

exploring women's landscape



(un)learning from Latin American women's daily walking experience in Berlin



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Master thesis submitted
by Consuelo Araneda Díaz

Chair of Urban Design of the
Technical University of Berlin,

Supervised by
Dr.-Ing. Jamie-Scott Baxter
Dr. Christy Kulz

Consuelo Araneda Díaz
M.Sc. Urban Design
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First supervisor Dr.-Ing. Jamie-Scott Baxter
Second supervisor Dr. Christy Kulz

CUD
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Cambria, italic

exploring women's daily walks

*a todas las mujeres del sur que caminan, corren,
migran y siguen en movimiento*



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abstract

(english)

Walking is our main way of inhabiting a territory and therefore, it often determines how we perceive the city. When walking, people move at a speed and scale mediated by the body, which implies a particular relationship with space, time and others. In that regard, the impact of landscape is usually invisible, because people tend not to value what they see every day, since it becomes part of a silent and usual background. We start noticing just when something in the routine changes, like the weather, the season, something in our bodies or the route we take daily. Migrating is, in those terms, a great change, where many aspects change at the same time. Moving through the city is crossed by many other dimensions as well, being gender one of the most relevant. Exploring Latin American women's travel experience in Berlin from an intersectional perspective, focusing on gender, migration and landscape, hopes to contribute to gender studies around urban mobility.

(deutsch)

Gehen ist unsere primäre Art, wie wir uns durch Stadt und Raum bewegen, und prägt daher oft, wie wir unsere Umgebung wahrnehmen. Während des Gehens bewegen sich Menschen mit einer Geschwindigkeit, die durch den Körper vermittelt wird, was eine besondere Beziehung zu Raum, Zeit und Anderen aufbaut. Eindrücke der Landschaft rücken oft in den Hintergrund da Menschen dazu neigen, das, was sie täglich sehen, nicht zu schätzen. Wir nehmen erst dann Veränderungen wahr, wenn sich etwas in der Routine ändert, etwa das Wetter, die Jahreszeit, unser Körper oder die Route, die wir täglich nehmen. Migration stellt in diesem Sinne eine tiefgreifende Veränderung dar, bei der viele Aspekte gleichzeitig neu erlebt werden. Die Art und Weise, wie Menschen sich in der Stadt bewegen, wird zusätzlich von zahlreichen anderen Dimensionen bestimmt, wobei das Geschlecht von besonderer Bedeutung ist. Die vorliegende Studie untersucht die Wahrnehmung von lateinamerikanischen Frauen auf ihren alltäglichen Routen durch Berlin aus einer intersektionalen Perspektive, mit einem Fokus auf Geschlecht, Migration und Landschaft. Die Arbeit trägt damit zur Genderforschung im Bereich der urbanen Mobilität bei.

(castellano)

Caminar es nuestra principal forma de habitar un territorio y, por lo tanto, muchas veces determina cómo percibimos la ciudad. Al caminar, las personas se mueven a una velocidad y escala mediada por el cuerpo, lo que implica una relación particular con el espacio, el tiempo y los demás. En ese sentido, el impacto del paisaje suele ser invisible, porque las personas tienden a no valorar lo que ven todos los días, ya que se vuelve parte de un fondo silencioso y habitual. Comenzamos a notarlo sólo cuando algo en la rutina cambia, como el clima, la estación, algo en nuestros cuerpos o la ruta que tomamos diariamente. Migrar es, en ese sentido, un gran cambio, donde muchos aspectos se ven alterados al mismo tiempo. Moverse por la ciudad también está atravesado por muchas otras dimensiones, siendo el género una de las más relevantes. Explorar la experiencia de viaje de las mujeres latinoamericanas en Berlín desde una perspectiva interseccional, centrándose en el género, la migración y el paisaje, espera contribuir a los estudios de género, ciudad y movilidad urbana.

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introduction

A city can be told by many different voices. There is never one story about a specific piece of land. The way each of us perceives the environment is deeply personal, which makes the act of inhabiting a place a unique experience.

The most basic way of occupying a territory is by foot. Since we are very little, we start exploring our surroundings through walking. It allows us to move at a speed and scale mediated by the body, which implies a particular relationship with space, time and others. What happens though when we change the scenario and migrate to a new place?

The impact of the environment on our daily walking experiences is usually invisible. People tend not to value what they see every day, since it becomes of a silent background, what we coincidentally called 'part of the landscape'. We start noticing just when something in the routine changes, like the weather, the season, something in our bodies (limp, pregnancy) or the route we take daily, like when we migrate.

In that context, there are some cities, like Berlin, where the landscape changes greatly regarding the season and could therefore, lead to more visible effects on our lives. This city is also often perceived as remarkable because of its considerable number of open spaces as well as multispecies landscape present throughout districts. It could be even more noticeable for people coming from different geographies.

It is likewise well known that women's experience in public space varies much compared to men's, not just because of safety reasons, but also because their mobility practices tend to include other relevant factors like care work and the reproduction of life in general (Falú, 2014; Jirón, 2007, 2010; Segovia & Rico, 2017). That is why one can observe wide heterogeneity in women's daily experiences, which are crossed by several layers in addition to gender. For migrant women, the environment presents new challenges than the ones they were used to, having to learn, but also unlearn common practices. A process that opens questions related to the practice of identity and the possibility of self-determination through the relation with space. This topic is of interest for urban planners, designers and people related to urban studies, as gender and migration are becoming more and more present in the public sphere.

The following work focuses on the experience of Latin American migrants while moving through Berlin. How landscape shapes their perception and how much they can shape the context back.

"Space is not neutral. Space is a feminist issue. The space we occupy –here, in the city, we city dwellers– is constantly remade and unmade, constructed and wondered at. 'Space is a doubt,' wrote George Perec; 'I have constantly to mark it, to designate it. It's never mine, never given to me, I have to conquer it.'" (Elkin, 2017, p.286)

why this research

The experience of moving through the city, as an everyday practice, has a considerable impact on people's lives. These personal experiences are not the same for everyone, especially between men and women, but also amongst women (Jirón, 2007). Frequently, in the field of urban studies, planners forget about those particularities which lead to generalised approaches and data. The perception of smaller or underprivileged groups is omitted but their bodies, stories and lives are still inhabiting the same space.

Trying to flatten the female experience, by saying that white German women share the same struggles while moving around the city, overlooks the particularities present in more than half of Berlin's population (51%)¹, for instance her cultural background. It just erases the migrant dimension and leaves migrant experiences out of the equation. This has led, amongst others, to tensions and some people refraining from participating in public spaces. Besides, in the case of Berlin, migrants are more the rule than the exception. Statistics show that 23% of its population was born outside Germany coming from about 170 nations¹, hence, to include migrants in urban studies is relevant. The following research is conducted considering the feminist claim of intersectionality approaches towards spatial practices. (Crenshaw, 1991)

"Yet intersectionality might be more broadly useful as a way of mediating the tension between assertions of multiple identity and the ongoing necessity of group politics." (Crenshaw, 1991, p.1296)

To frame this project on female migrants is also sustained by feminist posthuman theory. It contests the traditional power relationships in terms of gender, class and ethnicity, but also between species. Thus, challenging urban studies beyond the usual notions of feminist and multispecies approaches. (Neimanis, 2017)

It was decided to work with Latin American migrants because of the personal affinity of the author, which has the advantage of not just speaking the same language but coming from a common cultural background. Additionally, since most of the regions in Latin America have quite different climates, vegetation and geography than Berlin, the perception of these women can be particularly interesting.

To focus on the walking experience, although it can include other collective modes, allows to unfold the basic way of interacting in the outdoor space, from short trips to the grocery shop, to longer commutes for work or study. Walking also opens the possibility of connecting with others (human and non-human). The Chilean NGO La Reconquista Peatonal, where I personally collaborate, states walking is key to creating new memories tied to space and time (La Reconquista Peatonal, 2024). When working with migrants, it is valuable and even desirable, for them to be able to integrate into the new context, linking new experiences to the city.

"Every story is a travel story a spatial practice. For this reason, spatial practices concern everyday tactics, are part of them, from the alphabet of spatial indications the beginning of a story the rest of which is written by footsteps (...)" (Certeau & Certeau, 2013, p.116)

For this thesis, the central aspect is to understand how landscape affects our everyday mobility experience in the city. To unfold tensions as well as positive aspects that shape the experience of inhabiting a new context. Hence, the questions are:

How is women's daily walking experience shaped by Berlin's landscape? To what extent are they shaping it back?

and

What can we learn from their experience to a friendlier co-habitation?

¹ Berlin-Brandenburg Statistic Office, 2024

literary collage

The literature reviewed focused on urban studies related to walkability, gender and landscape. In the spirit of widening of the perspective of Eurocentric authors, this project searched for diversity in literature, coming up with different and nuanced understandings of urban life. Rather than going into a detailed explanation of each of the authors in this chapter, they were included in the main flow of the text. In that way, it would allow the reader to make smoother connections between the empirical work and the cited theory.

While reading the different authors, it was important to reflect not just on the topics they address, but also on their background, the words they choose, and the methods used in those studies. Bringing an experienced-based and relational approach, seemed suitable for this project. This helped to provide a nuanced understanding of how the different dimensions of landscape, gender and mobility intersect in our daily lives.

What can we learn from that experience?

To underpin this question, the focus was set on finding literature about specific aspects of interest. Regarding **walkability/urban mobility** from a feminist perspective, the work by Rebecca Solnit and Lauren Elkin was reviewed. Both writers coming from the US context, engage with feminist travel experience in urban but also rural areas. They go over issues like safety and security of women moving through cities, as well as the possibility of freedom and pleasure for women in public space. These last aspects are well described in Solnit's books *Wanderlust* (2001) which provides also an interesting historical and literary review of the act of walking, and *A field guide to getting lost* (2006) which goes deeper into walking as bodily and mental exercise which can connect us with the environment. In *Flâneuse* (2017), Elkin challenges the original male version of the 'flâneur', by turning into a female story of strolling through the city.

Adding consideration regarding the city as it is the space where these movements occur, Leslie Kern, an urbanist specialised in gender, environmental justice manifests in her book *Feminist City* (2019), that cities are built not just for humans, but for men and specifically for this middle-aged, white, healthy and heterosexual male subject. That said, parks, sidewalks, bus stops, are designed for male bodies. Other bodies are exposed to uncomfortable and even dangerous

situations on a daily basis all over the globe (Kern, 2019). However, several studies have shown that women are the main users of public transport and pedestrian infrastructure (Jackowska & Novas Ferradás, 2023; Jirón, 2007; Madariaga, 2013). The so-called 'mobility of care', which are all those trips made to take care of others (picking up from school, taking them to the doctor, doing the groceries etc.), is strictly entangled with feminised bodies. This means also walking in company, with bags, maybe a pram, amongst others. Which makes them live a double disadvantage in terms of their experience in urban space. Besides, women with a migrant background are often experiencing under-privileged positions in society, which makes them prefer cheaper means of transport, like walking, biking or public transportation (Jirón, 2007). In this sense, it is interesting to delve into the disconnect that exists between urban infrastructure and the experience of those who actually use it.

The Situationist International provide a sensorial approach by developing her theory of *psychogeography*. This work explored the effects of the environment over our perception while walking. They approached it from an artistic-performative way, by developing conscious *derivés* through big cities and recording the experience. Debord described walking as the way to navigate those places and feelings. He also acknowledges it as a process that needs to be corrected and reviewed continuously. (Debord, 1955)

Regarding **landscape**, the literature reviewed has centred on Haraway's theory about Companion Species and Making Kin, addressing the complexity, historicity and even impurity of the relationship with the non-human world. Haraway is a renowned US scholar because of her work relating philosophy and science, by challenging the ruling Anthropocene from a multispecies and feminist perspective. She also proposes a feminist understanding of the term 'significant otherness' as the act of becoming-with, of encounter, of multispecies stories and practices, of risky co-making, of connecting and building together. Co-habitation that takes place amongst and across species. This notion highlights how dynamic and fragile co-habitation is, because of the many parties involved in the same place. Particularly in her *Companion Species Manifesto* (2012) when describing other creatures as equally relevant as well as protagonists of meaningful relationships (Haraway, 2012). In addition, Astrida Neimanis's work was considered, as it takes Haraway's reflections to develop further in terms of feminist posthumanism. She adds interesting notions of the

‘we’, the collective and ways of relating to each other. By linking it to water, to bodies of water, Neimanis reinforces the idea of a common ground that we all share and that extends beyond humans. Water binds us together, even across our differences. (Neimanis, 2017)

Likewise, authors from the Global South propose different understandings of the way we engage with our surroundings. The Chilean-Mapuche scholar Elisa Loncon, in her book *Azmapu* (2024), explores how indigenous people understand and relate to nature. She elaborates on the world view of living in connection with the environment (Madre Tierra) which brings harmony to the system. Ailton Krenak, an indigenous activist and scholar from Brazil, works on the idea of separation from nature-culture that modern society has established. He also reflects on the idea of seeing nature as a resource, as a useful good for humanity to take advantage of, and the impacts it has brought on a sociological dimension. (Krenak, 2020, 2023)

For the topic of space and everyday practices, an important reference was *The production of space* (1974) by Lefebvre. According to him, space is the product of social processes and, as such, one can think of it as an ongoing and dynamic situation, rather than a close and rigid product. Since space is being constantly shaped for and by people and one of the most essential ways that people have to inhabit is by walking, one can understand the act of walking as a form of production in space. As previously mentioned, the territory is described as a dynamic and under construction.

This idea is deepened and complemented by the German sociologist Martina Löw. She elaborates on spaces as relational entities that are constantly being created by interactions, which is also part of the process of giving meaning to them (Löw, 2013, 2022). On the same topic, Doreen Massey is referenced for her work in relation to space, place and gender, which helps to cross spatial theory with gender studies. (Massey, 1994)

At the same time, it was interesting to review some works related to migration in terms of adaptation and identity. For instance, how space can be invisibly shaped to include or exclude certain groups by making them feel different. The notion of ‘othering’ is present not just in social practices, but also spatially situated (Weyers, 2023). Hence, the many aspects involved in the process of integrating and understanding this

process are a complex entanglement of factors, including visible and invisible dimensions. The impact of those factors vary from person to person, but one can identify some similarities when looking at specific groups (Back et al., 2012).

On a methodological level, Kimberle Crenshaw’s work is fundamental in terms of intersectional studies from a gender perspective (Crenshaw, 1991), as well as Donna Haraway with her reflections on situated knowledge (Haraway, 2016). She promotes paying attention to the special qualities of each place, as well as learning from locals about their own territory, instead of trying to impose a generalised theory. Likewise, Anna Tsing emphasises the need for thinking structures and systems differently, when it comes to studying human and non-human interactions. Looking at landscape from different angles to capture human and multispecies heterogeneity (Tsing et al., 2019). As previously expressed, to avoid flattening the experiences of such a large group as women. For this case, it is interesting to dive into how this embedded knowledge, or visions unfold in a new context (migrants living in Berlin). Additionally, studies conducted by the NGO La Reconquista Peatonal regarding walkability and gender have been a useful reference in terms of methodology.

Bringing together theory from different fields and latitudes was part of the goals in this project. This exercise led to unexpected connections as well as new reflections in terms of its significance to urban studies. It was built as a collage, since it was constantly being adjusted and complemented as the research progressed. The participatory events brought new aspects to the discussion, so many of the authors were included in further stages of the study.

methodological considerations

The way of proceeding was probably not as straight forward as this section would seem like. Coming from a project-oriented discipline, the working process tends to be more messy and rarely linear. That said, the project was organised considering an intersectional and empirical approach to spatial phenomena.

Donna Haraway talked decades ago about situated knowledge, addressing the relevance of not paying attention just to highly qualified experts. Rooted practices hold great value in understanding a specific territory. In the urban realm, those habits tend to be more dynamic and are constantly being shaped by migration, time and space. If we focus on the everyday routines, who is more of an expert than yourself?

To capture these daily practices, the research process included three participative moments with different emphasis: a focus group, a travel logbook and a member checking.

The focus group aimed to gather general impressions of everyday mobility and its relationship with the landscape. In this way, it was possible to identify those relevant aspects that could be further explored. This information was the basis to design the following instruments. Likewise, the focus group was a significant opportunity to get to know each other and build trust for the time to follow. During the meeting, they expressed the wish to meet again and keep participating in the study, which was essential for the next steps.

The logbook addressed the participants regarding personal feelings, thoughts, wishes in terms of their daily trips in Berlin. Here they could reflect for three weeks on their experiences and memories. By means of pen and paper, they were free to write, draw and sketch to record their travel routine. Having a physical diary made the exercise more accessible and attractive. It also made it feel less of an academical research, bringing up childhood memories of their first personal diaries.

Finally, the closing event was designed as a member checking to deepen into interesting topics present in the logbooks, as well as a moment for me to show them preliminary results from the analysis. This meeting was also planned to strengthen trust as well as receive overall comments about their experience during the study. (López-Zerón et al., 2021)

The idea of having two collective instances was influenced by the reflections of the Argentinian anthropologist, Rita Segato. She proposes the concept of thinking in conversation (*pensar en conversación*) as the natural way women used to talk, reflect and resolve daily issues. Segato emphasises that thinking while interacting with each other, sharing thoughts, opens the possibility to think together, which would lead to better reflections. It also gives value to the collective over the individual. (Revista Anfibia, 2019; Segato, 2018)

“Los cuerpos en co-presencia conversan.” (Segato, 2018, p.17)

In addition, the travel diaries were designed to complement and approach women’s experiences from different angles. Thus, they were planned as a personal instrument, where time and privacy could bring more intimate stories. The diaries to research mobility from the NGO La Reconquista Peatonal were used as a reference. Likewise, the ideas of Haraway were relevant to designing it, as she emphasises on the stories we tell, the words we use and how those words create worlds. It matters what kinds of relations, thoughts and ties we link them with. (Haraway, 2016)

The participants were invited through an open call via Whatsapp, Instagram and Facebook. I also contacted some feminist Latin American collectives on social media who shared the invitation amongst their members. A detailed explanation of how each activity was designed, conducted and systematised is present in the first part of the correspondent chapter.

I was surprised how fast women reached out, willing to participate in the project. It was easier to gather participants than I would have expected..

The information collected for those activities was analysed using an inductive methodology oriented to grouping common themes as well as focusing on specific singularities. The process was conducted with a gender perspective by highlighting women’s everyday experiences and bringing them together to promote group reflections. Besides, it was

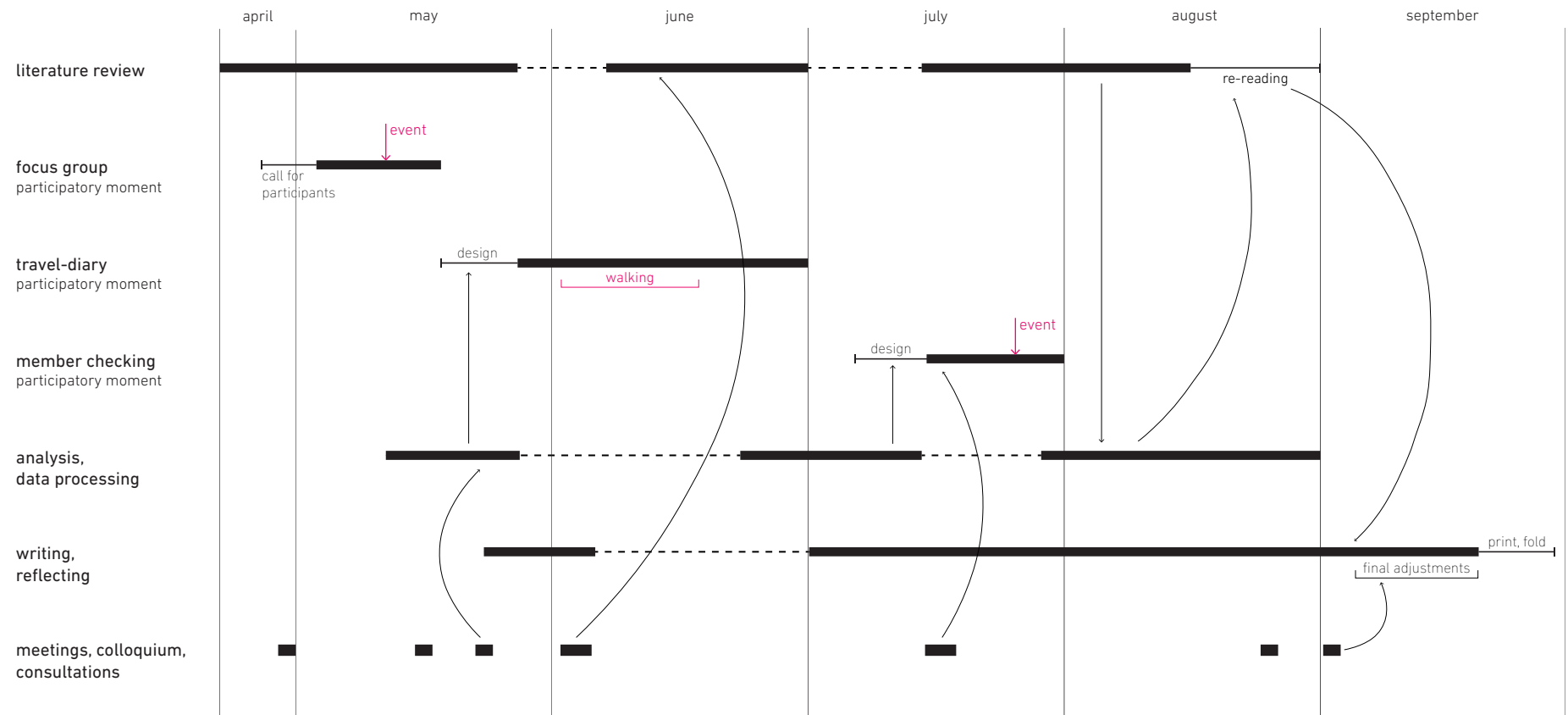
approached intersectionally to have a nuanced understanding of the dimensions coming together in the urban experience.

For the end of the study, it is planned to contact the participants to share the final document. There is likely to be gathering after the summer break, since many of them are interested in keeping in contact.

Because of constraints in terms of time and capacity, the number of participants was limited. However, it was clear from the beginning that the study would focus on the quality more than the quantity of data collected. Of course, it would be interesting to listen to more everyday experiences to create a sort of collective story about Berlin's landscape. A longer process could also help to characterise in greater detail how Latinas dwell in Berlin.

The positionality of the participants regarding their socio-economic background, professional context or current migrant status is not part of this study. Even though those are usually relevant factors when it comes to understanding the position from where people perceive and speak, they have most likely changed significantly since they migrated. This could also open another line for them to compare, diverting their attention from the spatial dimension. Additionally, since such study requires rigorous research from a sociological perspective, it demands professional skills which –as an architect– I do not have. I acknowledge though, that getting a clearer picture of women's social locations could provide in depth information to depict their everyday experiences in Berlin, which could be an interesting topic for further research. Therefore, and as previously mentioned, I recognise and value them in their beautiful diversity and would not in any case treat them as a monolithic group.

Throughout the text, many direct quotes and fragments from the travel diaries were included. Only the first name was included to characterise the quotes given verbally during the focus group or the closing session. In the case of the travel diaries, since they were assigned a code, all names were removed, so they could feel free and safe to share their thoughts. Also, because adding names would not necessarily contribute to enriching the fragments of the logbooks, but it could have made some participants refrain from filling out the travel diary in the first place.



This graphic shows how this work was –more or less– organised. There was constant cross-contamination between the lines of work, as a sort of pollination along the way.

how to read this piece

²⁺³ WordReference Random House
Learner's Dictionary of American
English © 2024

⁴ Oxford Languages © 2024

This project aims to provide a ground-based perspective from the urban experience. It sets women coming from Latin America in the centre, trying to unfold their daily perception of dwelling in Berlin. A fundamental consideration is to highlight the humanity in their stories, the unique sensitivities and subtle observation that shape everyday practices. To put name and face to urban studies, to give voice to those who are often not considered.

Having this in mind, the text is organised into different types of paragraphs: references and side notes, quotes, the main body of text and personal notes. To recognise them, the reader must look at the columns described at the bottom of each page. They are also written in a specific typography to differentiate them easily.

These are literal quotes from the participants. They are first presented in the original language (mainly Spanish or Portuguese). [Next, translated by the author of this project and written in brackets.] Their names were removed to create a safe space for them to share quite personal feelings.

A personal remark written in first person. These notes should serve as a complement to the main body of text, to bring subtlety and emotion to the research.

Name or title of the reference and source. It can also hold a brief side note.

In terms of the concepts, there are particular meanings that are relevant to describe to help understand them while reading the document. Of course, they could have other interpretations, but in the context of this study they should provide the following meaning.

(un)learn

‘To gain or acquire knowledge of or skill in (something) by study, instruction, or experience; to gain by experience, exposure to example, or the like.’ ²

In the context of this research, it is used to refer to strategies and practices developed throughout life. It is usually mentioned as gestures or habits women embody. To un-learn in this context means to make the reverse process to free oneself from those habits and be open to learn new ways.

latina

‘A woman of Latin-American or Spanish-speaking descent.’³ In this document the term would be use as a replace to ‘woman that comes from Latin America’, since it is the way many Latin-American migrants describe themselves. It includes all the countries in America where Spanish or Portuguese is spoken.

multispecies places

This term is used to name places and elements in the city where different species can co-habit. I decided not to call them natural spaces, because although they frequently have a natural origin, they are now intervened, shaped and modified by human infrastructure. These places can be parks, canals, rivers, riverbanks, forest or any other green or blue spot in the city.

landscape

‘All the visible features of an area of land, often considered in terms of their aesthetic appeal. The distinctive features of a sphere of activity.’ ⁴

Understood as the environment we live in, mostly referred to natural elements, nonetheless it includes the built and human-made context. This, because it would be very hard and probably pointless to try and draw a line between what is completely natural (pure) and what is artificial. Particularly in cities like Berlin, the line is quite fuzzy, since many places that look natural, are hand-made or strongly intervened by human activity.

focus group

description

The meeting was designed to capture the first impressions of the women's mobility experience in Berlin. It also provided a first approach to the landscape and the relevance of climate to their daily travelling practices. Besides, it was a relevant gathering to create a safe space for them to share their thoughts and feelings and reflect over common anecdotes too. This laid the groundwork for subsequent work.

Participants were contacted through an open call via Whatsapp, Instagram and Facebook. Some were known friends, and some came from some feminist and Latin American collectives based in Berlin. The meeting was held in Spanish on Saturday 4th May at 16h in Schillerkiez, Neukölln.

First, an introduction to the study was made and explained why it is interesting to hear their stories of dwelling in the city. Afterwards, the conversation was structured around three broad questions related to characterise their trips in Berlin (see next page). They had time after reading each question to write their thoughts in post-it notes which we then commented in a common round. The women were keen to participate and started to share their experience right away. It was surprisingly easy for them to connect, to empathise with each other's anecdotes and feelings.

The information gathered was systematised and analysed in order to find relevant aspects for the participant women that could be researched deeper. Some of the frequently mentioned factors are that the perception of the scale of Berlin was determined by the size of the place they originally come from. At the same time, one could imply that it influences not just in terms of scale, but in terms of characteristics in general. For example, a woman coming from a more rural context, could not only be surprised by the size of Berlin, but by its lack of mountains or sea (as one woman said). On the other hand, those women coming from a big metropolis located in a hot and dry climate, tend to perceive Berlin as a smaller and quite green place.

Additionally, during the conversation there were diverse shades of belonging described (Back et al., 2012), mainly regarding the time they have been living in Berlin and whether they feel comfortable or

integrated. On several occasions they said phrases like *"the first winter is hard but wait until the second!"* addressing the newer ones, or *"although I came here many years ago, I can't get used to the darkness in winter, I still feel depressed in January."*

Each question and its outcomes are in depth explained in the following pages.

sharing stories

How are your trips/ movements in Berlin? In terms of time, purpose, mode, speed, feelings, thoughts, wishes, places.

The first feeling mentioned was pleasure. Almost every participant highlighted how much they enjoy walking, even deciding to take longer routes to walk more. They emphasised how friendly the city is regarding pedestrians, bikers and generally public transport, which invites you to go and enjoy public spaces. Although they know Germans would disagree, for them the city feels much nicer to explore and spend time outside.

"Me muevo y disfruto mucho la caminata por placer, sin ningún destino en especial." –Alexandra, Chile
[I move around and really enjoy walking for pleasure, with no particular destination.]

At the same time, women mentioned freedom as part of the aspects that make pleasure possible. Freedom to choose how to move, since there are many and better modes of transport. This also reflects around the destinations and times they travel, because they know they will have at least one alternative on how to travel back, regardless of the day or time. Even with some disruption in the frequency or connections, they trust they will always get an alternative to getting home, which gives them freedom of movement. As Rebecca Solnit describes it in her book *A field guide to getting lost*, the pleasure of actively strolling without purpose or fix destination gives you a sense of freedom (Solnit, 2006). A feeling that is also portrayed by Virginia Woolf almost a century ago in her essay *Street Haunting* (1927). There she acknowledges the inevitable differences between men's

8 women
4 countries
24-32 years

Alex
Rosa
Natalia
Marianna
Natalia
Diana
Lorenia
Ihanelly

"La posibilidad de caminar sin miedo (o con mucho menos) es una de las principales razones que tuve para migrar. Disfruto mucho poder caminar en la calle y experimentar la ciudad "directo en la piel". En México yo iba en auto de puerta a puerta." –Diana, Mexico
[Being able to walk without fear (or significantly less) is one of the main reasons I had for migrating. I very much enjoy being able to walk in the street and experience the city "right on the skin." In Mexico I went by car from door to door.]

and women's city experience. Woolf writes about the strategies she develops to be able to walk alone and enjoy the liberty of movement. Almost a century has passed, and these female practices to behave in public spaces is still current. Women value the sensation of freedom because they know it is not a given right. (Elkin, 2017)

In addition, the travel times were described as much friendlier and predictable. This particular aspect varied much regarding the scale of their home-city, but since most of them come from big cities, Berlin seemed smaller with shorter distances to cover. They also mentioned that moving around is sometimes tiring, especially since they move more by foot, biking or by public transport. This involves more physical activity than travelling by car, as many of them did previously. It was particularly challenging in the beginning, when they didn't know their way and couldn't communicate in German that easily.

Another relevant element to their experience is that they have many different places to go to, destinations are in Berlin much more varied. They said that in one day they can move around several districts, making them have a broader perception of the city. Berlin has attractive activities distributed all over the city, which encourages them to discover new corners. Since Latin American cities tend to be quite segregated both socially and spatially, one tends to move around the same areas and rarely has the chance to explore other neighbourhoods. Most of them shared that reflection. Besides, these trips involve more physical activity, which makes them feel sporty and tired sometimes.

"80% del tiempo son viajes cortos. Al venir de una ciudad de casi 22 millones de habitantes, esta ciudad se siente mucho más pequeña." –Diana, Mexico
[80% of the time it is short trips. Coming from a city of almost 22 million people, this city feels much smaller.]

How is the experience in relation with your hometown? Time, situations, climate, modes, time, comfort.

When it comes to comparing the experience of living in Berlin with their previous city, one of the most frequently mentioned aspects was safety and comfort. As mentioned in the first question, walking has become a joyful activity for them, something they can do for the mere pleasure of strolling. This is directly connected to the shift in the modes of transport. They went from travelling primarily in their private car to using non-motorized and collective modes, particularly walking and biking.

"Cuando llegué a Berlín caminé por primera vez sola de noche." –Natalia, Mexico
[When I arrived in Berlin I walked alone at night for the first time.]

The participants also highlighted how time and perception changed, since they have much more space to pay attention to the environment and enjoy the city. This has to do with the means they use to travel, that enables them to move at another speed and with a closer bodily connection with the environment. Again, this perception is also related to the scale of their home cities, making a difference whether they come from a bigger city or not. Likewise, since distances tend to be shorter for them and the city offers many activities distributed around various neighbourhoods, they mentioned having new trips. The purposes to travelling are more diverse and create not just efficient trips, but for recreation. Moving within Berlin is no longer just a matter of necessity, it has become an enjoyable practice. Thus, it could be a relevant factor in their quality of life if one thinks of the possibility of integration.

"Since I moved to Berlin, I've been harassed on the street (cat called) only twice. In Brazil it happened every week. Also, here I don't use taxis or uber, I even uninstalled the apps. That also means being able to save more money."
–Marianna, Brazil

On the other hand, and as expected, climate plays now a big role in their daily routines, it determines how and why they move. Many of them come from hot climates or places where there is no differentiation between seasons, just a stable temperature throughout the year. Therefore, they rarely had to adapt their everyday trips because of the weather conditions, just occasionally because of heat. Going through a cold and dark winter has definitely been a learning experience.

"El clima en CDMX es templado todo el año, no cambia mi manera de moverme con las estaciones. Aquí evito caminar y bici en invierno y evito el U-Bahn y S-Bahn en verano."
 –Ihanelly, Mexico
[The climate in Mexico City is mild all year round, and my way of getting around doesn't change with the seasons. Here I avoid walking and cycling in winter and I avoid the U-Bahn and S-Bahn in summer.]

How is your relationship with the landscape? Does it play a role in your daily trips through Berlin?

Almost immediately, they mentioned mental health as a determining factor when they thought about the landscape in Berlin. Knowing they can visit a park, a canal or a lake on a daily basis increases their quality of life. It strengthens the connection with public spaces, makes them more accessible and friendlier as well, even though the climate does not always help. This aspect was mentioned in relationship to pleasure. The joy of being outside and having so many green spaces to visit without having to go very far.

"Vivo más equitativamente, me muevo por todos Berlín, no evito barrios como sí lo hacía en Santiago. –Natalia, Chile
[I live more unbiased, I move all around Berlin, I don't avoid certain neighbourhoods like I did in Santiago.]

In addition, being able to perceive the differences between each season throughout the year is something they highlighted. Watching how the vegetation, the sky and the air change. It was also a new and special feeling for them to discover how their own mood changes regarding the weather, particularly sensitive to the few hours of light available

during the winter days. Many women described it as a sense of depression, sadness, lack of energy in opposition to the mood in spring and summer, where not only nature flourishes, but people too. As the Chilean-Mapuche scholar Elisa Loncon states, to live in connection with nature means to understand it as a living entity and not just as a mere spatial dimension. And as such, to acknowledge their feelings and needs. In that way, humans can live in harmony with the territory they inhabit. Indigenous people have declared this centuries ago, but colonialism and modernity have worked hard to distance themselves from nature. (Loncon, 2023)

"Ciudad de México tiene 25°C casi todo el tiempo, no se aprovecha porque es normal pasar cerca de 4h al día en transporte." –Lorenia, Mexico
[Mexico City is 25°C almost all the time, but it is not enjoyed because it is normal to spend about 4 hours a day in travelling.]

Separating humans from nature is also a phenomenon described by the indigenous activist and philosopher Ailton Krenak. He depicts it by saying that white people love to separate, addressing the dichotomy of human-nature as a Western invention. The notions of culture and nature as opposed realms is a modern idea, writes Krenak, that makes no sense when looking at the places we inhabit. (Krenak, 2023)

Latour, a scholar from the Global North, also questions the artificial separation between nature and society, since both should be considered as social actors. He describes it as an illusion, because the planet is the same finite place for all. (Latour, 2006).

"En Caracas no disfrutaba tanto los paisajes/ la naturaleza porque andaba en auto y siempre tenemos el mismo clima, por lo que no se valora tanto. En cambio en Berlín disfruto mucho más de los paisajes y la naturaleza porque los vivo más de cerca, sobre todo los disfruto en sus distintas estaciones." –Rosa, Venezuela
[In Caracas I didn't enjoy the landscapes/nature as much because I travelled by car and we always have the same weather, so it is not appreciated as much. On the other hand, in Berlin I enjoy the landscapes and nature much more because I experience them more closely, I enjoy them especially in their different seasons.]

On the other hand, the scale of Berlin was remarked as a more embraceable size, which makes it friendlier to move by foot or bike. It also reduced the travel times for most women. This factor, combined with the diversity and good distribution of attractions for pedestrians, has improved their urban experience overall.

"Nos acostumbramos/aprendimos a movernos con frío, lluvia, viento etc. mientras que en nuestras casas si eso pasa no salimos." –Natalia, Mexico
[We got used to/learned to move in the cold, rain, wind, etc., while in our homes, if that happens, we simply don't go out.]

Another aspect mentioned was the daily practices, describing how they had to learn to move around Berlin according to the seasons and weather at first. This meant understanding how to dress properly aligned with the weather, what shoes to wear when there is snow and ice on the street or to be prepared for unexpected rain during summer. It also meant discovering to which temperature they could bike comfortably and when they would rather avoid taking the U-Bahn because of the heat. Besides, to familiarise themselves with the short hours of light in winter and very long days in summer. Some shared the anecdote, for example, that it was their first time buying winter clothes.

However, since this city is so different to what they had experienced before, they needed to adapt in other aspects as well: how to move around, understanding the different modes of transport available (bike, bus, tram, U-Bahn, S-Bahn, Regional Bahn etc.), trying to learn the language, the habits, the food. This set of factors involves getting used to a new place and integrating into its everyday dynamics.

Cities hold invisible structures that constitute their identity, what the German scholar Martina Löw calls 'intrinsic logics'. *"Intrinsic logic captures the hidden structures of cities as locally well-established, by and large tacitly operative processes of sense making along with their physical, material manifestations (on 'practical logic', see Bourdieu, 1977: 96–97). (...) Intrinsic logics are constantly being updated in rule-guided, routinized and materially tenable action and, as the case may be, more or less perceptibly changed intrinsically (that is, in keeping with the given city's typical manner)." (Löw, 2013, p.900)*

Tsing uses the term 'landscape structures' to describe those patterns that are created by human and multispecies interaction within a specific territory. This concept includes the non-human dimension to understand structures or logics beyond the Anthropocene. Furthermore, studying them means learning to look at landscape besides human activity, looking at them from an integrative perspective. (Tsing et al., 2019)

"Modifico, extendo mis recorridos para disfrutar del paisaje. Disfruto pasar por los parques, caminar a lo largo del canal, a ver a la gente." –Alexandra, Chile
[I modify, I extend my routes to enjoy the scenery. I enjoy going through the parks, walking along the canal, watching people.]

Fig. Focus group, own archive, 2024



For the Dutch sociologist, Rozemarijn Weyers, these logics are organised in terms of ‘othering’, dividing people by the ones who belong or not and making it tangible in certain places within the city. To do so, there are many underlaid rules based on practices, physical aspect, race, language amongst others that make someone perceive whether they are ‘welcome’ in a space (park, plaza, café) or not. Psychogeography also touched upon this idea by describing places with “the appealing or repelling character” (Debord, 1955). One must learn to decipher those logics, to read space, to be able to groove in. Nevertheless, integrating into a place is a process and, as such, it presents a series of nuances along the way, making the previous definition much more tangled and progressive. (Weyers, 2023)



Fig. Focus group, own archive, 2024

“On a daily basis, I believe that Berlin is way more pleasing, with old buildings and green streets and parks. But as someone who has grown by the coast, I miss the close connection to the sea, that ‘void’ in the landscape. I feel that the Spree doesn’t receive the attention it deserves here, except by a few places.” –Marianna, Brazil

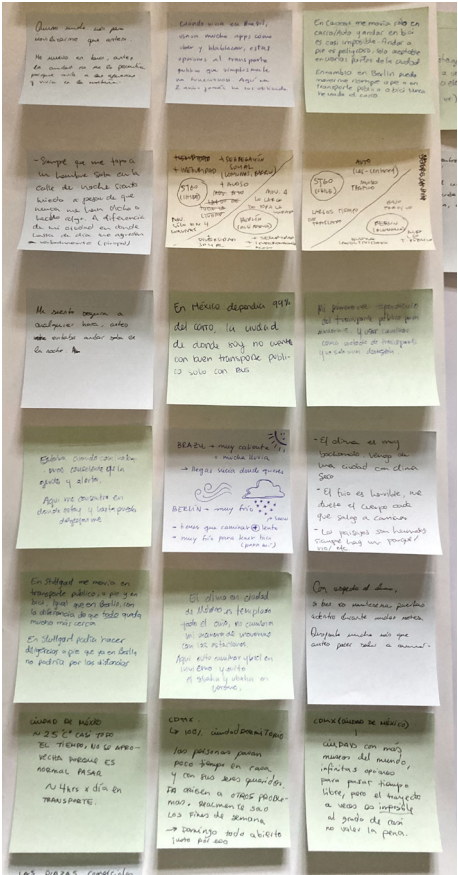
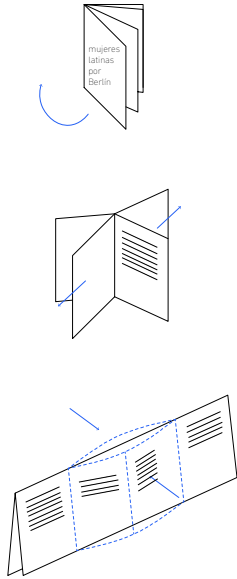


Fig. Post-its focus group, own archive, 2024

It was surprisingly easy how they connected and were open to share quite personal anecdotes. I received very positive feedback from them, which encouraged me to work further in an experienced-based and quite sensitive way.

travel diaries



design process

This instrument was designed to dive deeper into the daily experience of Latin American women living in Berlin in terms of mobility and landscape. It was planned considering the relevant aspects mentioned during the focus groups and emphasise the individual perception they experience daily since they migrated.

Within the different research tools, diaries are one of the most personal and emotional ones. For this reason, they are a useful instrument to capture individual experiences. As a personal journal that is supposed to accompany people's everyday walks, the design of the physical object also becomes relevant. To do so, an example developed by La Reconquista Peatonal ⁴, has been used as reference.

As it is mainly a white paper logbook, it allows diverse entries that can go beyond linguistic, adding hand drawings, paper cuts and even small findings like plant leaves or train tickets. The flexibility of the tool enables a deeper sense of appropriation and could help to share more intimate and unexpected insights about everyday stories. Also, with an exploratory and experienced-based method, there are no right or **wrong** in the answers, which were emphasised during the handing out of the notebook to each participant.

Besides, the logbooks were inspired by the project and book *Dear Data* (Lupi & Posavec, 2016), an initiative that seeks to share with a friend some event, feeling or information in a graphic form. Therefore, they decided to sketch on a postcard something they wanted to exchange every week. Since they lived far away, this practice took some time and was described by them as a form of "slow data" transmission. They sent each other postcards for a whole year that resulted later in a publication.

For the design of the paper notebook, a simple fanzine version was selected. This model is easy to print, fold and can be adapted to different sizes. In this case, I decided to organise it around an A3 format, folded up to the size of an A6, for it to be pocket-sized and convenient to carry with you. The project Estudio Repisa ⁵ was used as a graphic reference, because they have been working for several years creating fanzines and notebooks for participative research.

It was relevant for me to approach women with an attractive object. Researchers tend to employ the same methods and tools, which are often quite dry and unfriendly to the targeted group they are trying to address. Since this project attempts to capture personal experiences, it is crucial that the instrument speaks to the women, makes them feel comfortable and safe. The diary will serve as a field notebook and, in that sense, it is supposed to record personal sensibilities, singularities to characterise women's urban experience. Coming from a graphic field that gives value to objects and materiality, it was personally interesting and enjoyable to design the tool carefully. I did it in a way that would invite women to trying to open up in a creative and ludic piece of paper. (Criado & Estalella, 2023)

The content of the logbook was designed to guide the storytelling but leave enough free space. Questions or headlines were framed to make the participants reflect on their everyday impressions. They tend to be open questions that could be responded to in various ways, making them feel comfortable with any possible answer. The language used was Spanish, and the participants had the option to use Portuguese, English or German as well. Besides, they were encouraged to complement with sketches or drawings. It was structured around five sections addressing different topics or aspects of a topic.

A Personal information

General information regarding age, place of origin, size of the place of origin and time living in Berlin is asked. This first page has a guided design with precise questions. The data collected will be used to characterise and find intersections amongst women.

B The route

The second section asks women to select one or two routes they take frequently and describe them. To explain why they choose it, maybe adding characteristics like time, distance, modes or any other element that they find relevant. They are also asked about feelings, perceptions or thoughts they have along the route. For this part, they have three blank pages to write, sketch or draw.

C The landscape

For this section there were also three blank pages destined. The focus is on the characteristics of the environment along the route

⁴ NGO La Reconquista Peatonal, is a project that seeks to highlight walking as an essential way of moving around and inhabiting the city. www.lareconquistapeatonal.org

⁵ Estudio Repisa, is a project that develops specially dedicated pieces, which are built from affection, observation, research and communication. Each book is a machine for thinking and sharing with our surroundings. www.estudiorepisa.com

like temperature, humidity, smells, colours, species, light, amongst others. It is asked if some of these particularities determine or modify how they move. As in the previous section, they can write, sketch or draw.

D The route I remember

When you think about the daily route you travelled before When you think about the daily route you travelled before moving to Berlin, how do you remember it? How has your travel experience changed? Maybe describing in terms of time, modes or comfort. Are the things you miss (or not) from that experience?

To complement this section, another question was added on a side page: Has your relationship with the city and its landscape changed? Five pages are destined for this aspect, with some blank parts as well as lines to write.

E After walking

As a closing moment, two blank pages at the end to ask if they like the relationship they now have with the landscape in Berlin. Additionally, it is asked if they feel they have developed a sense of belonging to this new landscape.

After printing and folding them carefully, they were wrapped in an envelope along with a handwritten letter addressed personally to each woman. The envelope also included the consent and information sheet. In the following images, the reader can observe parts of the process.

The deliveries were done personally during the last week of May and the first week of June 2024. In that encounter, the participants were provided with a brief summary of the research project, its goals and the aim of the travel notebook. It was emphasised that every experience is unique and valued as it is, so they didn't feel afraid of writing wrong answers.

As in the focus group, the call for participants was made amongst friends and colleagues primary and additionally through some feminist and Latin American collectives. Most of the women from the focus group took part in the travel diaries too, and others joined for the first time. In the end, 26 women filed out a logbook.

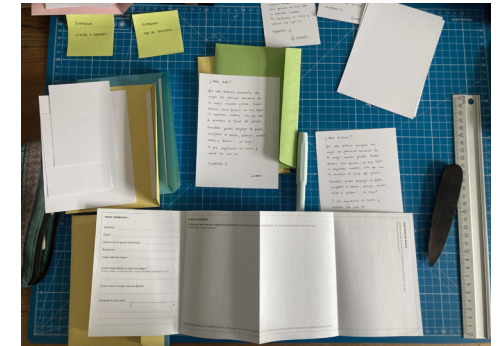


Fig. Process of the logbooks, own archive, 2024

Around three weeks later, we met personally again for the return. These encounters showed how much they appreciated the process. Many of them shared that they felt surprised to observe things they usually do not pay attention to, or how much it helped them to do the exercise of going back and remembering how they used to move in the city and how they do it now. They were also thankful to have this moment of pause and reflection over their own routines, because they rarely take the time to do it. Some of them were curious to know who the other participants were and if there would be a chance to meet them. The wish to build a community amongst Latinas was not something planned in the beginning, but it became more and more present. In this brief meeting they value feeling heard and being part of something bigger which would highlight their stories. Having this in mind, the next group meeting, designed as a member checking, gained relevance.

Another characteristic of the diary that they remarked was that they enjoyed having the option to draw or sketch and not just write, since sometimes they wanted to share images or colours to describe their routes. Some of them even took pictures along the way and offered to share them digitally to complement the records. Those images were not included in this document but helped understand the story told in those logbooks.

Once the travel diaries were collected, they were scanned and systematised. To archive and anonymise them, they were labelled with a code starting with MT_#. This information was added to the database to facilitate the process. Afterwards, they were analysed section by section, looking for common topics, overlaps and particularities. In the same matrix, there were some interesting phrases transcribed or fragments of drawings pasted for each question. The scanned files were saved to my personal account from the TU Cloud.

Delivering and getting back the notebooks in person, meant me moving a lot around Berlin. We arranged meeting points for five to six different districts that I reached mostly by bike, as well as by foot and public transport. These appointments changed the routes I usually take, making me travel through neighbourhoods I don't visit on a regular basis or that I hadn't been before at all. Because of the weather, I was pleased to have breaks during the day to go out and enjoy some fresh air. However, some days I had to change my plans spontaneously because of the heavy rain. I took it as part of the research work.

It reminded me of my interest in walkability and urban mobility in general, how well it feels to be on the move and how much this perception has changed since I live in Berlin.

That said, I decided to fill out a diary myself. Although the content of it is not part of this thesis, by going through the questions, I had the chance to reflect deeper on my personal experience. Go back to the genesis of this research project allowed me to have an overview of the important aspects, as well as recognizing some possible new topics to research further.

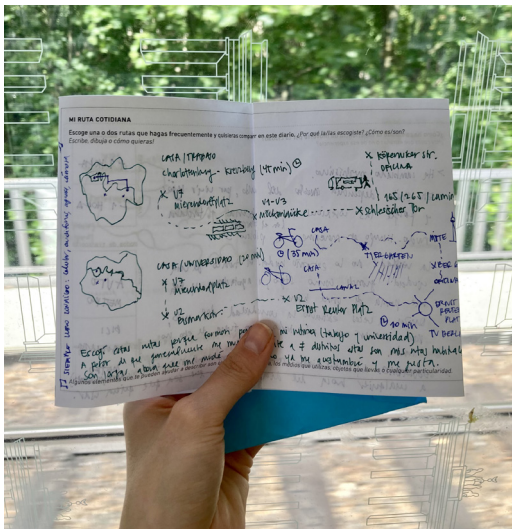


Fig. Filled diary, own archive, 2024

navigating the diaries

Reading the logbooks was a challenging, interesting, joyful and sometimes touching experience. The diversity and yet the similarity was impressive. Therefore, I decided to approach them from different angles to try to unfold and show their experiences properly. Nonetheless, this is and will never be a close process, the same way women keep moving, their stories will keep changing over time.

1. First, all the logbooks were read in a row, making notes about interesting topics, as well as repeated concepts and remarkable quotes. This was done analogue with the paper diaries spread out on the floor and a notebook to write. This process was repeated three times more.

2. It was noticed that some emotions or aspects were mentioned by several women, so these were written down and counted. This quite simple exercise revealed a clear tendency to see what is impacting their daily lives and what they value the most as latina-migrants in Berlin. This was the second reading round.

3. In the third round, I went deeper into the repeated aspects identified one step earlier, to analyse what they were specifically saying to it. Then, some intersections were recognised, when crossing aspects like time living in Berlin, size of their hometown and perception of the landscape.

4. The last reading round was to pay attention to factors of belonging. To unfold those aspects that contribute to developing a sense of integration, with all the nuances this process entails.

During reading, the topics were analysed having in mind the literature reviewed to find possible connections. Although there is not much written regarding the female experience of the natural environment, there are specific authors regarding particular topics.

The first and most mentioned aspect was safety. It was often framed in the context of the danger of being mugged on the streets, but also referred to sexual harassment related to gender. The common example almost everyone described was the possibility of walking alone at night. Being able to do so means a great deal to women, because it gives a sense of freedom and independence they didn't have in their hometowns. Since they can move freely, it gives the feeling that the city is "their own". Even though there are some places mentioned as possibly dangerous or that would make them nervous at night, the general perception is that safety has increased drastically in contrast to their former cities. Some of them mention that in many cases the sense of fear comes just as a natural response of their bodies. "Body has memory" they wrote, and to un-learn such instincts takes some time. One woman exemplified this by saying that she never again had to tell a friend that she arrived home safely. A practice that is widely spread and rooted in Latin American countries, as the Chilean book *Avisa cuando llegues* (Astudillo et al., 2019) and *Feminist City* (Kern, 2019) explain. The first book gathers 21 short stories from women's experiences in public space. It was done in collaboration with UN Women to make awareness of the circumstances which women have to face daily when moving through the city. The title of the book is precisely the phrase we say to each other before saying goodbye "let me know when you arrive". It is not just about safety, it is also a practice that expresses love and appreciation for each other (Astudillo et al., 2019). Furthermore, Kern says, it is also about companionship, solidarity, about mutual recognition. It is a form of care, of women taking care of each other, creating a safety network as a strategy to face the outside world. These safety strategies were also one of the main aspects highlighted during the focus group.

"¿Por qué los grupos de muchos hombres nos ponen incómodas?" [Why do groups with lots of men make us feel uncomfortable?.] (MT_25)

"Long before anyone had cell phones, we had to concoct various little routines ensuring no one was left to walk alone at night. For example, if I was taking the subway home, I was supposed to call Jill from the pay phone when I got off at St. George Station, wait while she and Kate walked up together and then the three of us –invulnerable now– would walk back to residence. (...) Developing these little check-in tactics was automatic, an assumed and completely normalized part of being a woman." (Kern, 2019, p.70)

"Avisame si llegaste bien"

Fig. Fragment MT_19, 2024

26 women
7 countries
27-43 years

Alex
Rosa
Natalia
Marianna
Diana
Elisa
Ihanelly
Constanza
Alexandra
Romina
Bernardita
Giovana
Florencia
Norika
Francisca
América
Clara
Rosa
Camila
Florencia
Carla
Gabriela
Valentina
María José
Tuanne
María

On the opposite hand, fear or insecurity were experienced by some women regarding racism and other types of public violence. Although less common, it is still relevant to mention it as a new type of threat that arises because of their migrant condition.

Following safety, freedom was a common feeling presented in the diaries. Freedom because of the wide offer of public transportation, which makes it possible to reach almost everywhere relaying on it, even at night. Freedom relates to the number of public spaces and public infrastructure available across the city, e.g. parks, sidewalks, swimming pools, playgrounds or libraries. Freedom as a positive consequence of feeling safe moving alone in Berlin, feeling that they have the power to decide for themselves. It was described in one diary as *"me siento libre y viva."* [I feel free and alive.]

"We want to make choices, and have some agency in getting lost, and getting found. We want to challenge the city, and decipher it, and flourish within its parameters." (Elkin, 2017, p.135)

Another relevant aspect was the amount of vegetation and multispecies places present. Almost everyone mentioned either the presence of trees, green spaces, parks or blue bodies within the city. Having implemented the logbooks during spring-summer surely influenced this perception. Nevertheless, there were also some comments regarding the relationship with green spaces in autumn or winter.

"Cómo la maleza se ilumina o se llena de niebla, cómo le pega el sol al suelo y los árboles. El ruido. Los contrastes de luz." [How weeds light up or are filled with fog, how the sun hits the ground and the trees. The noise. The contrasts of light.] (MT_22)

The impact of these elements was highly valued, describing the positive effect on their mood, energy levels and mental health. It was also pointed out as one important motivation to go outside, thus, it makes their daily trips enjoyable. Additionally, it was mentioned as one of Berlin's important assets during summer in comparison to the dark and cold winter seasons. In that regard, the city is portrayed as quite polar, with a hard winter and super nice summertime. For those women with small children, having many green spaces nearby

"Si bien en invierno es duro, me gusta cómo el clima condiciona los ritmos de Berlín, cómo se vive la ciudad. Es como si el paisaje me permitiera estar más atenta a los cambios." [Despite the winter being harsh, I like how the weather shapes Berlin's rhythms, how the city is experienced. It's as if the landscape enables me to be more aware of changes.] (MT_20)

represents a big asset to their daily routine. They appreciate the presence of multispecies in public space more than before, as they are friendly spaces for all ages.

Several of the diaries describe with great detail how plants change throughout the year and the process when trees regrow their leaves. On the same line, but less mentioned, is the presence of animals in the city. Birds, foxes, sometimes rats are part of Berlin's landscape. It showed that they pay a lot of attention to the natural context they now inhabit. As the landscape architect Günther Vogt says: *"(...) when you walk through the city with an alert eye you can see how quickly the vegetation changes. Perhaps what is needed is not patience but instead a certain attentiveness."* (Landscape as a Cabinet of Curiosities, 2021, p.200)

"Siento que en general las plantas nos saludan y se despiden de una forma muy especial cada año." [I feel that in general the plants greet us and say goodbye in a very special way every year.] (MT_26)

These observations resonate with the reflections proposed by the indigenous scholar, Elisa Loncon, who says that Mapuche people understand themselves as siblings to natural beings. She explains that observing what happens around us, acknowledging its value, means also learning to pay respect to the non-human world (Loncon, 2023).

This topic is one of the main reasons I decided to start this thesis. Having lived the different times of the year in Berlin, seeing how it changes and how it affected my own routine, was a big discover. Hence, it was reassuring to read similar experiences in other women.

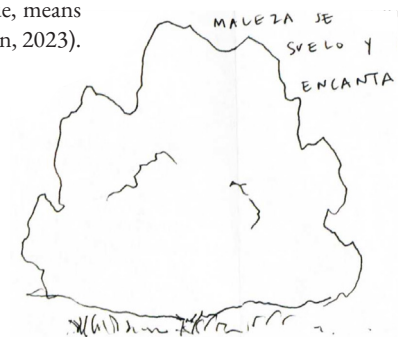


Fig. Fragment MT_22, 2024



By describing accurately how natural elements look like, how they change and how this makes them feel, one can assume a closer connection to them. Doing so, according to Loncon, would allow them to live in harmony with the different creatures, which would also lead to a healthier urban life overall. On the other side of the world, Anna Tsing describes those interactions between humans and non-humans as ‘landscape structures’. By observing carefully, one can synchronise with the organic rhythm of these patterns. “A phenomenological attunement to landscape forms as well as to beings-in-landscapes allows multispecies histories to come into view.” (Tsing et al., 2019, p.187). In addition, Krenak states that from the moment humanity de-personalized natural elements like rivers or mountains, we stripped them of their meaning. By doing so, they were relegated to mere resources for us to exploit, resulting in the terrible divorce with Mother Earth. (Krenak, 2020)

“El olor de Berlín es muy particular, es fuerte e invasor. Cuando llueve huele a humedad y no me acomoda mucho. Veo animales que no veía en Santiago: ardillas, erizos de tierra, zorros, ratas diminutas y gigantes, cuervos.” [The smell of Berlin is quite specific, it is strong and invasive. When it rains it smells damp and it doesn't suit me very well. I see animals that I did not see in Santiago: squirrels, hedgehogs, foxes, tiny and giant rats, crows.] (MT_22)



Another aspect related to the perception of freedom is the diversity of modes available to travel. S-Bahn, U-Bahn, tram, bus, Regional Bahn, bike, scooter or by foot. There are many alternatives. This makes private cars or services like uber almost disappear from the scope. Not a single woman mentioned using a car to move around, they even explicitly stated that since living in Berlin, cars seem to have “stopped existing”, because they have enough alternatives to replace them. By doing so, they are able to live closely connected to the context. Moving by foot or bike gives the opportunity to travel at another speed, using your own body which perceives the outside world directly on your skin. Public transport, although faster, allows you to look through the window and pay attention to other elements besides the street. Hence, any of these modes contributes to increasing the awareness of the city and its landscape.

Fig. Fragment MT_08, 2024

“Tampoco echo de menos mi auto. En este sentido, la experiencia de moverme por la ciudad ha cambiado definitivamente para mejor, y es algo que me gustaría llevarme de vuelta a Chile.” [I don't miss my car either. In this sense, the experience of moving around the city has definitely changed for the better, and it's something I'd like to take back to Chile.] (MT_07)

Additionally, it is not just the variety of transport means, but that they are quite reliable services. Even though many German citizens tend to complain and probably, in comparison to other German cities, the system is worse, for women coming from Latin America, it is good and trustworthy. Again, they mention safety and freedom in terms of knowing one can go to a place and have an alternative to return home safely almost 24/7. In that regard, it has been expressed that this makes moving through the city much more accessible in terms of both spatial and economic factors. Now, they don't need to spend extra money on a taxi or uber every time they go out late. They also don't have to pay for gasoline or parking tickets for their own car. Moving on a daily basis has become easier, autonomous and even enjoyable.

Women also write about becoming closer to public spaces such as parks, plazas and streets. They use the city in a more intensive way, spending longer periods of the day outside. Berlin is known for its public life, which is reinforced by the sense of appropriation their residents show. As soon as the weather allows it, people go out. Daily activities move from the private to the public sphere in a very quick and spontaneous way. This phenomenon does not happen in every city or country in the same way, which makes it remarkable for migrants coming from different latitudes. Running, reading, meeting friends, drinking a beer in front of a *Späti*, celebrating a birthday in the park or making a barbecue are just some of the activities that usually take place outside. Some women described it as living a more ‘public life’, which depicts the positive feeling they developed towards shared spaces.

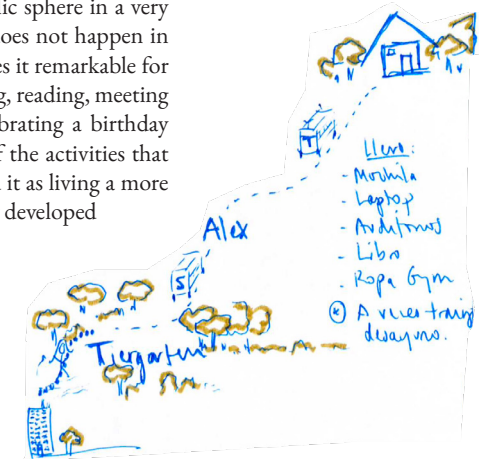


Fig. Fragment MT_23, 2024

“Lo que ha cambiado para mí es que al tener más espacios públicos para el ocio he tenido que acostumbrarme a que se puede hacer una vida más ‘pública’, tener más vida de barrio. Tener tu sillita, tu vaso, accesorios de picnic y de juego. Esto me encanta, es si o si un cambio muy bacán en mi nueva vida en Berlín. “[What has changed for me is that by having more public spaces for leisure I have had to get used to the fact that you can have a more ‘public’ life, have more neighbourhood life. Have your chair, your cup, picnic and play accessories to use outside. I love this, it’s a very cool change in my new life in Berlin.] (MT_04)

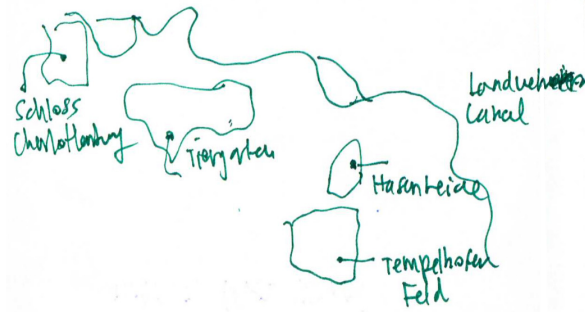


Fig. Fragment MT_14, 2024

Making more use of the spaces provided by the city, those that are not linked to consumption or with some entry barriers, helps to be part of the urban life, to develop a sense of belonging to this new space. Women with children avoid moving long or complicated distances, which makes them value even more having access to different uses within the same neighbourhood (*Kiez*).

Latin American cities present serious territorial inequalities, which often leads to people moving just around a few neighbourhoods. Hence, experiencing the city in quite a fragmented way. Mobility could be the means to connect those patches of a city, but it mostly serves as the opposite (Jirón, 2010). The impacts of urban segregation in Latin America have been studied extensively. A relevant finding is that it affects the sense of belonging and territorial identity, while it increases urban insecurity. All factors that have a determined impact on women’s possibility of autonomy (Segovia & Rico, 2017). Even there is probably no surprise in saying that Latin American cities hold (usually) high levels of spatial segregation and social inequalities, it is relevant to highlight how these impacts on women’s urban experience.

Therefore, being able to use and enjoy public spaces means much more for them. It comes with additional layers like safety, freedom or even the possibility of economic independence. (Falú, 2014)

With time, women have developed curiosity towards the city. They wrote about wanting to explore, to get to know new places and that they, therefore, changed their daily routes. These trips give them space to stroll without any clear destination, to be distracted and enjoy the moment. It is a feeling they rarely recall experiencing back home, not just because it was their own city, but because of safety, time

“Despistarse en un privilegio.” [To get distracted is a privilege.] (MT_17)

and connectivity difficulties. As some female authors say, to have the possibility to wonder around, to drift without clear destination just for the pleasure of being outside, is a privilege.

“That is to say, the experience along the way could replace destinations as the purpose of travel. And if the whole landscape was the destination, one arrived soon as one set out in this world that could be looked at as a garden or painting.” (Solnit, 2001, p.93)

For Elkin, it is described as a privilege as well, as women experience several limitations to fully enjoy public spaces. The possibility of the 19th century *flâneur* is, foremost, reserved only for men. Additionally, they should be white, healthy and European citizens. Almost 150 years have passed since that character was portrayed, and it is still a liberty only men can take for granted. Nevertheless, Solnit narrates the internal process it takes to lose those constraints we have been



Fig. Fragment MT_04, 2024

"La mejor caminata es al atardecer cuando el destino es la casa así que no hay apuro." [The best walk is at sunset when the destination is home, so there is no rush.] (MT_07)

taught, to be able to embrace the unknown. How many new external (and personal) dimensions one can explore when letting go of the map. A wider palette of emotions to experience pleasure in exploring the landscape. (Solnit, 2006)

Pleasure was described as a result of having all the previously mentioned aspects covered. To go out just for the joy of being outside. This feeling can be linked to what was written regarding quality of life and the improvement in their mental health. Of course, health is not stable and can change easily, especially during the cold seasons, but is still portrayed as a positive effect of migrating.

"Creio que encontro mais beleza no meu dia a dia, e portanto mais prazer e fruição." [I believe I find more beauty in my day to day and bringing more pleasure and joy.] (MT_08)

At the same time, the logbooks showed traces of *nostalgia* in different layers. Some women wrote about missing family and friends, which can be one of the most expected dimensions. Many described feeling homesick for things like food, fresh fruits and sun. Others expressed missing the sense of humour, the way of socialising and relating to each other (smiles, hugs, kisses). Those invisible and sometimes indescribable gestures present in public life that shape how they experience space. Chaos, for instance, which one can assume to be a negative attribute, was surprisingly something they occasionally missed. It can be exemplified by the presence of street vendors, informal markets, hectic traffic or music on the street. Most likely, those are elements they never valued much while in their home cities. Nevertheless, the lack of them erases part of the urban landscape they are used to. This feeling is in tune with the first observations of this work, namely, we tend to forget about things we see every day and just realise it when something in our circumstances change.

Moreover, they perceive a lack of empathy or solidarity. Pregnant women or women with children mentioned being shocked that no one gave them a seat in the subway or helped them with the pram. For the few participants who expressed having care responsibilities, this aspect was particularly relevant. Some of them wrote missing home

"Extraño conversar con gente en la calle, que me ayuden o ayudar." [I miss chatting with people on the street, being helped or helping others.] (MT_25)

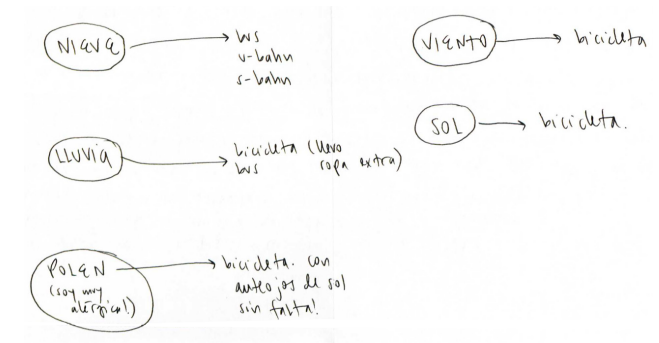


Fig. Fragment MT_20, 2024

"Siempre iba de punto A a un punto B en coche. Lo que más triste me parece es que ahora me doy cuenta que me perdía todo lo que pasaba entre esos dos puntos." [I always went from A to B by car. What seems saddest to me is that I now realize that I missed everything that happened between those two points.] (MT_09)

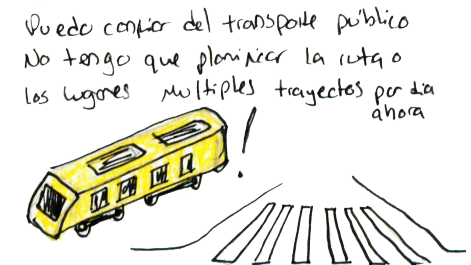


Fig. Fragment MT_03, 2024

much more since they became mothers, because of the way people would help her or be friendlier seeing she is carrying a baby. Although they perceive that Berlin can be an extreme example of disconnection in terms of individualism and should not serve as an example for the whole country, they feel sad and even hopeless when realising homeless people or people with drug issues have become part of the urban landscape without anyone's attention. Facing so many people living daily on the street or with clear mental difficulties has been part of the process of accepting their new circumstances.

The starting point for this project were women, migrants, originally from Latin America living in Berlin, and to study their experience while moving through the city. Thus, inevitably, it raises issues in terms of intersectionality, of subordination and how urban studies can interrogate these dimensions (Crenshaw, 1991). Consequently, one can identify some aspects intersecting with others, creating a more comprehensible understanding.

In that regard, language has shown to play an important role in feeling part of Berlin. It determines the possibility of interactions and being catalogued as foreigners or not. Speaking German is – to them – more relevant than how they look like or if they have adopted German manners. Regardless of the time spent in the city, until language remains a barrier, they would still feel in some degree like outsiders. Following, the fact of having had to move out many times within Berlin, has made them get to know the city better. Even though experiencing housing insecurity isn't a desirable situation, they appreciate having lived in different neighbourhoods. At the same time, women moving across several districts on a daily basis share a similar feeling, because it has helped with orientation too.

Besides, for those coming from intermediate to big cities, scale has been a familiar factor. Some mention having consciously chosen a big city for that reason. In any case, even for those coming from smaller or rural areas, Berlin still seems manageable. They notice it in the rhythm, the speed at which they usually move, which feels calmer. Somehow, Berlin flows slower, giving them space to explore and enjoy the way.

"To belong means to me to feel rooted. That entails being able to live the way you want, surrounded by loved ones, having a comfortable house, stable jobs, and so forth."
(MT_08)

Coming from a region without seasons or with a very dry and hot climate like Mexico, makes Berlin's climate much more difficult to adjust to, as for women from the South of Latin America. Although expectable, it also has some positive effects, because they appreciate much more how the landscape changes during the year.

Regardless of the size or climate in their home cities, the impact for those women that used to travel primarily by car has been high. None of the participants has a car now in Berlin. They are discovering and admiring the landscape, the surroundings and everything that happens in between two points. The possibility of moving at another speed, relying on her own body (or sometimes public transport), has brought new experiences to their daily trips.

Except for those who have children or are pregnant, they mostly move alone, more than they did before. Moving independently gives them the opportunity to decide for themselves. To change the route, make a stop, drink a coffee on the way, are all moments when they develop curiosity towards the city. An experience which is now possible, because of the aspects previously explained like safety or access to diversity of means of transport. All attributes they value highly.

Nostalgia crosses all the dimensions described earlier. Women feel homesick or miss specific elements regardless of the time spent in Berlin, speaking the language, having a good sense of orientation or being able to walk to work. Probably, it has many more layers to unfold than the ones expressed in the logbooks or the two meetings we had. Furthermore, it is likely to be much more complex and intertwined with intimate factors that will not be addressed deeper in this study. However, it is important to note it because it is a relevant dimension as a migrant.

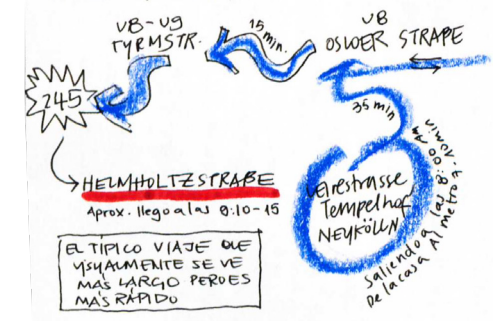
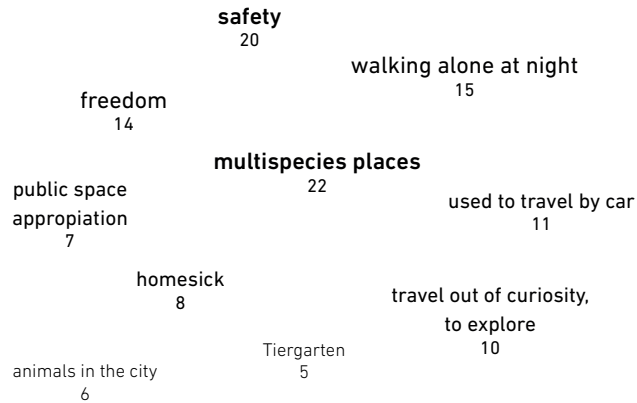


Fig. Fragment MT_22, 2024

Some numbers to illustrate the relevance of the topics:



The small number below shows in how many diaries out of 26 was this topic mentioned. The first one refers to mentioning the presence of vegetation in the city in the form of parks, forest, playgrounds etc., as well as other natural features like bodies of water. Among the repetitions, the appearance of Tiergarten was a surprise. Although it is certain one of the biggest public spaces in the city, I did not expect it to be so present in everyday routes. Nevertheless, there were at least five women that described it in their daily trips.

“Empezar el día cruzando un parque me pone de buen humor.” [Starting the day travelling through a park puts me in a good mood.] (MT_15)

While reading the diaries I could relate to many of the experiences. This made the process much more personal and meaningful. That is when I decided to design the final get-together event not just as a member checking event, but as an opportunity to build community.

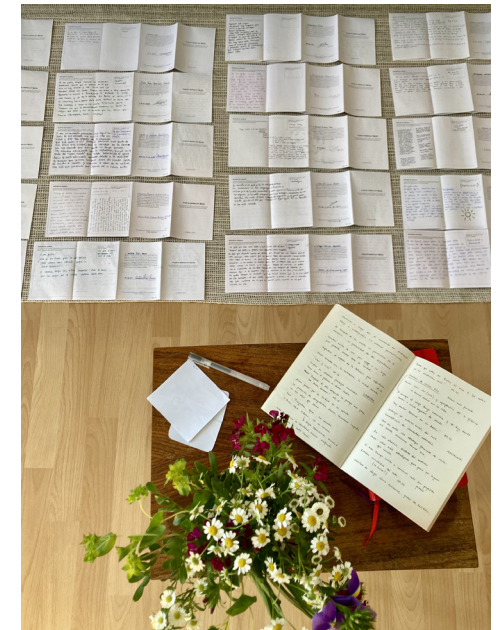


Fig. Analysis process, own archive, 2024

closing session

procedure

On the 20th of July, we gathered again at ‘Ida Nowhere’ a community space in Neukölln. The travel diaries were exhibited for the other participants to read. At the beginning, I shared some preliminary thoughts regarding the analysis of the travel diaries, and they had time to complement them with their own comments. Afterwards, the conversation was guided to specific aspects that were interesting to go over with further detail. Having the logbooks hanging in front of them opened the discussion not just around personal experiences, but as a collective. Many times, they were surprised to see how many similarities they could find within their individual anecdotes. Same as in the first session (focus group), there was no need to break the ice, they were keen to start the conversation easily.

This meeting was designed as a member checking, to ensure the analysis and interpretation of their stories was accurate, as well as deepen into some interesting topics (López-Zerón et al., 2021). Likewise, it was relevant to me to share some results with them, as a form of feedback and recognition for their trust and contribution. They expressed on many occasions being interested in seeing other diaries, getting to know each other and reading the final document. Therefore, it made sense to organise a group meeting which would enable them to have an overview of the study and make them part of the conversation around the findings. Same as for the focus group, the idea of thinking in conversation, proposed by Segato, was taken as a reference. Coming together generates a safe atmosphere and helps to an affectionate exchange of perspectives. (Segato, 2018)

8 women
4 countries

Rosa
Natalia
Elisa
Alexandra
Romina
Francisca
María José
Tuanne

listening closely

The first question was related to the idea of learning and unlearning: How have you adapted your daily practices when moving around the city? Immediately, the conversation linked the question with safety and security. Most of the gestures or practices mentioned had to do with feeling safer and protecting themselves from possible threats. A concrete example they portrayed was the relationship with their bag. They learnt to always have it with them, to hold it almost like a baby, to never leave it out of sight. Even during the meeting, which was in a close and safe space, some of them kept their bags in their lap. This shows how integrated this practice is. A woman said that she was asked once why she was always carrying her backpack up front and not in the back as it is designed for. She had to explain that it was for security reasons, that she learnt to carry it always where she could see if someone would steal from her. The bag –they explained– is a personal object they hold on to as a way to feel safe, safe from being stolen but also from physical or sexual assaults.

“She’s learning that being a woman alone in the city means learning a set of embodied habits, mostly unconsciously. Over time and through repetition (or iteration, as Judith Butler would say) these condense and shape the body.” (Kern, 2019, p.166)

Since they learnt that walking at night alone or passing by a group of men can pose a threat, one woman said that she developed what she calls her ‘man walk’, which means walking in a fast, unattractive, and rough way. Doing this makes her feel safer in those situations, probably because she thinks she does not look attractive nor vulnerable. The same example is described in Latin American literature by saying *“Escribir como hombre para validarse. Comportarse en la calle como hombre para salvarse. Masculinizarse, esconder el cuerpo, ocultarse.”* [Write like a man to validate yourself. Behave like a man on the street to save yourself. Masculinize yourself, hide your body, conceal yourself.] (Astudillo et al., 2019, p.16)

After leaving her country, once she arrived late at Kottbuser Tor and had to walk through a big group of men, so she instinctively used her ‘man walk’. Although they would likely not have done anything to her, she said that these are some of the practices deeply rooted in her body, that are difficult to unlearn. Looking back, she can see that those situations are less risky than what she was used to, but to decipher those urban dynamics takes some time. Additionally, being

a foreigner often comes with having no (or a small) social network. Hence, you wouldn't know whom to call to ask for help.

"Your body 'keeps the score'⁶ of moments of fear, harassment, violence, and unwanted contact. It holds onto that sense of shock, the recoil, the disgust, and the anger that accompany deliberate, uninvited touch. Moments when fight to flight impulses kick in make stark imprints. The visceral discomfort of sexualizing, objectifying comments and the accompanying shame and impotent rage are held just below the surface of the skin." (Kern, 2019, p.168)

Related to the same topic, they explained how surprised they were to see people using their laptops on public transport, because they would never have thought of doing it before arriving in Berlin. They interpret it as a visible sign of how safe it is to be in public spaces. It also took them some time to understand that graffiti or trash on the street did not necessarily mean marginality or danger. Before, they would have avoided any place with such signs. Those anecdotes show to what extent feeling safe or unsafe modify quite banal practices as well as shape the flexibility towards public activities.

*"Antes graffiti = marginalidad = delincuencia, lentamente me he acostumbrado que eso no necesariamente es así."
[Before graffiti = marginalization = crime, I have slowly become used to the fact that this is not necessarily the case.]
–Francisca, Chile*

Because of the language barrier, many of them declared to have stopped using headphones on the street to try to connect with the environment. They portrayed it as a way of being present, trying to understand what is happening around them and maybe be able to groove into it. As noted in previous chapters, language has a significant impact on how they move and perceive the city. It is undoubtedly a factor on which they all agree, and on which they are all working to improve.

On the contrary, there are some practices they highlight as positive and that they would not like to unlearn. German society (or at least Berlin) is too individualistic, they perceive. People do not pay attention to others, do not show empathy or solidarity to strangers. It is hard to see someone being kind to the cashier at the supermarket, for example,

*"Hay gestos y formas que no quisiera perder como: saludar, sonreír, hacer contacto visual con la gente. La gente acá no te mira a los ojos." [There are gestures and manners that I would like not to lose such as: greeting, smiling, making eye contact with people. People here don't look you in the eye.]
–Elisa, Chile*

It requires sufficient maturity and self-awareness to identify those things that you value and would not like to change. Even more so when it is immersed in a context which promotes other practices

or that greets everyone when arriving at a party. Only a few people would spontaneously offer help to an old person struggling to get off the bus, they said. As expressed in the logbooks, they hope to never stop perceiving them as rude and unfriendly practice and that they would not want to adapt to. This description resonates with Butler's notion of identity as an effect of discourse (external inputs) as well as a practice, a form of self-expression and performance. Even though the subject is culturally constructed, she writes, it is still provided with the ability of agency and reflection. (Butler, 1999)

The second question was: Do you feel that your quality of life has improved by having more contact with natural elements in your daily life? To which they responded immediately highlighting the relevance of being able to move freely around the city. Particularly relevant was that they feel they can rely almost 100% on their bikes. To get around in this active mode makes them feel good and proud. A woman phrased it by saying she can now "brag" about being sporty, being proud of her new mobility habits. This aspect was also one of the most mentioned in the travel diaries.

Adding to the same idea, they explained how easier everyday life feels like in Berlin in comparison to their hometowns. One can carry out daily duties much handier and faster, because of accessibility, connectivity and security. Hence, their quality of life increased considerably. This is, again, an aspect that many Berliners would not agree on, but since Latin American cities tend to be highly segregated, sprawled, car-oriented and sometimes unsafe, Berlin looks quite comfortable.

⁶ Bessel A. van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014)

Multispecies places were, as well, quite relevant to their daily travel experience. Almost every day, they can visit a park, bike through Tiergarten or Tempelhofer Feld or make a stop at the canal. Having the possibility of nature increases their mental health and joy of being outside. The diversity of open spaces also plays a role, because they offer a wide range of activities or at least the flexibility to use them in different ways. From jogging or skating, to reading a book, playing with kids, organising a picnic, having a celebration or attending a concert, are just some of the activities they can enjoy spontaneously in public space. Even though they are sometimes not spotless or maintained. Whereas in Latin America, parks and plazas tend to be very neat and polished but are conceived as part of the decoration of the city, not a place to be actively used. On the same line, because of the abundant vegetation, they perceive that summer is much nicer. They gave the example that the asphalt never burns, because there are trees on almost every street.

"Nunca antes hubiese ido a echarme sobre el pasto en un parque." [I would never have gone to lie down on the grass in a park before.] –Alexandra, Venezuela

As explained in the travel diaries, passing through many green (or blue) open spaces is perceived by them as a privilege. To have big open spaces from time to time when they can experience spaciousness and have this contrast to the rest of the urban fabric.

During the session, pleasure was mentioned in terms of being able to enjoy the city more than they were used to. Like what was indicated in the logbooks, it was mostly described as the result of the previous aspects. One woman exemplified this by saying she can move slower and therefore enjoy the route and not just the destination.

"Cambio en mi ritmo, en el cotidiano me suelo mover más tranquila, sin el estrés de otras grandes ciudades. Puedo disfrutar el trayecto." [I change my pace; I usually move more calmly in my daily life, without the stress of other big cities. I can enjoy the journey.] –Francisca, Chile

Afterwards, the conversation went around the topic of living a more 'public life', which was highlighted in the travel diaries. They explained it is mostly because of the spatial disposition of the city. In

Latin America there are often many walls and fences. One can never see what is happening inside a private space. Streets are surrounded by opaque boundaries which are not friendly to walk through. In contrast, Berlin is quite transparent in that regard, the line between private and public space is less visible. They said this gives them a sense of openness and a comfortable scenario to let other things happen. It also enables you to enjoy the green spaces even more and not perceive them as decoration or restricted areas.

At the same time, to be allowed to drink alcohol on the street was described as a determined factor in contrast to Latin American cities. It widens the diversity of events happening in the public space. Additionally, feeling safe and having access to public transport all day, contributes to intensifying the use of public spaces as well.

*"Siento que quiero hacer más cosas afuera porque hay más alternativas disponibles." [I feel like I want to do more things outside because there are more alternatives available.]
–Romina, Chile*

To deepen into the relationship with the context, they were asked about the aspects that make them feel that they belong to this new landscape. Many declare that they still think they have a long way to go until they feel that they fully belong, but there are some factors they have accomplished. One was to be able to orientate themselves in the city, knowing what U-Bahn or Bus they needed to take to get somewhere. Another banal example was finding out what to buy in the supermarket. As absurd as it may sound, it was an example many could relate to. It is a sign of being local, because you already have the experience of which brand or type of each product you prefer without having to read all the labels. *You stop looking lost like a tourist*, they said.

*"Siento que no destaco físicamente, hay tantos colores e idiomas en la calle, que puedo ser una más, sentir que pertenezco." [I feel like I don't stand out physically, there are so many colors and languages on the street, that I can be just someone one more, feel like I belong.]
–María José, Ecuador*

On a physical level, many could feel being part of Berlin's landscape. Living in such a cosmopolitan city makes it easier to merge, since

there are already many colours, languages and styles. In Berlin, not looking like the prototypical German person doesn't mean you don't belong. On the contrary, most of the people living in this city don't fit this stereotype, even though they could hold a German passport. Or the other way around, they could look stereotypically European but actually come from another continent. Amongst the participants one could recognise a wide variety of physical features and skin colours, but none of them highlighted it as an important issue for their life in Berlin. Likewise, seeing diversity in other dimensions such as age, religion, social background, makes them feel that the city is open to everyone.

However, there are still some elements holding them back from belonging. Language is probably the most relevant one, since it is described as essential to be able to communicate, as well as understand what is happening around you. Some of them miss having small talks with people on the street, being able to engage besides the essential interactions. Language was already mentioned during the focus group as a factor of integration, which resonated with the idea of the implicit practices of whiteness and 'othering' described by Weyers. Despite Berlin being quite friendly to English-speaking people, to get to the core of its culture and practices, knowing the language is needed. (Weyers, 2023)

"Valoro mucho encontrar elementos familiares, antes no me hubiese fijado en gente bailando en la calle o un restaurant con comida latina, ahora eso me hace sentir en casa." [I really appreciate finding familiar elements. Before, I wouldn't have noticed people dancing in the street or a restaurant serving Latin American food, but now that makes me feel at home.] –Alexandra, Venezuela

Berlin has a history of self-organised initiatives, from allotment gardens to environmental activism, housing organisations, artist or diaspora collectives. In that sense, a woman stated that once she learns German she will be able to join one of these groups and feel one step closer to belonging.

As a closing exercise, they received a postcard to answer the question: If you could choose one element/aspect of your place of origin to make your trips through Berlin more pleasant, what would you choose?

Almost everyone chose the Andes Mountains. Chileans as well as Ecuadorian and Venezuelan agreed that they miss a broken and mountainous geography. A woman from Brazil selected the view of the ocean, since every street in her city leads to the beach. All testimonies relate to the landscape, to landmarks that shape what they have built over the years as the image of a city. Even though they tended to mention safety and connectivity to describe their daily experiences in Berlin, once asked about memory and wishes, they immediately turned to spatial and natural elements from their home countries. This may have an underlaying connection with how indigenous people from the South relate with territory. A close link that goes beyond the physical dimension, recognising it as a living and sacred entity. Relationships that have served for centuries to read natural phenomena, to prepare for their changes, enabling a harmonious cohabitation. (Krenak, 2020; Loncon, 2023)

At the same time, memories tie us to places, a sort of knowledge that remains silent until we actively remember. Places are made from many fragmented stories accumulated with time, holding particular meanings for inhabitants and visitors. It is also part of our identity as individuals, but as a collective too. Memory reflects a spatial practice to a specific place, in this case, the strong presence of a mountainous landscape. (Certeau & Certeau, 2013) The Andes (as well as other distinctive natural landmarks), are embedded in their personal identity, which is also shared with other Latinas. Today, since living

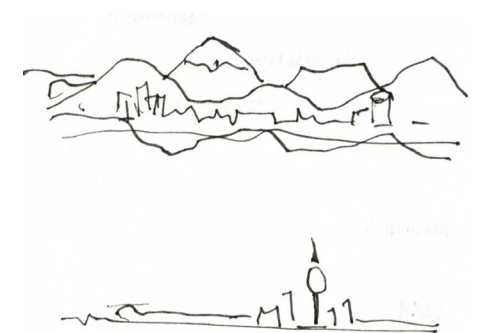


Fig. Fragment MT_25, 2024

in a different place, those memories from the past are still reflected in their daily practices in situations like trying to find the mountains to know where the north is. (Rothberg, 2009)

"Memory, like the mind and time, is unimaginable without physical dimensions, to imagine it as a physical place is to make it into a landscape in which its contents are located, and what has location can be approached." (Solnit, 2001, p.77)

Furthermore, they agreed that bringing diversity to Berlin is something they value as being migrants. Some examples they gave as visible elements were speaking another language, wearing new colours or having different body gestures. Likewise, they perceive they also contribute on a relational level by bringing different ways of interacting and acting with each other. Even in small examples like saying hello, asking how you are, smiling, making eye contact, initiating small conversations, helping someone on the street. Many times, they declared being afraid of losing these manners amid the harshest and hostile Berlin environment. This contests their identity which, as a cultural construction, can change over time. Nevertheless, as identity can also be interpreted as a practice, women can consciously reflect upon its essence. Identity is then, a performance in which they have agency to decide, regardless of the cultural context they are immersed in. (Butler, 1999)

Having moments like this gathering reminds them of those things they miss and value their roots, things they recognise as part of their identity as Latinas. This resonates with the descriptions of nostalgia in the travel diaries, where they convey missing more empathy in Berliners.

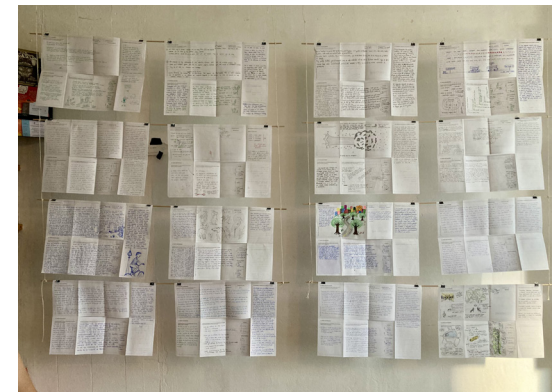


Fig. Closing session, own archive, 2024

Without wishing to speak against integration, the fact of constantly living as a migrant has made me reflect more deeply on the implications of what it means to integrate. I think it should be understood as a process that goes in both directions, where foreigners and locals can meet along the way.

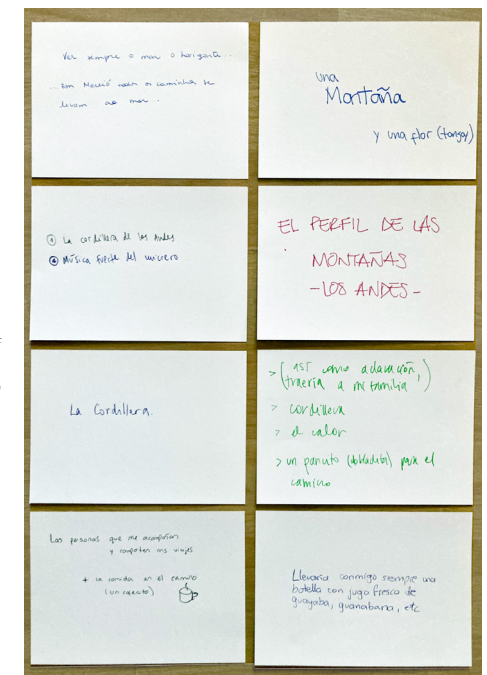


Fig. Memory exercise, 2024

cabinet of reflections

discussion

After going through the travel diaries and the field notes many times, one can only start grasping how multilayered experiences are. They shared valuable information which touches upon many aspects of urban life. Every woman has a unique story, one that grows and mutates with them over time and space. Working with women demands to understand them in their heterogeneity. Subtleties which need a closer and careful look to be captured. It is relevant to understand those nuances before drawing fast conclusions, especially since Berlin is becoming more and more international. Hence, to address intersectionality when studying urban dynamics as a way of widening the scope of territorial tensions and practices (Crenshaw, 1991). Haraway explains that we need stories big enough to gather complexities while leaving open edges for new and unexpected connections. She refers believing in compost as a form of addressing the patchy assemblage humans are part of. Compost also as a messy entangle between and across species, similar as the colourful diversity present in the city (Haraway, 2016). Furthermore, Tsing argues for studies that draw attention to the heterogeneity present between humans and nonhumans. By using the term patchy Anthropocene, she reinforces the notion of messy and dispersed patterns of human and multispecies structures. (Tsing et al., 2019)

Though complex, this constellation holds some structure, those invisible logics that constitute a place's identity (Löw, 2013). City dwellers are part of the construction of those logics. They are constantly shaping and being shaped by them, which makes it possible for new inhabitants to join the game. Integration as well as developing a sense of belonging is a process which requires you to unfold those invisible rules that structure a place. Furthermore, it means being part of the updating of those rules, taking a role in the city-making process. In the end, it means participating in the production of space. To produce a space, to give it a meaning, is a labour carried out to the extent of living and moving (Lefebvre, 1974). Moreover, the String Figure's theory from Haraway, addresses this idea as a way of constant iteration between giving and receiving, action and counteraction in an intertwined territory. A form of playing a game where every participant has to learn to give and take for the strings to hold. The production of space and meaning in the broader sense is as well a matter of how we perceive, use, tell and remember places. This entanglement could be understood as part of a string figure relationship, where many hands are pushing, pulling and sometimes also letting go. (Haraway, 2016)

"No species, not even our own arrogant one pretending to be good individuals in so-called modern Western scripts, acts alone; assemblages of organic species and of abiotic actors make history, the evolutionary kind and the other kinds too." (Haraway, 2016, p.100)

Since cities are inhabited by many hundreds of thousands of people, they are frequently contested places which are constantly being shaped by a great number of bodies. In that regard, Krenak challenges the notion of individuality, by addressing the inevitable need for collaboration and co-dependency. The creation of the world, he says, was not a specific event, it is an ongoing process of which we are all part of, because of the simple fact of sharing the same territory. This understanding opens the chance to rethink our identity as species, group, collective and the kind of bond we would like to have with what surrounds us. How we desire to continue co-existing on Earth (Krenak, 2020; Marino, 2022). This is also one of the central aspects of feminist theory, as Neimanis explains by saying that posthuman feminism is *"not only about correcting a phallogocentric understanding of bodies, but also about developing imaginaries that might allow us to relate differently."* (Neimanis, 2017, p.11). Both approaches, coming from multispecies and feminist theory, discuss the need to work towards a different way of co-habitation that allows us to share the same space in harmony, amongst and across species.

The participants in this project showed the importance of building networks, paying attention to each other, looking in the eyes, smiling from time to time. Migrating has given them the possibility to start again and to choose (more or less) how they want to relate to this new scenario. Practices embedded in our social practices are, in many cases, inherited from someone else's history. The borders of identity are jagged and can have borrowed habits and memories that are not directly part of our own experience. Hence, starting in a new place may give you the chance to unlearn some of those to create your own memories. By doing so, they are also contributing to the collective patchy story of Berlin. (Rothberg, 2009)

"Staying alive—for every species—requires livable collaborations. Collaboration means working across difference, which leads to contamination. Without collaborations, we all die." (Tsing, 2015, p.28)

Adding to that, in some travel diaries one could note the importance they assign to migration, as they describe feeling lucky to be able to live here, to have the experience of living in a city like Berlin. Despite

difficulties, women value inhabiting new places, learning new ways. Collecting stories and experiences that enrich them personally as well as the possibility of creating colourful cities. Besides, it gives them the opportunity to try new strategies, new manners, routes, places and so on, since they have no inherited practices. Fears and prejudices that determined the image of their home city, can be rebuilt in this new scenario. Many bodily practices they had to feel safe in public spaces which they do not need anymore, like sharing live location when coming home at night. On the contrary, there are habits they think they would never unlearn, even though they are no longer necessary. In some degree, it does not seem to bother them, as it constitutes part of their identity and does not limit their daily life. It is interesting to capture those subtle elements that make them feel integrated in this

“Camino con un paso más seguro, me apropié de algunas rutas que ahora son y serán siempre parte de la historia de mi vida. Si me voy mañana, yo también habré formado parte de la historia de Berlín.” [I walk with a more confident stride, I took over some routes that are now and will always be part of the history of my life. If I leave tomorrow, I will also have been part of Berlin’s history.] (MT_12)

new spatiality while still preserving their identity as Latinas. As Judith Butler says, identity is a practice, a daily human performance, which is influenced by the cultural context and the ability to reflect on those inputs. In that sense, it holds both stability and permeability at the same time. A ‘constellation of identification’ where many factors are contributing and pulling the strings (Butler, 1999). This game of learning and unlearning, integrating without losing their essence, relates again to Haraway’s theory of String Figures, a game of giving and receiving, of being able to co-create new patterns. An exercise of dropping fears, staying open to the unexpected and accepting the risk of contingency. This cultural exchange provides different perspectives on urban life. (Haraway, 2016)

Women move more, more comfortable and happier. They can enjoy the possibilities that the city provides. Moving independently, mainly by non-motorized means –according to their own stories– improves their quality of life and perception of the environment. This example is part of the habits they gained while in Berlin.

Solnit describes Michel de Certeau’s reflections in terms of pedestrians by saying: *“Walkers are ‘practitioners of the city,’ for the city is made to be walked. A city is a language, a repository of possibilities, and walking is the act of speaking that language, of selecting from those possibilities. Just as language limits what can be said, architecture limits where one can walk, but the walker invents other ways to go.”* (Solnit, 2001, p.213)

It is worth mentioning how landmarks shape our image of what a city should look like. In particular, the Andes mountains are deeply rooted in women’s memory, but in general, rivers, oceans, climate. Those are all landscape milestones that proved to be much more relevant than any other physical element. The participants were surprised to realise that it was almost the same for all of them. They also conveyed that because Berlin is so flat, both in topography and buildings, they miss the Andes even more.

On a methodological level, it was relevant to “put face” to data in terms of acknowledging women’s experiences, adding their first names, taking time to get to know them, handling their stories carefully. An example of this way of proceeding was, for instance, delivering and returning the diaries personally, even though it was much more energy demanding. It resonates with how Tsing addresses the importance of local knowledge when saying: *“The Anthropocene may be planetary, but our grip on collaborative survival is always situated—and thus patchy.”* (Tsing et al., 2019, p.188). For this, it matters to pay attention to the details, to work collaboratively, to approach the holders of this situated knowledge with care.

Likewise, it is worth mentioning that this research was conducted by me, a Latina living in Berlin, the same as the participants, which gave the project a special personal meaning. It frames the positionality from where the study is speaking.

Another observation worth mentioning was the translation exercise. The participatory work was held in Spanish (and some Portuguese), the literature references were in Spanish, English and German and the written part of this research was in English. Additionally, the project was described and reflected on a daily basis with friends and colleagues in both Spanish and German. Jumping between languages has moments of concepts getting “lost in translation”, but there were many times when it made new connections possible. Unexpectedly,

at some point elements were ‘gained in translation’. *“It matters what matters we use to think other matters with, it matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.”* (Haraway, 2016, p.12)

This project hopes to contribute to the field of urban studies with a focus on a gender perspective. It aims to enrich the understandings of mobility by adding the factors of migration and spatiality, to be considered in future studies. Those layers should provide design and planning with better information for public projects. Gathering data directly from the parties involved highlights the value of people’s personal experiences and pays respect to situated knowledge of a specific territory. This research does it by presenting a fragment of those stories in the context of Latinas in Berlin and carefully interpreting how the story is told. (Haraway, 2016)

Since the project touches upon the notion of belonging and the process of integration in a new context, it wishes to provide a different approach to it, with the focus on spatiality and mobility. Also, by acknowledging it as a both directions path, where city is a dynamic scenario under construction by its different inhabitants (old, new, human or non-human). This work is a search for a more humble and delicate urban design. An attempt to pay respect to those unique daily practices that shape our multispecies environment.

“The kind of feminist posthumanism that interests me is one that strives to connect to the many subjects of feminism that were never granted access to the designation of ‘human’ in the first place. These feminist posthumanisms emerge from, include, and learn from black and anticolonial (as well as queer and crip) feminist critiques.” (Neimanis, 2017, p.11)

Cities are living and changing elements, which speaks in favour of leaving an open-end. However, this is both an attribute and a limitation, because at some point –as in every project– one needs to draw a line to be able to deliver some kind of product. For the purpose of this research, this document was designed as a kind of checkpoint within a process that could take further steps with new participants. Possible lines of interest could be to widen the diversity in the sample, setting some criteria of interest (i.e. only people who migrated alone), or on the contrary, narrowing it to some specific characteristic (i.e. only German speaking Latinas). Both paths could help provide a better understanding of the positionality where these women stand. Personally, I also acknowledge that the process needs to be continuously reviewed and updated.

There is a methodological limitation. As this approach demands a lot of time, energy and complexity along the process, it is difficult to have many participants. In this case, 28 women were part of the study. If the goal is to achieve representativeness in the samples, one could decide to collect a bigger number or focus on a wider diversity in the participants. Nevertheless, it is not the goal of this text to come to fixed conclusions, rather invite the reader to the manifold world of people’s movements.



Fig. Fragment MT_19, 2024

findings

To conclude, there are some interesting findings to draw from the study. As the amount and complexity of information gathered along the process was high, I will provide one possible interpretation. For the same reason, the findings come from different angles and not strictly content related, which also shows the patchiness of the process.

First, the impact of geographical landmarks plays an important role in our image of a city. The Andes mountains are deeply embedded in the imaginary of Latinas and to live in a place with a flat topography makes them feel that something is missing. It was interesting to realise that, regardless of the time spent in Berlin, their memory of what home looks like keeps going back to the mountains. This could also have some relation to the amount of time they lived in Latin America. As they spent their childhood and longer in the South, these geographical landmarks constructed their first image of a place which is probably rooted in a way nothing new could. Of course, it does not have to be the mountains. In other cases, it can be the ocean, a river or any remarkable spatial characteristic of their hometowns.

On the other hand, moving is a form of dwelling as well as a possibility of self-determination and a source of pleasure. Women in this study conveyed moving more and better as they did before arriving in Berlin. In particular, walking and biking showed to offer a wide range of opportunities. By involving your own body, travelling becomes a personal and even intimate moment. They can choose when and how they move, allowing not just efficient trips, but also leisure and joy. Being able to move pleasantly, increases both their quality of life and the possibility of taking part in public life. Strolling, jogging, walking, drifting, wandering, running, became part of these women's lives, which is perceived as a big privilege.

In addition, migration proved to be a possibility for re-shaping one's common practices and, moreover, one's identity. To change countries means immersing yourself in a new culture, language, climate, traditions and so on. To decipher this new place and make it one's own, creates the opportunity to start again, deciding what to keep

and what to learn. To that extent, women's identities can mutate, preserving the essentials while performing differently. Migrating challenges the stability of identity, as it forces us to reflect on our practices, which emphasises the notion of identity as a performance under construction.

Finally, working in different languages helped to enrich the project. The complexity of translation has shown to add value to the study, contrary to what is usually assumed. Switching languages as a daily practice made me go over the information and the references many times. It also made me search for appropriate terms in each language to express my ideas and to phrase and synthesise my thoughts again and again. Words matter, it matters what words we tie to ideas and what worlds are created by those words.



Fig. Fragment MT_08, 2024

epilogue

This work is, in many ways, an excuse to read and re-read interesting books and to talk to Latinas like myself, see how our community experiences the city. It started from quite a personal observation when I first moved to Berlin in 2022. Since then, I started sharing this reflection about nature in the city, the landscape and how much it impacts on my new travel routines with other migrant friends.

During the first weeks, I decided to explore a new neighbourhood (*Kiez*) every day. I bought a map and started searching for areas around my home that I would like to visit. When I came back, I stuck a post-it with my impressions. Through that practice I started creating my own image of Berlin and I realised how much the non-built environment impacted on my perception. As soon as months passed, I also could see how the city and people's habits changed dramatically, in a way I just remember seeing when I was a kid living in Switzerland. These physical observations, combined with my interest in mobility, laid the groundwork for this project and probably those to come.

There are several open questions regarding how other age groups or migrants in other cities experience their daily routes. It would be interesting, for instance, to study how migrations shapes the notion of spatiality in children and adolescents, how flexible they are in the previously mentioned exercise of learning and unlearning. Another path could be to analyse how migrant women approach a new city, what those exploratory walks look like, when discovering a new neighbourhood.

As an architect, it is both a challenge and a privilege to approach territory from a sociological, experiential perspective. Over the past few months, I have become closer to a community who generously shared their everyday stories with me. I could access to quite personal experiences that influence their everyday in Berlin. For that, I thank them sincerely.

"Home is no longer just one place. It is locations. Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and everchanging perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference. One confronts and accepts dispersal and fragmentations as part of the construction of a new world order that reveals more fully where we are, who we can become..." (In 'Choosing the margin', p.148; in bell hooks, op. cit.) (Massey, 1994, p.171)

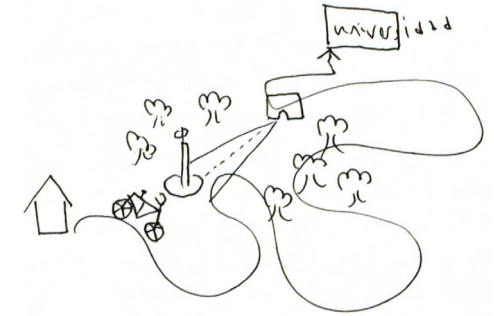


Fig. Fragment MT_07, 2024

*"La pertenencia es un privilegio" [To belong is a privilege.]
(MT_15)*

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26 female (F) authors used as reference

11 Latin American (LA) authors cited

28 participants in this study

7 countries of origin

1 city of current residency



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mujeres *latinas* por Berlín

una investigación sobre la experiencia cotidiana de
caminar la ciudad de mujeres latinoamericanas

- primavera 2024 -

DESPUÉS DE CAMINAR...

*¿Te gusta la nueva forma de relacionarte con el paisaje que habitas en
Berlín? ¿Te sientes parte de este nuevo paisaje?*

sensación o emoción con
que te quedas...

Yo, _____,
autorizo a Consuelo Araneda Díaz a utilizar este cuaderno como
parte de su investigación en el marco de su tesis de master en
diseño urbano de la Universidad Técnica de Berlín. Estoy de acuerdo
con que el contenido pueda ser reproducido parcial o totalmente en
el marco de la investigación y en publicaciones con fines educativos,
resguardando mis datos personales. Tengo conocimiento que este
material será almacenado de forma segura y podré solicitar su
revisión o destrucción en cualquier momento.

_____ fecha y firma

*Este cuaderno fue diseñado e impreso en Berlín, en días de sol
y cálidos atardeceres.*

PARA COMENZAR...

Nombre: _____

Edad: _____

Género con el que te identificas: _____

Ocupación: _____

Lugar/país de origen: _____

¿Cómo describirías tu lugar de origen?
campo, pueblo, ciudad pequeña, ciudad intermedia, metrópolis u otro

¿Hace cuánto tiempo vives en Berlín?

¿Te gusta tu vida acá?

0

10

MI RUTA COTIDIANA

Escoge una o dos rutas que hagas frecuentemente y quisieras compartir en este diario. *¿Por qué la/las escogiste? ¿Cómo es/son?*
Escribe, dibuja o cómo quieras!

Algunos elementos que te pueden ayudar a describir son el tiempo, la distancia, los medios que utilizas, objetos que llevas o cualquier particularidad.

MIENTRAS ME NUEVO
¿Cómo te sientes al moverte? ¿Vías sola o acompañada? ¿En qué
piensas mientras te mueves?

EL PAISAJE QUE ME ACOMPAÑA

temperatura, humedad, olores, colores, especies, día o noche
¿Determinan o modifican la forma en que te mueves?

Escribe, dibuja o cómo quieras!

momento del día:

estación del año:

¿Ha cambiado tu relación con la ciudad y su paisaje?

EL CAMINO QUE RECUERDO

¿Cuándo piensas en tu ruta cotidiana antes de migrar a Berlín, cómo la recuerdas?

¿Cómo ha cambiado la experiencia de moverte por la ciudad?
¿Hay cosas que extrañas o no de esa experiencia?

	duración
ANTES	
AHORA	

	modos de transporte
ANTES	
AHORA	

This thesis was printed in the late summer
of 2024. At Schillerkiez between coffee and
flowers. Berlin was green and sunny.