understanding how women of color experience
fear of harassment and/or violence
in **Vancouver's public transit systems**, and
how such fear shapes their
mobility in Metro-Vancouver.

This project has obtained human research ethics approval
from the SFU Office of Research Ethics.

For more info, please contact:

<Researcher's Email>
(redacted for confidentiality)

Appendix B. Online Survey

Participate in a research project about mobility justice in Vancouver!

* 1. Please enter your full name.

Jane Doe

* 2. Please enter your SFU email below to be contacted regarding the details of this study. Over the next few days, please look out for an email from stabassu@sfu.ca regarding your participation in this study.

janedoe21@sfu.ca

DONE

Appendix C. Participant Selection Criteria

Survey Response No.	Phases of Participant Selection						Selected as Participant (*)
	Phase I – Survey			Phase II – Email Outreach	Phase III – Final Screening		
	SFU student ⁴⁵	Woman of Color ⁴⁶	Reliant on public transit systems in Metro Vancouver ⁴⁷	Satisfactory responses to initial email ⁴⁸	Length of stay in Vancouver > 1 year ⁴⁹	Demonstrated ability to participate/ timely email exchange ⁵⁰	
1	YES	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NO	NO
2	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO
3	YES	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NO	NO
4	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO
5*	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
6	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO
7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NO	NO
8	YES	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NO	NO
9*	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
10*	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
11	YES	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NO	NO
12*	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
13*	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
14	YES	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NO	NO

⁴⁵ When respondents provided an SFU email ID on the survey, this was recorded as a **YES**.

When no email/ no SFU email ID was provided, this was recorded as a **NO**.

⁴⁶ Anyone who completed the survey was recorded as a **YES**

⁴⁷ Anyone who completed the survey was recorded as a **YES**

⁴⁸ The initial email sent to survey respondents asked: –How and why do you self-identify as a woman of color?” and –How reliant are you on public transportation systems in Metro Vancouver for your day-to-day commutes?” Satisfactory responses were recorded as a **YES** when they were:

Clear and brief

Provided in a reasonably timely-manner (within the parameters of my research timeline)

Able to confirm that the respondent identified as a woman

Providing the respondent's race/ ethnicity/ nationality or offered an explanation for why they identify as a person of color or visible minority in Canada

Able to communicate the frequency of transit-based commutes, purpose(s) of typical commutes and/or the extent and nature of their reliance on public transit systems in Metro Vancouver

When no response was received to the initial email, this was recorded as N/A.

⁴⁹ Satisfactory responses were recorded as a **YES** when they confirmed this duration as being longer than a year.

⁵⁰ Satisfactory responses were recorded as a **YES** when all correspondence with this respondent was able to be conducted in a reasonably timely manner (within the parameters of my research timeline) and they demonstrated the ability to participate in this study.

* Survey respondents who were selected as participants

Appendix D. Interview Questionnaires and Body Mapping Facilitation Guide

Stage I – Mobility Assessment

Introduction:

Previous usage of public transit (outside Vancouver): Where you have lived before coming to Vancouver and how reliant were you on public transportation in those places?

Mobility Needs and Choices:

- 1. Typical transit-reliant day in Vancouver:** Please describe a typical day in Metro Vancouver, when you are highly reliant on public transportation for getting around? You can include details about:
 - Your routes and modes of transit and how you choose them;
 - Frequency of certain trips;
 - What times of the day certain trips occur on, etc.
- 2. General experience of transit in Vancouver:** What is your general experience of using Metro Vancouver's public transportation systems?

Bodies and Mobility Justice:

- 3. Impacts of being a WOC on transit-use:** Shifting our focus slightly now, I want you to think about two facets of your identity: being a woman and a person of color. Do you feel that your usage of public transportation in Vancouver is impacted in any way by either of these identities? If yes, then how does this occur?
- 4. Impacts of other significant factors on transit-use:** Are there any other facets of your identity or ways in which you identify that you feel are significant or that impact your behavior and actions or even the way you are perceived by others while using public transit? Are there any aspects of your identity that you feel would make you feel more vulnerable or less safe in transit spaces?

Fear and Mobility:

- 5. Safe/ unsafe spaces:** Do you think certain transit spaces in Metro Vancouver are more or less safe than others? How do you make these assessments of safety?
- 6. Preparations:** How do you prepare for commutes using public transit in Vancouver? Which trips are more difficult to prepare for and which are not? Why?

7. **Altered behavior to feel safer:** Have you ever altered your behavior/ actions out of a fear of violence or harassment while using public transit in Metro Vancouver?
8. **Steps taken to feel safer:** Have you ever taken any steps to feel safer in a transit space in Metro Vancouver? What kinds of trips generally require such steps?
9. **Choosing modes:** How comfortable do you feel with using different modes of public transit in different situations in Metro Vancouver and how does that level of comfort change? Are there any times of the day or specific transit stations or routes where you feel more or less comfortable?
10. **Support systems:** Have you ever relied on any support system(s) to help you navigate a safer route for yourself? How have they helped you in the past? (this can be an app/website, a friend/social network, a landmark/ guide etc.)

Experiences of Harassment/ Violence in Transit Spaces:

11. **Personal experiences of harassment:** Have you ever experienced any form of harassment or violence while using public transit in Vancouver or while navigating the city in order to access public transit? Or have you ever been personally harassed or physically attacked or witnessed an attack while using public transit? If yes, how would you describe those experiences?
12. **Family/ friends experiences of harassment:** Has anyone in your immediate family or social circle shared with you their experiences of being harassed or attacked in a public transit space in Vancouver? If yes, could you describe the incident(s)?
13. **Impacts of harassment:** If 'yes' to (i) or (ii): How did such incident(s) impact you? How did it impact the way you chose to travel using public transit in the future?

Conclusion:

14. **Anything missing:** Did we miss anything important in our discussion, in regards to your use of public transportation in Vancouver and your perceptions of safety in such spaces?
15. **Future transit-usage:** Do you think that you will continue to rely on public transit for as long as you live in Metro Vancouver?

Stage II – Body Mapping

Facilitation guide for the Body Mapping exercise followed during the second interview:

Step 0: Introduction to the Body Mapping exercise	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly explain to participants why Body Map Storytelling is being used as a research method in this study • Summarize the outline of this interview
Script	<p><i>Today, we'll be going through an activity together called Body Mapping. We will focus on the human body to explore how your thoughts and feelings impact the ways in which you travel using public transit in Vancouver. I will give you prompts in a series of steps that will help you draw your Body Map on a sheet of paper by hand. This will be your body map and you are ultimately the expert on your own lived experiences, so the content of the Body Map will depend a lot on how you choose to respond to the prompts. Your artistic abilities are not significant for this activity, so please don't worry about the aesthetic quality of the Body Map.</i></p> <p><i>To give you a bit of background about this activity, Body Map storytelling has been used by researchers in many different fields to help with healing and to understand things that are not revealed through more traditional and chronological recounts of people's lived experiences.</i></p> <p><i>I have chosen this activity for my project because it promotes intersectionality and self-assessments, positioning you as the 'expert' on your experiences. It also helps us to appreciate human bodies as active agents in the social, economic and spatial spheres of our lives. The activity itself is not complicated, but it requires you to be in a space where you can think deeply about the prompts and instructions without being interrupted. Do you have any questions at this point?</i></p>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that participants have read the informed consent form for this study before beginning the exercise • Inform participants well before the interview what tools they will need to complete this exercise: a sheet of paper, pens/ pencils- ideally in a few different colors. • Confirm that participants are in an environment where they can complete this exercise without interruptions • Keep a check on the participant's general health and energy level throughout the exercise • Keep in mind that each participant will interpret prompts in their own way and complete each step at their own pace • Provide time-checks to the participants to help keep the interview under an hour
Step 1: Body Outline	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how (if at all) participants depict their self-identification as women, people of color and students at Simon Fraser University • Understand how participants see themselves or how they think others view them when they are in transit spaces in Vancouver

Script	<i>Draw an outline of your body on the sheet of paper in front of you. Think about the posture in which you are drawing the outline of your body as well as the color of the outline. Choose a posture and color that represents how you in your physical body occupy space within public places, especially in places of public transportation in Vancouver.</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to explain to participants that they are free to interpret how they “occupy space within public/ transit spaces” or to respond to any questions they have • Remind participants that their Body Maps will be published and may be reproduced in various forms
Step 2: Safe Transit Spaces	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how participants describe a safe transit space in Metro Vancouver
Script	<i>Use images, symbols or words to describe a “transit space”: bus stop, walkway/ waiting area around a bus stop, train station or the inside of a bus/train, where you might feel <u>safe</u>. You can draw objects/people/situations that can create this feeling for you in a “public transit” space. Use all of the space on the paper, including the space inside and outside your body outline to show different things.</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think critically about how they assess the safety of certain transit spaces and what factors influence their assessment • Encourage participants to think about specific incidents or experiences that have made them feel safe in transit spaces
Step 3: Unsafe Transit Spaces	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how participants describe an unsafe transit space in Metro Vancouver
Script	<i>Use images, symbols or words to describe a “transit space”: bus stop, walkway/ waiting area around a bus stop, train station or the inside of a bus/train, where you might feel <u>unsafe</u>. You can draw objects/people/situations that can create this feeling for you in a “public transit” space. Use all of the space on the paper, including the space inside and outside your body outline to show different things.</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think critically about how they assess the safety of certain transit spaces and what factors influence their assessment • Encourage participants to think about specific incidents or experiences that have made them feel unsafe in transit spaces
Step 4: Steps to feel safer- Before a trip	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how participants prepare themselves to feel safer when they know they may be in an unsafe transit space for any part of their trip • Understand what parts of their body help them feel safer
Script	<i>Imagine that you are preparing for a trip using public transit in Vancouver and you will be taking a route that you know to be relatively unsafe. Use images, symbols or words to describe the steps you might take to prepare/ protect yourself in order or to feel safe, before the trip (i.e. from your home to a “transit space”). Do a scan of your body outline, going from head to toe, and try to identify what parts of your body are involved in each of these steps. Try to focus on your body specifically and less on the environment around it.</i>

Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think about anything they might wear, carry or any behavioral changes they might make in order to feel safe before a trip • Encourage participants to think about specific incidents or experiences of preparing for a trip to feel safer
Step 5: Steps to feel safer- During a trip	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how participants take steps to protect themselves or feel safe during a trip that requires them to be in an unsafe transit space for any part of the trip • Understand what parts of their body as well as the environment in the transit spaces around them help them feel safer
Script	<p><i>Once again, imagine you're preparing for a trip using public transit in Vancouver using a route that you know to be relatively less safe. Use images, symbols or words to describe the steps you might take to protect yourself or to feel safe during the trip (while on a bus/ Skytrain and coming all the way back home).</i></p> <p><i>Look at the area around your body outline and let this represent your surroundings in "public transit spaces". For this step, try to identify the elements in your surroundings that are involved in any such steps as well as your body.</i></p>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think about anything they might wear, carry or any behavioral changes they might make as well as elements in their environment that they can use in order to feel safe during a trip • Encourage participants to think about specific experiences or incidents when they took steps to feel safe in unsafe transit spaces
Step 6: Feeling unsafe in transit spaces- Part I	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand whether participants have had any experiences or interactions in transit spaces that made them feel uncomfortable, threatened or unsafe • Understand how the participants choose to remember and reflect on any such incidents and how they situate their identities as women of color within such experiences
Script	<p><i>Now, think about any interactions you have had with strangers in a "transit space" or any interactions you have overheard in such spaces that made you feel uncomfortable, threatened or unsafe. Use words, images or symbols to describe your sensations and thoughts during such instances. How did you feel? How did you respond?</i></p>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to focus more on their feelings and thoughts when they encountered such interactions or incidents rather than the outcomes of such incidents • Encourage participants to think about specific incidents or experiences of feeling unsafe, uncomfortable or threatened in a transit space
Step 7: Feeling unsafe in transit spaces- Part II	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand whether participants have experienced a fear of harassment or violence in transit spaces in Vancouver and how this fear has manifested • Understand how participants describe this fear in relation to their identities as women of color who are students at SFU

Script	<i>Now, think specifically about the sensation of fear. Focus on how fear (of harassment or violence) based on sexism or racism has played a role (if at all) in your decisions regarding your day-to-day routines, your actions and behavior in public spaces and your usage of public transit systems in Vancouver. Use symbols, images or words to show how this fear has manifested or how you have experienced it as well as how it impacted your commutes using public transit in Vancouver.</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to focus more on their feelings and thoughts when they encountered such interactions or incidents rather than the outcomes of such incidents • Encourage participants to think about specific incidents when they experienced a fear of harassment or violence in transit spaces
Step 8: Impacts of USF (unique factors of significance) on transit usage	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what other factors, apart from gender and race, impact participants' transit usage, fear of harassment or violence and perceptions of safety in Vancouver that are unique to each participant • Highlight factors that participants have mentioned during the Mobility Assessment that may impact their transit usage, apart from their gender and race
Script	<i>You've mentioned in our first interview that _____ (you are a petite person/ you are "White-passing" most of the year/ you are a queer woman who sometimes takes public transit with your partner/ you've experienced taking public transit in Vancouver when you were injured/ required a mobility assistance device/ were pregnant.) Think about any situations where you felt that these factors impacted the way you were perceived in transit spaces, the way you behaved or any actions you took to feel safer. How did these situations make you feel? How did you behave differently as a consequence of such situations? What steps did you take to feel safer? Use images, symbols and/or words to describe the above.</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the information shared during the Mobility Assessment to highlight any UFS they have already mentioned (the items listed within brackets in the script) to explore how these factors have impacted their transit usage • If the participant did not share any UFS during the Mobility Assessment, encourage them to think about whether there are any such factors that apply to them • Encourage participants to think about how their gender and race relate to any of these UFS
Step 9: Projecting Safety	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what parts of their body help participants project or present themselves in ways that make them feel safe in transit spaces
Script	<i>Now, try to identify the parts of your body that help you project yourself more confidently/ assertively in public spaces/ transit spaces. This can also include an accessory you wear or carry on a certain part of your body to help you feel safer. Which of your body parts can play a role in helping you feel safer by projecting yourself in a different way? How do they achieve this? Use images, symbols and/or words to identify these elements and to describe how they can help you feel safer.</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think about specific incidents when they projected something intentionally or behaved and presented themselves differently in order to feel safe in transit spaces

Step 10: Hyper-visibility versus Invisibility	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand whether participants have ever felt hyper-visible or invisible in transit spaces in Vancouver • Understand what made them feel this way and how they responded or behaved in such situations
Script	<i>Now, think about whether or not you have ever felt either hyper-visible or invisible while in a public transit space in Vancouver. Use words, images or symbols to describe your sensations and thoughts about any such experiences. What kinds of things have made you feel this way? How did you react or respond to this feeling? How did it impact your behavior, actions or interactions?</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think about specific incidents when they felt hyper-visible or invisible in transit spaces
Step 11: Experiences of harassment or violence- Part I	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how participants felt and reacted to any personal experiences of harassment or violence in transit spaces in Vancouver • Understand what made them feel this way and how they responded or behaved in such situations • Understand how participants now reflect on such incidents and what they take away from such experiences
Script	<i>You've shared an experience about _____. Reflecting on this experience now, what do you remember thinking and feeling at the time? Do you wish you had reacted differently? How did you react? Try to identify your thoughts and feelings regarding this incident and describe them using images, words and/symbols.</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think about specific incidents or experiences of harassment or violence in transit spaces in Vancouver • Remind participants that they don't have to respond to any questions that they do not wish to • Remind participants at the end of this step that they have access to free mental health services provided by SFU • Keep a check on participants' overall well-being and health since this question may be very triggering for some
Step 12: Experiences of harassment or violence- Part II	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how participants felt and reacted to any personal experiences of harassment or violence in transit spaces in Vancouver • Understand what made them feel this way and how they responded or behaved in such situations • Understand how participants now reflect on such incidents and what they take away from such experiences
Script	<i>You've mentioned that you have witnessed/ a friend or family member has shared with you their experience of incidents of harassment or violence in transit spaces in Vancouver. How did witnessing or hearing about such incidents impact you? How did they make you feel? Have they impacted your behavior and actions in shared/ public spaces, including transit spaces, in Vancouver? Use images, words and/symbols to describe your experience of such incidents and their impact on you.</i>

Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think about specific incidents that they have witnessed – such as hearing racist/ sexist slurs being exchanged like one participant mentioned- or specific experiences shared by close friends/ family in Vancouver regarding harassment or violence in transit spaces • Remind participants that they don't have to respond to any questions that they do not wish to • Remind participants at the end of this step that they have access to free mental health services provided by SFU • Keep a check on participants' overall well-being and health since this question may be very triggering for some
Step 13: What makes you feel safer	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand what forms of support, networks or resources help participants feel safer in transit spaces in Vancouver
Script	<i>Use words, images or symbols to describe any forms of support, networks or resources you have used to feel safer in transit spaces in Vancouver. This can include the act of going out with a group of women, having someone with you, using a mobile app for navigation/ safety etc. What makes you feel safer?</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think about factors that they have not already mentioned or may have missed when describing the factors that help them feel safe in transit spaces
Step 14: Reporting to transit authority	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how participants feel about reporting incidents of harassment or violence to the police • Understand how participants feel about transit authority/ police in transit spaces in general
Script	<i>Use symbols, images or words to show how you might feel about reporting incidents of harassment or assault to any authority figure- police or public transit authority, in Vancouver.</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think about specific experiences of harassment or violence or incidents that they have witnessed in transit spaces in Vancouver • Remind participants that they don't have to respond to any questions that they do not wish to • Keep a check on participants' overall well-being and health since this question may be very triggering for some
Step 15: Filling in the gaps	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give participants an opportunity to evaluate and adjust their Body Maps before the end of this activity
Script	<i>Take a couple of minutes to look at what you have drawn thus far. Is there anything missing? Is there any message you would like to convey to others, regarding your: public transit experience as a woman of color, your fear of harassment or violence in transit spaces, or your perceptions of safety of transit spaces?</i>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think about factors that they have not already mentioned or may have missed

Step 16: Personal symbol/ slogan	
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To represent the diversity within women of color in Canada • To allow participants to feel a sense of ownership over their Body Maps • To visualize how participants view their own presence within transit spaces in Vancouver and choose to depict it
Script	<p><i>Finally, take a few moments to reflect on this activity and choose one item- a symbol, a word or phrase or an image to draw, that would be your personal slogan or symbol. Think of this as the mark you are leaving as a woman, as a person of color and as all of the things you are, on the spaces you occupy in this city. It can be something to represent that your lived experiences are significant and valid.</i></p>
Notes/ Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participants to think about factors that they have not already mentioned or may have missed

Stage III – Testimonial/ Storytelling

Reviewing the Body Map:

- 1. Identifying responses to Stage II Prompts 1-15 on the Body Map:** Can you identify on your Body Map what you drew or wrote in response to each of the prompts given during Stage II?

Further analyzing identified responses:

- 2.** Why do you think you chose to draw or write the images and text to depict your experiences/ thoughts/ feelings?
- 3.** Where on your Body Map did you use color for a specific reason or to attach a certain meaning to the image or text?
- 4.** Can you identify text or images that can symbolize more than one thing or respond to more than one prompt?
- 5.** Would you add or remove anything to your original drawing now? Why?
- 6.** How do you feel about your Body Map? Do you think it represents you as a woman of color and your perceptions of safety while using public transit in Vancouver?

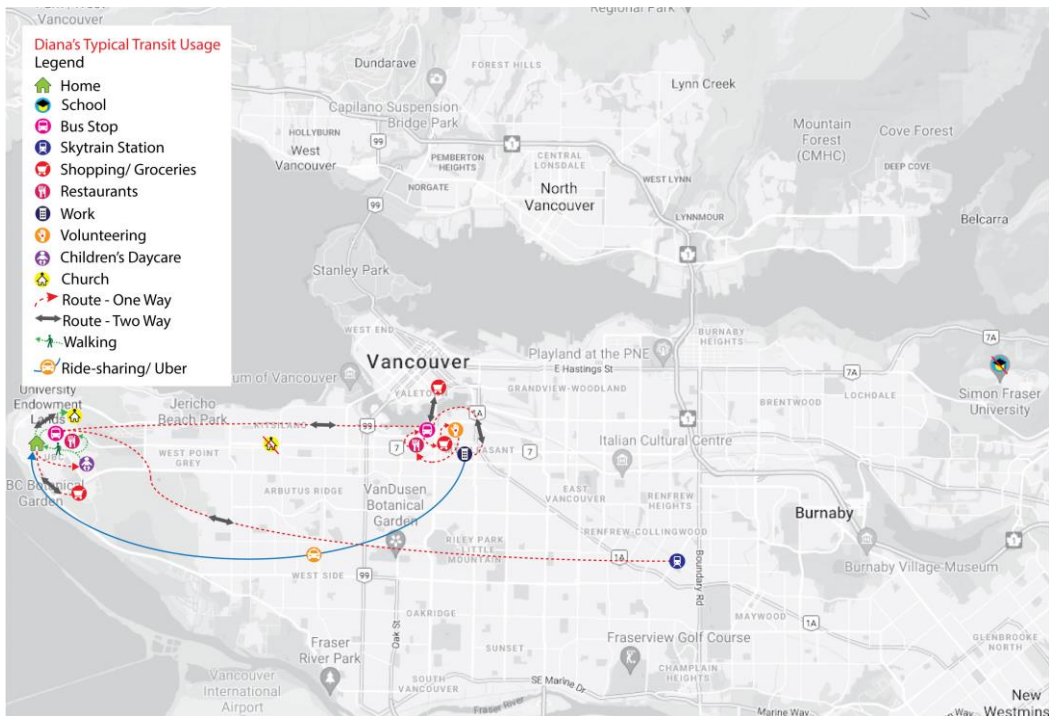
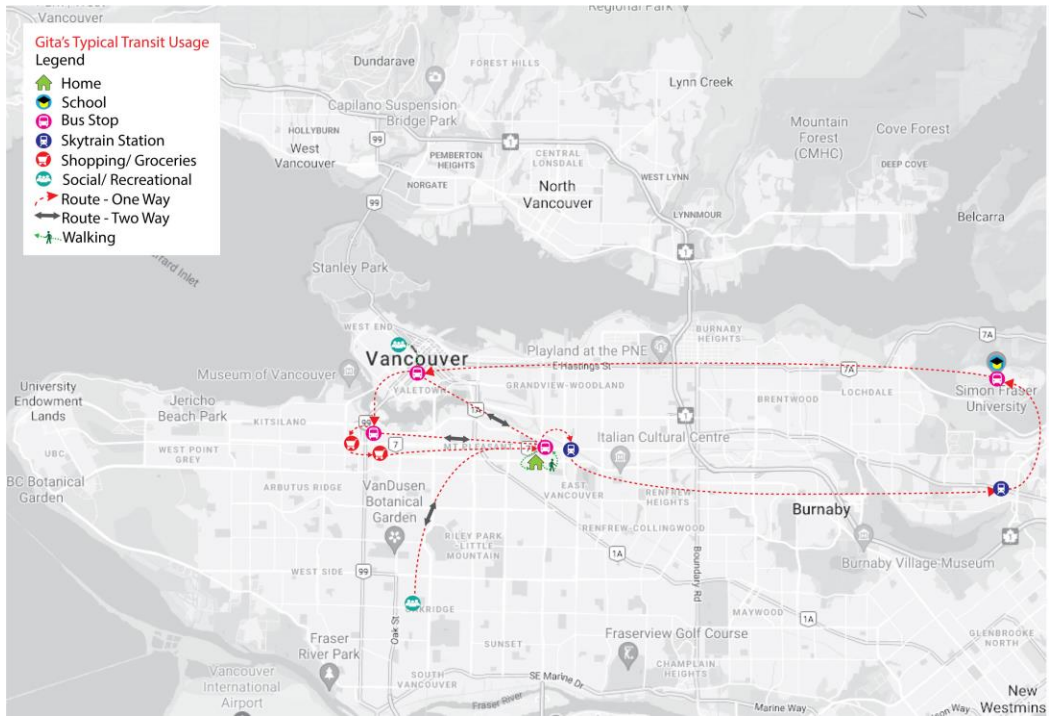
Clarifications:

- 7.** Can you clarify what you meant when you said _____ during one of the previous interviews?
- 8.** You mentioned that you _____. Can you share some more detail about this experience/ your thoughts and feelings?

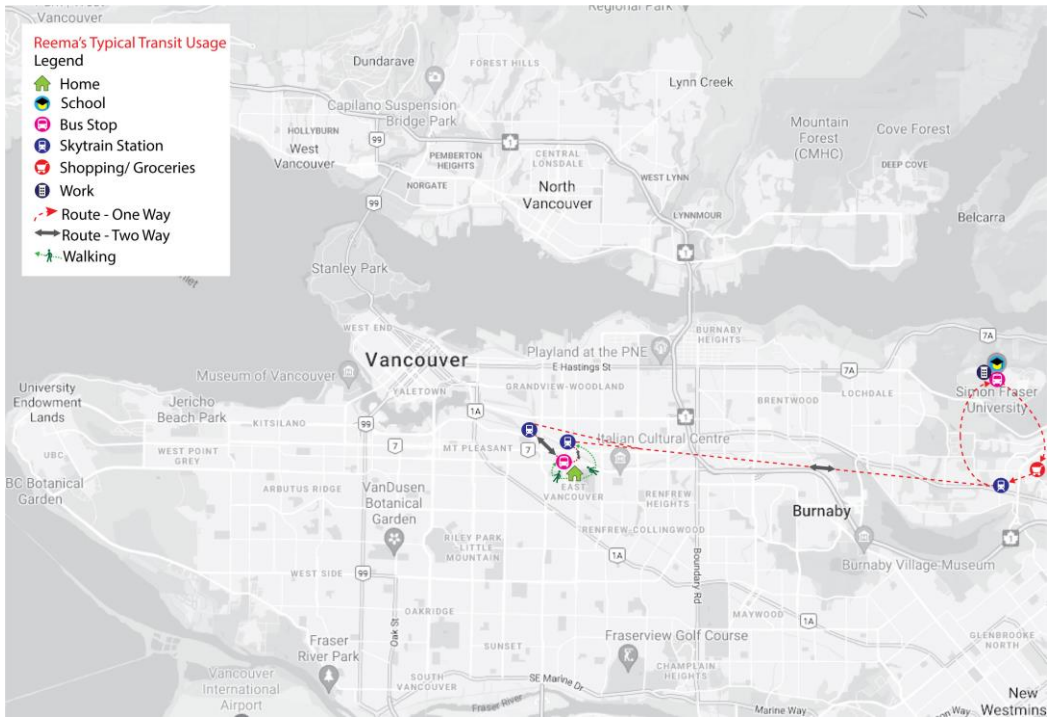
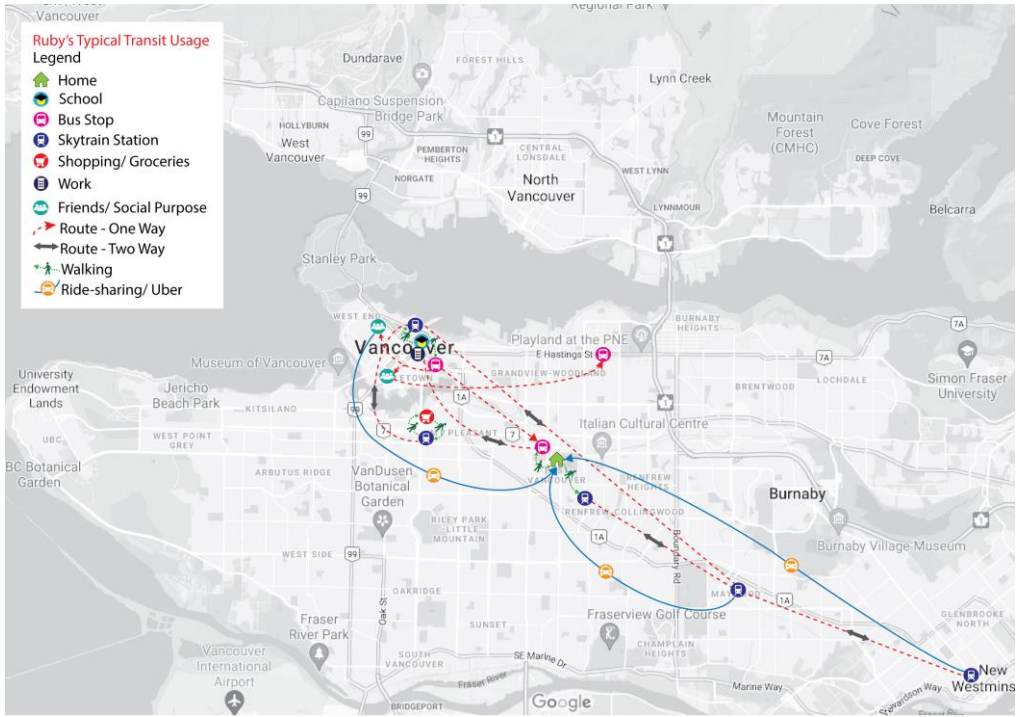
Reflections:

- 9.** How did it feel to draw the Body Map?
- 10.** How do you feel about participating in this research project?
- 11.** What suggestions or advice do you have for transit planning authorities in Metro Vancouver to make our transit system safer for women of color?

Appendix E. Mobility Assessment Maps⁵¹



⁵¹ **Please note:** The routes shown on the following maps using dashed lines are not geographically accurate but are simply meant to convey that some distance is being travelled between two points. The maps shown in this appendix are taken from Google Maps.



Appendix F. Body Maps

1 Broadway safe

2 Safe

3

4

5

6 So uncomfortable

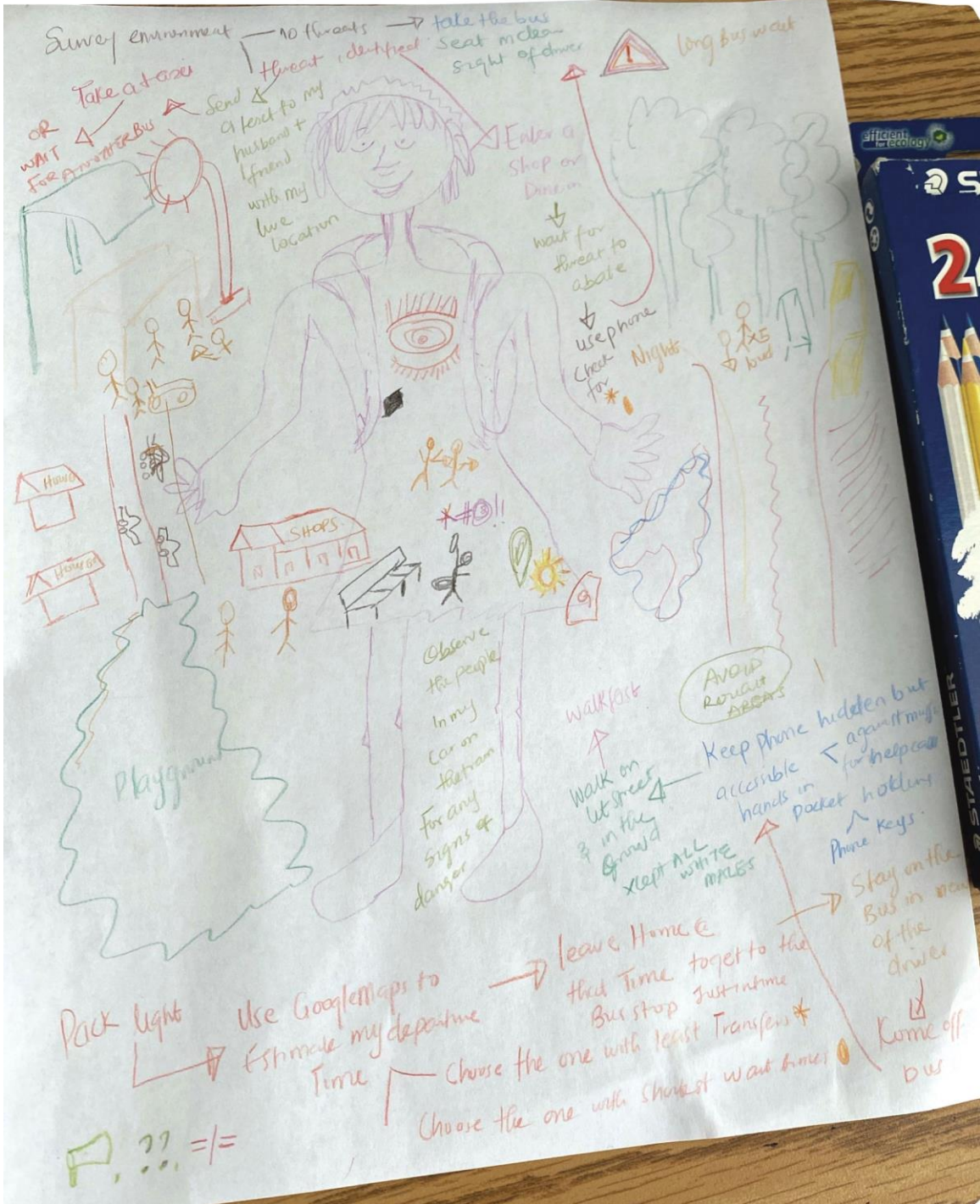
7

Gita's Body Map

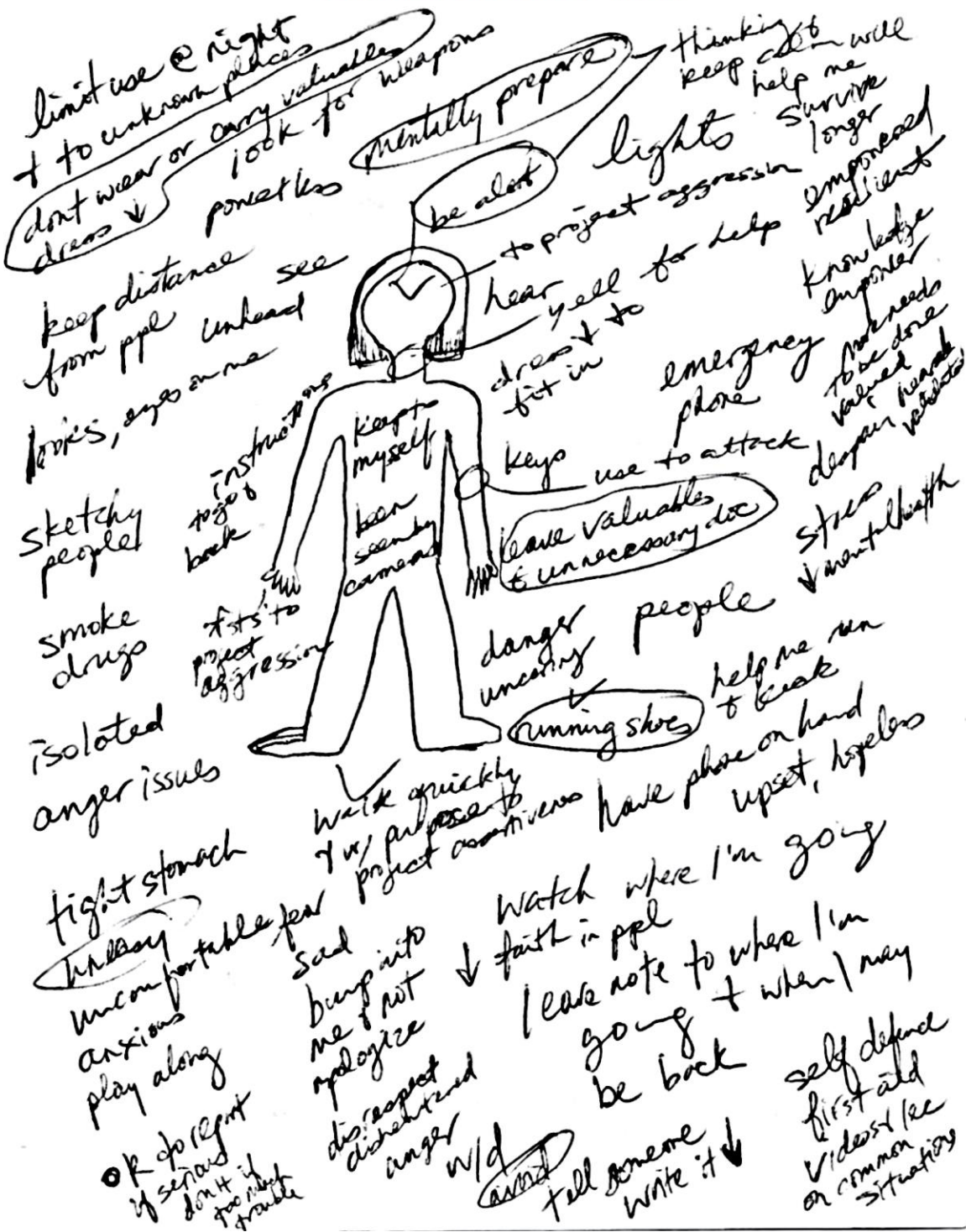
IMAGE NO. & DESCRIPTION:

- 1: SAFE TRANSIT SPACE
- 2: SAFE TRANSIT SPACE
- 3: SELF- PERCEPTION
- 4: UNSAFE TRANSIT SPACE
- 5: SELF-POLICING
- 6: EXPERIENCE OF PHYSICAL & SEXUAL HARASSMENT ON TRANSIT
- 7: UNSAFE TRANSIT SPACE & SUPPORT SYSTEMS

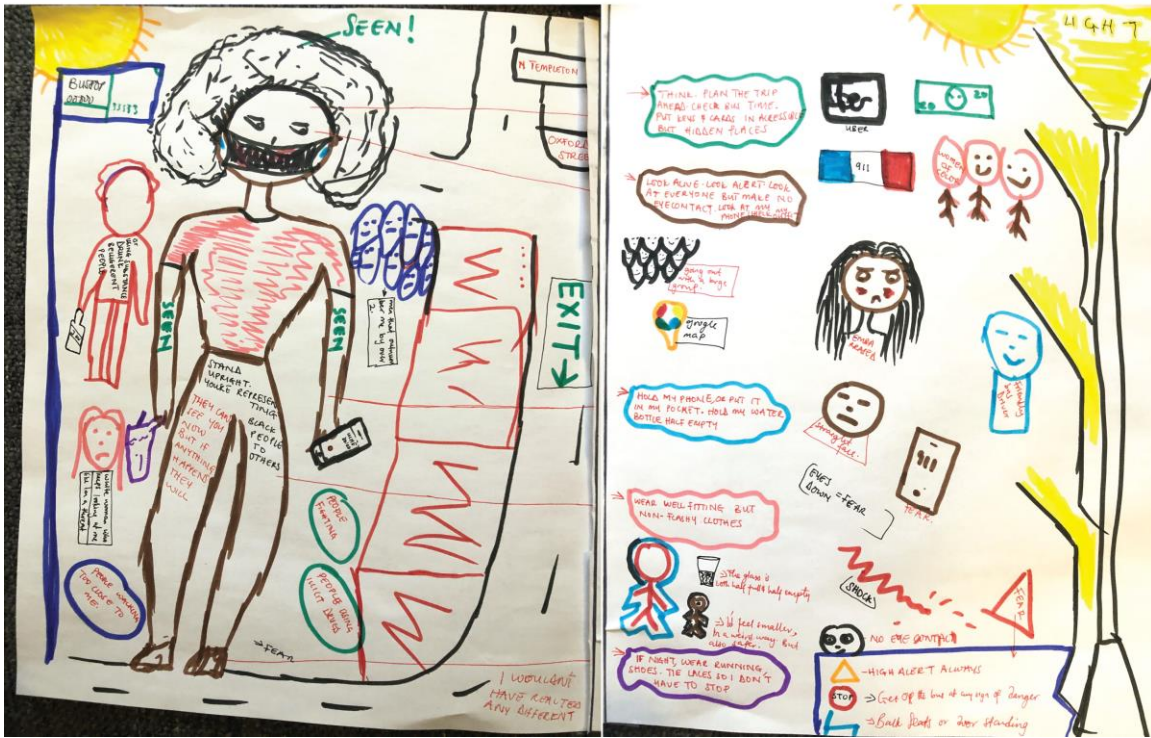
DIANA'S BODY MAP



ANNA'S BODY MAP



RUBY'S BODY MAP



REEMA'S BODY MAP



Appendix G. Prompts for Reflection

Prompts for Reflection between Stages II and III:

Before our final interview, take a look at your Body Map:

1. Try to recall why you drew each of the elements in your Body Map (all words, images, symbols etc.).
2. Think about what each of these elements represent. Do any of them depict more than one idea, feeling, thought, or situation? What are they?
3. Think about how you chose to draw each of these elements. Try to recall how you felt while drawing each of these elements.

Appendix H. Sorting Data for Thematic Charting

Chart No.	Title	Column Headings & Sub-Headings						
1	Personal Information	Race/ Ethnicity	Age	Past Living Situation	Moving to Vancouver	Current Living Situation	Friends/ Family	COVID
2	Frequency of Transit Usage	Outside Metro Vancouver/ Canada	In Metro Vancouver					
			Overall/ General	Daily/ Typical Weekday	Weekly	Typical Weekend	Late Night	Rare/ Occasional
3	Purpose of Transit Usage	School	Work	Shopping	Grocery	Social/ Recreational	Downtown	Returning Home
4	Mobility Needs & Choices	Transit Route	Transit Mode	Transit Frequency	Weather	Waiting Time	Ride Sharing (Uber/ Evo)	Private Vehicle
5	Assessment of Transit System	First Impression	General Impression	Comparing to Transit in Other Places	Safe Transit Spaces	Unsafe Transit Spaces	Future Transit Plans	
6	Transit Experiences	Positive Transit Experiences	Negative Transit Experiences	Personal Experiences of Harassment/ Violence	Friends/ Family's Experiences of Harassment/ Violence	Complains about Transit System	Suggestions to Transit Planners	
7	Navigating Transit Spaces	Preparing for Transit	First Mile/ Last Mile	Steps to Feel Safer on Transit	Behavior		Support Systems	
		Safety Accessories			Hyper- Vigilance	Self-Policing		

Chart No.	Title	Column Headings & Sub-Headings					
8	Facets of Identity Impacting Transit Usage	Gender	Race/ POC/ Visible Minority	Immigrant/ Canadian	Student/ Income	Other	
9	Perceptions Impacting Transit Usage	Worldview	Self- Perception	Hyper- visibility/ Invisibility	Fear	Hearing about Violence/ Harassment	Clothing & Transit
10	Transit Police/ Reporting Incidents	General Perceptions of Transit Police	Behavior around Transit Police	Reporting Incidents	Hearing about Police Brutality	Incidents/ Interactions	
11	Drawing the Body Map	More Paper	Humor/ Funny Drawing	Unclear image/ word In Body Map	Details Shared during Stage II	Experience of drawing the Body Map	Experience of Participating

Appendix I. Categorizing Charted Data

7. Navigating Transit Spaces	Preparing for Transit	First Mile/ Last Mile	Steps to Feel Safer on Transit	Behavior		Support Systems
				Hyper-vigilance	Self-Policing	
Ruby				<p>Stage III:</p> <p><i>Yeah, for sure, it's like I, I... I don't know how to explain it but it's like when I'm outside, I'm looking... around, but I'm also like...super hyper-sensitive of like what's happening Like okay, this person is walking too close to me or this person is... from, I, I see the way you're walking and you're walking like too fast or too slow for comfort, like, what's going on and just like looking at you to make sure you know that I can see you. And it's more like I see what you're... whatever issues that is going on with you. If, obviously if someone is like... negligent or I feel like they might do something to harm me, they don't look like they're in control of their senses, I will not make eye contact, but I still will be very present in that space, like looking... around or something but just not making eye contact. Yeah</i> <small>7.254 – 7.261</small></p>		

Data charted in Chart 7: Navigating Transit Spaces, Column: Behavior; Sub-Column: Hyper-vigilance	Elements/dimensions identified	Categories/classes
<p>Ruby (SIII):</p> <p><i>Yeah, for sure, it's like I, I... I o n't know how to explain it but it's like when I'm outside, I'm looking... around, but I'm also like...super hyper-sensitive of like what's happening. Like okay, this person is walking too close to me or this person is... from, I, I see the way you're walking and you're walking like too fast or too slow for comfort, like, what's going on and just like looking at you to make sure you know that I can see you. And it's more like I see what you're... whatever issues that is going on with you. If, obviously if someone is like... belligerent or I feel like they might do something to harm me, they o n't look like they're in control of their senses, I will not make eye contact, but I still will be very present in that space, like looking... around or something but just not making eye contact. Yeah</i> 7.254 – 7.261</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsure how to explain • When outside, she looks around and is super, hyper-sensitive of what is happening around her • Observes other people's position relative to her and their pace • Aware of people walking too close to her, too fast or too slow for comfort • Wonders what is going on, why people are walking where and how they are • Looks at people, making sure they know she can see them • More like making sure that they know she can see whatever <u>issues</u>' they have going on • If someone is belligerent or appears to be potentially harmful, she avoids eye-contact with them • Still be very present in that space, even if someone is being belligerent or appears to be potentially harmful by looking around, but avoiding eye-contact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial hesitation followed by detailed explanations • Very sensitive to environment, observing others' pace of walking, behavior, body-language, proximity to her physically • Tries to be very present in transit spaces by making sure that someone showing suspicious behavior knows that she has picked up on their -issues" • Maintains careful distance by avoiding eye-contact, while remaining hyper-vigilant in the presence of belligerent individuals/ someone potentially harmful.