

## **Why is so difficult to coexist with passengers in the subway?**

Maite Regina Beramendi<sup>1</sup>, Noemi Marini<sup>2</sup> y Elena Mercedes Zubieta<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>*Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina*

<sup>1,3</sup>*National Council on Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET),*

*Argentina*

<sup>1</sup>*University of Lausanne, Switzerland*

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This study explores the coexistence challenges among Buenos Aires subway passengers. It focuses on analyzing coexistence problems, perceptions, and participation in conflicts, as well as tolerance towards norm deviations. An online survey with 768 riders revealed that conflicts among passengers reproduce violence and create a social climate of mistreatment, normalizing disrespectful behaviors. Participants reported a stressful environment leading to contradictory behaviors: they are both vigilant and detached, paying less attention to others' needs and more tolerance towards uncivil behavior. The findings suggest that the lack of adherence to social norms exacerbates the tense atmosphere, highlighting the need for better regulation and enforcement to improve passenger coexistence.

*Keywords:* coexistence, norms, subway, transgression, violence

### **¿Por qué es tan difícil convivir con los pasajeros en el metro?**

Este estudio explora los desafíos de la convivencia entre los pasajeros del subterráneo de Buenos Aires. Se centra en analizar los problemas de convivencia, percepciones y participación en conflictos, así como la tolerancia hacia la transgresión de las normas. Una encuesta on-line con 768 usuarios reveló que los conflictos entre pasajeros reproducen la violencia y crean un clima social de maltrato, normalizando comportamientos irrespetuosos. Los participantes reportaron un ambiente estresante que lleva a comportamientos contradictorios: son tanto vigilantes como distantes, prestando menos atención a las necesidades de los demás y mostrando mayor tolerancia hacia comportamientos incívicos. Los hallazgos sugieren que la falta de adhesión a las normas sociales exagera la atmósfera tensa, destacando la necesidad de mejor regulación y cumplimiento para mejorar la convivencia entre pasajeros.

*Palabras clave:* convivencia, metro, normas, transgresión, violencia

### **Por que é tão difícil conviver com os passageiros no metrô?**

Este estudo explora os desafios da convivência entre os passageiros do metrô de Buenos Aires. Ele se concentra em analisar os problemas de convivência, percepções e participação em conflitos, bem como a tolerância em relação à transgressão das normas. Uma pesquisa

Maite Regina Beramendi  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6113-5529>

Elena Mercedes Zubieta  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8789-737X>

All correspondence about this article must be addressed to Ph.D. Maite Regina Beramendi.  
Email: [beramendimaite@psi.uba.ar](mailto:beramendimaite@psi.uba.ar)



online com 768 usuários revelou que os conflitos entre passageiros reproduzem a violência e criam um clima social de maus-tratos, normalizando comportamentos desrespeitosos. Os participantes relataram um ambiente estressante que leva a comportamentos contraditórios: são tanto vigilantes quanto distantes, prestando menos atenção às necessidades dos outros e mostrando maior tolerância para com comportamentos incivilizados. Os resultados sugerem que a falta de adesão às normas sociais exacerba a atmosfera tensa, destacando a necessidade de melhor regulação e cumprimento para melhorar a convivência entre os passageiros. *Palavras-chave:* Convivência, metrô, normas, transgressão, violência.

### **Pourquoi est-il si difficile de cohabiter avec les passagers dans le métro ?**

Cette étude explore les défis de la cohabitation entre les passagers du métro de Buenos Aires. Elle se concentre sur l'analyse des problèmes de coexistence, des perceptions et de la participation aux conflits, ainsi que de la tolérance à l'égard des transgressions des règles. Une enquête en ligne auprès de 768 utilisateurs a révélé que les conflits entre passagers reproduisent la violence et créent un climat social de maltraitance, normalisant ainsi les comportements irrespectueux. Les participants ont rapporté une ambiance stressante qui conduit à des comportements contradictoires: ils sont à la fois vigilants et distants, prêtant moins attention aux besoins des autres et faisant preuve d'une plus grande tolérance envers les comportements inciviques. Les résultats suggèrent que le manque d'adhésion aux normes sociales exacerbe l'atmosphère tendue, soulignant la nécessité d'une meilleure réglementation et d'un respect accru pour améliorer la cohabitation entre les passagers.

*Mots-clés:* Cohabitation, métro, règles, transgression, violence

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Cities have become densely populated and culturally heterogeneous spaces that require norms to organize their functioning and structure social dynamics. In public space these rules become more relevant, as people must interact with a large number of people, and this interaction is generally anonymous and transitory (Páramo, 2013). Although public spaces share a set of general rules that indicate socially expected behaviors (e.g., cooperative behavior) and rejected behaviors (e.g., to insult someone), each space has its own specific norms and social dynamics.

Particularly, the subway is characterized by its constant flows of diverse and anonymous people, who must coexist together in a relatively small, and enclosed underground space without natural light (Ocejo & Tonnelat, 2013). This public transport has formal and informal security and coexistence norms to organize its functioning.

Formal norms are explicitly outlined, codified, and enforced rules, established by recognized authorities or institutions (Nino 2005). For example, subway safety or circulation norms, such as the rule to wait for trains behind designated lines, are widely reflected in operational manuals and regulatory frameworks internationally. Conversely, informal norms, or social norms, are the tacit, commonly unarticulated standards that influence behavior within specific communities or cultures. These norms dictate socially acceptable conduct across various contexts, driven by communal approval, peer influence, and shared values (Symes 2007). They are learnt from imitation or oral transmission between passengers (Zaporozhets, 2014).

Osaca Alarca et al. (2015) state that compliance with the rules in the subway promotes harmonious citizen coexistence where the well-being of people and positive interaction among passengers are considered, as well as a commitment to preserve the transportation infrastructure.

When passengers are undisciplined or act without respecting the rules of coexistence, they generate a conflict or a rejection in the rest of the riders (Beramendi, 2021; Honkatukiaa & Ssynarenko, 2019; Moore, 2011; Ocejo & Tonnelat, 2013; Zaporozhets, 2014). Ocejo and Tonnelat (2013), in their ethnography study, have observed that participants became angry or manifested a strong disapproval when the social norm of maintaining a civil inattention was unaccomplished. This norm considers that no passenger can focus his/her attention for long on one person, if not this person becomes an object of unwanted attention. In general, participants responded to this transgression with another non-verbal message (e.i., to stare to someone or have a menacing look) to communicate they were uncomfortable. However, they found that sometimes passengers didn't tackle the problem with this mechanism, instead they used verbal communication and the conflict increased in the degree of violence.

Zhao and Siu (2014) have found that people get angry when riders instead of sharing the handholds and handrails of the carriages, they lean on them, preventing others from using them. This abuse of the use of the public space creates a climate of tension in the subway. Tuckel et al. (2016) also found that disturbances on board can arise from passengers carrying bulky items, engaging in manspreading, or eating and drinking, among other behaviors.

The conflict between passengers flares up at peak hours (Ocejo & Tonnelat, 2013; Wan, Li et al., 2015). Some rules are impossible to respect, because the crowdedness limits the physical space of the subway (e.g., maintain personal space, and not leaning on the doors). Tuckel et al. (2016) recognized that some rules are seriously violated when conditions become crowded, but their results showed minor modifications of passenger's behavior between peak and non-peak hours. In this sense, passengers used backpacks or exhibited manspreading behavior beyond the level of agglomeration of the subway. In accordance with these results, Wan, Yuan et al. (2015) stated that metro passenger's violations are most often intentional process, for example, with the hope to board or alight the train earlier or faster.

In addition, Beramendi (2021) exhibited a relation between the passenger's intention to comply with norms and their legitimacy perception of the rules. For instance, passengers tend to respect more coexistence rules (e.g., give up your seat for priority passengers) than security ones (e.g., do not lean on the door). This legitimacy perception is not related to moral conceptions of wrong or right; on the contrary, it is associated with the real conditions or possibilities of complying with rules. Specifically, passengers assumed the impossibility of walking through the car among a crowd of people, so they lean on the door or stay next to it. The safety norm begins to lose relevance or coherence due to the dynamics of the operation of the subway, and people start not respecting it. However, it is interesting to note that passengers still stay at the door when the subway is not carrying a great number of riders. That is to say, although it no longer responds to the logic of noncompliance, the behavior is now automated, the action is decontextualized, and thus, a new norm is naturalized.

Wan, Yuan et al. (2015) and Wan, Li et al (2015) referred to the fact that, in general, passenger's transgressions cause incidents that to some degree affect system operations. For example, when people get on the car at last-second riding and force the door. These actions lead to many negative effects like congestion or delay of travelling. However, they pointed out that these transgressions could turn into fatalities. Wan, Li et al. (2015) suggested that the problem stems from the fact that research focused on analyzing technical or system problems, or environmental issues (e.g., facilities, metro staff), but few researchers sought to reduce metro risks by interpreting human behaviors, specially, norms transgression.

In the local context, previous studies (Beramendi, 2021; Beramendi & Romero-Gianotti, 2019, 2022) showed passengers have a high perception of non-compliance with norms in the metro. This systemic problem diminishes the perception of quality service, and creates discomfort and annoyance in passengers. The aim of this study is to focus on the analysis of the social transgression effects in the interaction among passengers to understand social climate. To achieve this objective, a questionnaire

was designed with different techniques to understand coexistence problems between passengers, the perception and participation in conflicts between riders, and the (in)tolerance to deviate from the norms.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

The sample was non-probabilistic, and a convenient sampling technique was used to collect the data. It consisted of 768 subway users of Buenos Aires subway. 69.5% were female and 29.9% were male, and 5% recognized themselves as belonging to another gender. The mean age was 44.35 years ( $SD = 15.80$ ,  $Min = 18$ ,  $Max = 84$ ).

The rider's frequency travel was divided into six categories: 28.9% of passengers use it every day, 25% use it from Monday to Friday, 29.9% take the subway few days per week, 8.7% take it only once per week, 3.8% use this public transport every fifteen days, and 3.6% take it once per month.

### ***Instrument***

An on-line self-administered questionnaire was designed. It was composed of different instruments such as a Likert scale, two vignettes with an open-ended question and a closed question, and two questions with a Likert format. Also, the questionnaire included socio-demographic data, information about the use of the subway, and an informed consent:

### ***Subway's Coexistence Scale***

To analyze the coexistence in the subway a Likert scale was designed. The items were clustered in four dimensions: (a) cooperation and mutual care: it groups the perception of help by others in a disinterested manner, and behaviors of respect and tolerance, (b) mistreatment: it groups careless beliefs and negative attitudes about the behavior of the passengers and their relations, (c) feeling of irritability:

it analyses the degree of one's own irritability and the perception of others irritability, and (d) conflictive actions: it assesses transgressions of coexistence norms and good manners (social norms).

Initially, the scale was composed of 25 items, of which 23 remained, since two of them did not correctly load on any factor. Some of the items are: *To get on the subway, people stop at the door and friction is generated between passengers, I see people predisposed to help if there is a problem, I feel people are not considered when they travel*, among others. The scale values range from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is acceptable in three of the four dimensions: (a) cooperation and mutual care ( $\alpha = .79$ ), (b) mistreatment ( $\alpha = .77$ ), (c) feeling of irritability ( $\alpha = .78$ ), and (d) conflicting actions ( $\alpha = .47$ ).

#### *Perception and participation in conflict situations between passengers*

Two questions were designed: one of them assesses perception of conflict in the subway and the other one reports passenger's participation. The questions were the following: How often did you witness arguments/fights between passengers? The response options were: 1 (never), 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (very often) and 5 (always).

How often did you have arguments/fights with other passengers? The response options were: 1 (never), 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (very often) and 5 (always).

#### *Tolerance to the noncompliance with the rules of coexistence*

Two vignettes, with text and pictures, were designed to assess the tolerance of non-compliance with the norm "Do not block the door" in two different situations. In the first situation, the collective climate of tolerance is assessed, and in the second one the hypothetical reaction of the participants is analyzed.

##### *First vignette "People need to get off"*

"You're riding Buenos Aires subway on the line you're used to. The subway is full (rush hour), and you are about to arrive at the

station where you should get off, but there is a passenger standing in the doorway obstructing the exit. You asked the passenger to let you off the car, but he didn't answer or move, and you are about to miss your station. What do you think would be the reaction of most of the passengers? The possibilities of responses were: (a) they would ask permission again, (b) they would ask permission but already raise their voice, (c) they would make an ironic/sarcastic comment, (d) they would yell at him/her to react and move, (e) they would push him/her because they have to get off and the person does not move, and (f) another (write the option).

### *Second vignette "Passengers are blocking the door"*

This is the fourth time the door has opened and closed. They're talking on the speaker: "Please stop blocking the doors so that the subway can continue its journey". What would you say to the passengers who are blocking the door?

### *Procedure*

The data was collected through the SurveyMonkey platform. Three different channels were used to contact the participants: the link was sent by email, by WhatsApp and shared in Facebook groups.

Before starting the questionnaire, participants had to give their agreement to participate through an informed consent, where it was explained that the participation was voluntary, anonymous and that it would only be used for academic purposes. It was also stressed that participants could stop participating at any time they wished. The quantitative data analyses were carried out with the statistical programs SPSS 24 and AMOS 21. To process open-ended survey question, Atlas Ti version 7 was used.

### *Data Analysis*

Based on the variety of instruments used in the questionnaire, qualitative and quantitative analyses were carried out.

The Subway's Coexistence Scale and accompanying vignettes were developed through a rigorous, multi-stage process to ensure their validity and effectiveness in measuring social interactions and norms within subway systems. Initially, the scale was created utilizing a wide range of theoretical and empirical research to formulate 25 items, which were refined based on expert feedback and pilot testing. Simultaneously, vignettes were crafted to represent realistic subway challenges to ensure genuine responses reflective of real-world behavior and attitudes towards norm compliance (Hughes & Huby, 2012). This comprehensive approach to scale and vignette development, combined with detailed statistical and qualitative analysis, ensured the reliability and validity of our measurements, providing deep insights into the dynamics of subway coexistence.

In relation to the quantitative data, descriptive analysis, correlations and path analysis were run. Path analysis with the method of Unweighted Least Squares estimation was conducted. To determine the adequacy of the models fit, Goodness-of-Fit statistic (GFI), Adjusts Goodness-of-Fit statistic (AGFI) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) were examined. GFI and AGFI values above .95 and SRMR values as high as 0.08 indicate well-fitting models (Hooper et al., 2008; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Widaman & Thompson, 2003).

For the analysis of the open-ended survey question, a qualitative conventional content analysis method was used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The data was processed through the Atlas Ti version 7 program. Participants' answers were read and reread repeatedly. In the second instance, the open coding was done and categories emerge from the analysis. In the third instance, family codes built up from analyzing categories and other categories emerged (Hsieh, & Shannon, 2005). In the coding process, all responses were assigned to a category. This allowed the frequencies and percentages of each category to be calculated. As this descriptive analysis is a complement to the qualitative analysis, the categories were maintained even though they may have low frequencies, for example, 8 cases. The data analyses were carried out with the statistical program SPSS 24 and the program AMOS 21.

## Results

### *Perception and participation in conflicts*

With regard to the perception of conflict (arguments or fights between passengers), the results indicate that participants experienced a considerable number of conflicts in the subway. To a lesser extent, respondents reported having actively participated in some type of conflict or argument (Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Analyses of perception and participation in conflicts*

| Conflict      | M    | DS  |
|---------------|------|-----|
| Perception    | 2.96 | .81 |
| Participation | 1.87 | .79 |

Note. The response range is 4

### *Subway's Coexistence Scale*

The descriptive analyses shown in Table 4 exhibited a high degree of inconsiderate behavior in the subway, where respondents, for example, perceived that passengers tend to push or prefer to sit more comfortably themselves than to provide a place for another rider to sit. In addition, participants in this study identified high levels of irritability. They recognized to be easily irritated as well as other riders. In this sense, participants perceived a social climate of impatience and tension in the subway. Despite this negative climate, the participants perceived gestures of cooperation and consideration between passengers. For example, they believe that if they have a problem someone will assist them. Finally, the participants admitted to carry out conflictive actions to deal with coexistence problems they experience. For example, using elbows to have more space or subtly bothering someone if something bothers them, instead of communicating the problem.

All things considered; participants perceived coexistence problems in the subway. This social climate of irritability is related to the

perception of inconsiderate gestures, less cooperative behaviors and more conflictive actions (Table 3). Nonetheless, cooperative behaviors and mutual care, and conflictive actions are not related.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive analyses of Subway's Coexistence Scale*

| Dimensions                  | <i>M</i> | <i>DE</i> |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Cooperation and mutual care | 2.95     | .65       |
| Mistreatment                | 3.84     | .64       |
| Feeling of irritability     | 3.43     | .84       |
| Conflictive actions         | 2.60     | .83       |

Note. The response range is 4

**Table 3**

*Correlation between the Subway's Coexistence Scale dimensions*

|                             | 1 | 2      | 3      | 4     |
|-----------------------------|---|--------|--------|-------|
| Cooperation and mutual care | - | -.49** | -.35** | -.02  |
| Mistreatment                |   | -      | .59**  | .20** |
| Feeling of irritability     |   |        | -      | .22** |
| Conflictive actions         |   |        |        | -     |

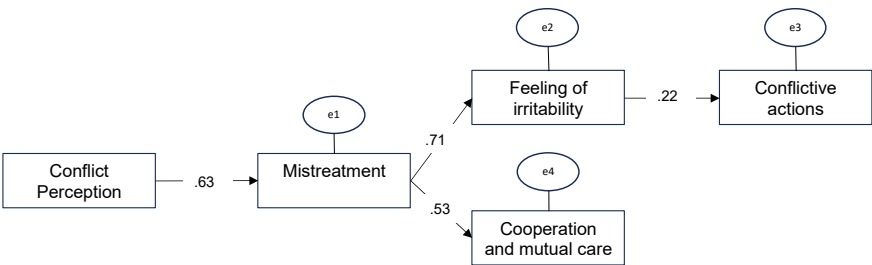
Note. \*\* =  $p < .01$

To go deep into the problems of social norms transgressions, two path analyses were carried out to explore the relation between the perception and the participation in conflicts with the coexistence problems. Based on the mentioned criteria, results showed an adequate fit for both proposal; conflict perception ( $GFI = .99$ ;  $AGFI = .98$ ;  $SRMR = .05$ ) and conflict participation ( $GFI = .99$ ;  $AGFI = .99$ ;  $SRMR = .04$ ).

As it shown in the Figure 1 and 2, the same structured was tested for the perception and participation conflicts. The proposal assumes that the conflict perception or the participation in conflicts influence the perception of mistreatment behaviors. In turn, these behaviors

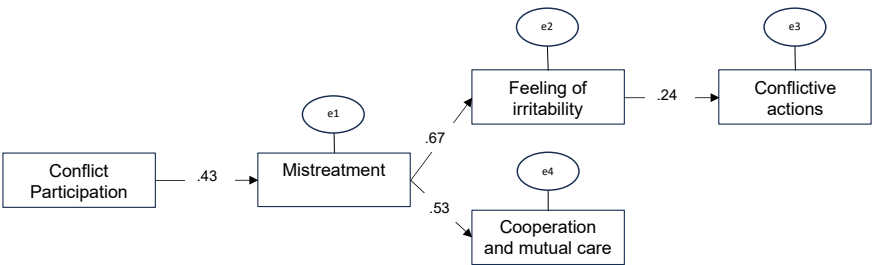
negatively influence the perception of cooperative behaviors and increase feelings of irritability in people, which at the same time, facilitate uncivilized behaviors, such as pushing other passengers or skip the queue to get on board faster.

From this perspective, the perception of a social climate of discussion increases coexistence problems. Social norms of respect, cooperation, good manners, and solidarity are breached, conjointly aggressive, selfish and inconsiderate behaviors arise. Similarly, participating in discussions contributes to perceive a social climate of tension and irritation, and moreover, it is more probably to incur actions to bother or harm other passengers.



**Figure 1.** Path analysis composed of conflict perception and Subway's Coexistence Scale dimensions

*Note.* Figure 1 shows standardized parameter estimates



**Figure 2.** Path analysis composed of conflict perception and Subway's Coexistence Scale dimensions

*Note.* Figure 2 shows standardized parameter estimates

### ***Vignette 1: People need to get off***

Participants were presented a vignette in which they need to get off the subway, but a passenger was blocking the door. The participant asked the passenger to let him/her get off the car, but the rider didn't answer or move, and the respondent was about to miss his/her station. In the end, participants should answer how they think that riders would be react, considering five responses options.

The Table 4 shown a perception of a low tolerance social climate where only around the 19% of the participants believed riders would maintain good manners and an appropriate tone of voice in their second communication. The majority thought people would respect the manner, but they would raise the voice. This type of communication informs of the passenger's anger or discomfort, but by maintaining the forms, it avoids a possible conflict. However, if the two most aggressive answers are grouped, to yield and to push, the 38.1% of participants believe riders would have a more violent or menacing reaction. From these results, an environment of tension and low tolerance is perceived by participants, where the transgression of social norms could become a problem.

**Table 4**  
*Frequencies and percentage*

|                                                                                   | <i>F</i> | <i>%</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| They would ask permission again                                                   | 140      | 18.6     |
| They would ask permission but already raise their voice                           | 261      | 34.8     |
| They would make an ironic/sarcastic comment                                       | 27       | 3.6      |
| They would yell at him/her to react and move                                      | 62       | 8.3      |
| They would push him/her because they have to get off and the person does not move | 224      | 29.8     |
| Another (write the option)                                                        | 37       | 4.9      |
| Total                                                                             | 751      | 100      |

## ***Second Vignette: Passengers are blocking the door***

From the analysis of the participants' responses, 12 categories were obtained and grouped into three dimensions: (a) participants who would not say anything, (b) participants who would comment, and (c) participants who would communicate with non-verbal messages (Table 5). Also, four codes more emerged from the qualitative data. Considering the subjective interpretation of the content, these categories reflect the full analysis process of the answers. In the sense, these categories do not enrich as much the understanding of the phenomenon as they help to fully illustrate the systematic classification process of coding. These categories grouped: (a) questions not answered, (b) people do not know what to answer, (c) unrelated answers to instructions of the vignette, and (d) unfitted answers for a category (see Table 5, categories 13, 14, 15 and 16).

**Table 5**

*Categories of the Second vignette "Passengers are blocking the door"*

| Categories<br>(Frequency/Percentage)                          | Descriptions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1. Simply Nothing</b><br>(92/11.98)                        | It groups participants whose answers expressed they wouldn't say anything or explained that they don't talk in these situations                                                                                                                                       | "Nothing, I reserve my comments"<br>"Probably, nothing"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>2. Nothing, the fault is with the company</b><br>(11/1.43) | It includes those responses that would not say anything to the passengers. They blamed both the company who runs the subway, due to its low frequency, low controls and high agglomeration and the State for maintaining a public service with these characteristics. | "Nothing. I'd tell the company to check the number of passengers per car it transports at rush hour that exceeds the security of a PUBLIC transport"<br>"Nothing. It's not a problem for the passengers. More frequencies and more staff must be put on trains and platforms. Doesn't the company ever have any responsibility?" |

| Categories<br>(Frequency/Percentage)                       | Descriptions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3.Nothing, to avoid conflict</b><br>(21/2.73)           | It covers those opinions that would not say anything to the passengers, because they are afraid of an aggressive response or starting a conflict. In general, they perceive a social climate of tension and irritation, where other participants could react aggressively if someone exercises social control.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>"Nothing, I am afraid of the answer, and above all because I am a woman, and on top of that I am old, the answer is very bad, I do not want to expose myself and have a bad time."</p> <p>"Nothing. If you tell them something they answer in a bad way or insult you, many people have bad manners".</p>                                                                                                    |
| <b>4.Nothing, It is not my role</b><br>(9/1.17)            | It groups opinions that would not say anything to passengers, because they believe it is not their role to exercise social control.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>"I'm not the one who tells people what to do"</p> <p>"Nothing. That's why there are security personnel, because it's forbidden to lock the doors".</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>5.Nothing, I understand the passengers</b><br>(13/1.69) | It covers those opinions that would not say anything to the passengers, because they empathize with them. They expressed that subway's frequency is low, so passengers have to get on board as they can to avoid having problems in their job or just to get on time to an appointment. These participants emphasized that the subway system is the problem, and people push to get on or travel in bad conditions because they have to use this public transport. At one point, they think they would do the same if they were in the same situation. | <p>"Nothing, they're just like me trying to get to their destination, they just had bad luck".</p> <p>"In general, it's not that they want to lock the door, but that they don't enter and need to travel, I don't say anything."</p>                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>6.Nothing, things work out</b><br>(15/1.95)             | It includes those responses that would not say anything to the passengers, because they think the passengers who are blocking the door would come to their senses, or someone else will tell them, or they will push to get on board till the door could close                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <p>"Nothing. I hope the passengers would stop. They're already giving it to them on speakerphone. They are probably waiting for someone to come along so they can settle in. There are probably already a lot of people yelling at them to get out of the door"</p> <p>"I wouldn't tell them anything, I'd wait until the doors could be closed or get out if there's no chance of him getting in the car."</p> |

| Categories<br>(Frequency/Percentage)             | Descriptions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Quotes                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>7.Yes, aggressions</b><br>(29/3.78)           | It is composed of those aggressive responses, either because they attacked the passengers with insults, or because they qualified people instead of the event; and the tone is usually threatening or derogatory                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | “Move it, asshole”<br>“They are ignorant”.                                                                                                                        |
| <b>8.Yes, stop blocking the door</b><br>(361/47) | It groups participants' answers which expressed the passenger responsibility of blocking the door. However, five groups were clustered, because the messages varied in content and strategy to communicate. In the first group, participants did not tell directly the passengers what to do, they emphasized the lack of conditions to travel (e.g., there is no room), or they offered a solution where they emphasized a positive point of view (e.g., the next train is coming in two minutes). Their messages are indirect and practical. In the second group, participants gave a straight order to the passengers to stop blocking the door, but at the same time, they hoped passengers could get in. These participants are aware of the poor quality of the service, like travelling so tight, though they understand the pressure of the passengers to get on board. Their concession is to travel in a crowded public transport but fast. In the third group, participants repeated the norm announced on the speaker (vignette 2) to legitimize their order. They remarked passengers' transgressions and their responsibility to restore the functioning of the subway. In the fourth group, participants gave a straight order to the passengers to get off of the car or to wait for the next train, alongside a short explanation (e.g., get off the car, because there is no more room). These messages combine the responsibility given to passengers for disturbing people's ride, and the need to stress that the problem is beyond them. In the fifth group, participants gave a straight order to get off the car. The implicit message is passengers are not complying with the norm so they just have to get off, and this way to express responds to the logic of the subway where people don't talk much | “It seems to me that you can't get on, we can't move anymore”<br>“Can you please release the door as you are requested by speakerphone?”<br>“Get off of the car”. |

| Categories<br>(Frequency/Percentage)                              | Descriptions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>9. Yes, for the good of everyone</b><br>(62/8.07)              | It covers those answers that are aimed at passengers who block the doors to appeal to them to stop doing it for the passengers' well-being, and also, for taking care of the subway. In this category, the participants try to convince those who block the doors to stop doing such behavior, because they would harm the rest of the passengers. By engaging in this behavior, everyone is late for work or for their destination, hurts others by putting pressure on them to get in the car, and puts all passengers at risk, even of having an accident these messages call for cooperation and respect. Even if the wagon is too crowded so they can't get on board, they still hope they will not harm others with delays or possible accidents | "Do not block it, we are all going to arrive later and there may also be an accident".<br>"Please stop pushing the others and get off to wait for another formation"                    |
| <b>10. Yes, it's a collective problem</b><br>(19/2.47)            | It is composed of those responses that communicated a message, but instead of talking to the passengers who were blocking the door, the receptor of the communication were the passengers who were inside the car. These messages are characterized by asking for a better organization and optimization of space to those passengers who are inside the car. This participant realized that the problem is the lack of room, but they focused on solving this problem collectively so that everyone can travel                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | "Hey everyone, let's make a little place for everyone to take place"<br>"Please, we can get better organized and accommodated together".                                                |
| <b>11. Yes, for the sake of those who block door</b><br>(11/1.43) | It groups participants' answers which try to persuade those who block the door by explaining to them this behavior only puts them in danger or makes them be late. These messages only focus on the well-being of them, and the strategy to convince them is to emphasize on the cost of engaging in this action                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | "Please move. The doors can hurt you"<br>"The longer they persist in this attitude, the later they will arrive at their destination."                                                   |
| <b>12. Corporal messages</b><br>(11/1.43)                         | It is composed of non-verbal participants' responses. In general, they expressed that they would move to make more room for the passengers who are blocking the door or they help them to get in the car their bulky objects.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | "Nothing. I'd just try to make more room for him to get in, after all we all need to travel"<br>"If they're in close to me, I'd make room for them to get in, I wouldn't say anything". |
| <b>13. No response at all</b><br>(58/7.55)                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                         |

| Categories<br>(Frequency/Percentage)                                                   | Descriptions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Quotes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>14. The answer does not relate to the instructions of the vignette</b><br>(43/5.60) | It groups those answers that: (a) made a reflection on the problem of blocking the doors in the subway, (b) expressed their opinions on who are the responsible of this problem, (c) answered what they would do, (d) stated short phrases that to interpret them would fall into the over interpretation (e.g., they do not listen to you, or excuse me), (e) did not understand the statement of the vignette (e.g., "i would ask them to let people down", when the scenario that was designed is not the descent but the subway is about to start) | "Many times, it is not the passengers' fault if not from Metrovías. They have conflicts and transfer them to the passengers"<br>"I usually stay outside on these occasions and wait for the next subway. But in general, I hear 'get off! No one comes in anymore' 'we all want to get home' (those who insist on staying are usually men)" |
| <b>15. They don't know what to say</b><br>(8/1.04)                                     | It includes those responses that expressed a straight message that they don't know what to tell. Also, in this category there are two more options. The first one, there are participants who explained their difficulty to have an opinion and deliberated a reasoning why this happens. The second one, their answers depend on the "characteristics" of the passenger who are blocking, or the situation.                                                                                                                                           | "I don't know what to tell you them.", (b) "I don't know, I'd have to see what the person obstructing"                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>16. They don't fit into a category</b><br>(6/.78)                                   | It is composed of those responses that couldn't be cluster in any category or have less than two cases. For example, there are two cases that they expressed they wouldn't say anything to the passengers who are blocking the door, but they stared at them to communicate their disapproval.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | "Be patient"<br>"I would ask them if something is wrong, suspecting that it may be someone who is not feeling well or perhaps does not understand"                                                                                                                                                                                          |

The first and the second dimensions have several categories. In both cases, participants expressed that they wouldn't say anything or they would, but they gave different reasons. Which are important to understand, because it reflects different beliefs about which is the source of the problem and the way to solve it. What is more, the passenger's behaviors or responses will be more friendly or tolerant depending on their beliefs.

The first dimension labeled "participants who would not say anything" (see Table 5, categories 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) refers to those par-

ticipants who expressed that they wouldn't say anything (20.95%). The majority of the participants answered that they wouldn't say anything, and they didn't give a reason. The rest of them have explain their decisions, and they have different motivations. One group expressed that they understand the passenger's behavior, and in one way, they could justify it (see Table 5, categories 2 and 5). Another group emphasized that these actions take place, because of the conditions of the travelling. The ones responsible are the company who runs the metro or the Government. A third group thinks that it is not their role to take care of this situation, either because they do not want to exercise social control or because they think someone else would take actions to solve the problem (see Table 5, categories 4 and 6). And the last group stated that they wouldn't say anything to prevent any kind of confrontation. This group reflects more their concern about the social climate of the metro (see Table 5, category 3).

The second dimension was coined participants who would comment something to the passengers (62.75%, see Table 5, categories 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11). The comments vary from very aggressive (see Table 5, category 7) responses to very polite and persuasive messages (see Table 5, categories 8, 9, 10 and 11). Almost in each category of these dimensions, participants recognize that the responsibility of blocking the doors belong to passengers. However, the way to express discontent changes as a strategy to persuade and to avoid problems. In general, messages are indirect, practical, with a rational or emotional content to persuade (see Table 5, categories 8, 9, 10 and 11). There are few messages which are direct or aggressive.

The third dimension was labeled meta-communication, because it groups participants who would communicate with non-verbal messages. In general, these participants want to solve the problem helping the passengers to get in on the car. They understand that passengers want to travel as much as they do, so they try to adapt, creating more space with gestures instead of words. They follow this unwritten rule of non-verbal communication to interact with people in the metro.

## Discussion

Faced with the question about the effects of normative transgression on citizen coexistence in the Buenos Aires subway, we can observe, from different edges that were analyzed, that the coexistence between passengers was crossed by normative problems that cause tension, irritability and discomfort among passengers. The social climate experienced by the subway users reflects sensations of mistreatment and irritability. Participants felt a distressful environment which leads them to contradictory behavior.

On one hand, people tended to be alert and to monitored social interactions, because social norms are not respect by a majority. What is more, participants should monitor rider's behavior as well as their intentions. As a result of the rides conditions, the participants stated that they constantly suffer from being pushed or elbowed. If they do not recognize a bad intention, they can empathize with these behaviors. Nevertheless, even under these challenging conditions, they noted that people often behave inconsiderately. For example, cramped passengers might still use their cell phones, read, or engage in other activities that encroach on additional space, making others uncomfortable. Moreover, instead of acting in ways that promote harmonious coexistence, passengers often choose to occupy more space than their seat allows rather than making room for others. Furthermore, many people disregard social norms, such as not asking for permission to move around, contributing to the general discomfort. Similar findings were reported by Moore (2011). According to the author, passengers consider that behavior is antisocial when they assess that people's behavior is intentional and causes them a type of harm.

On the other hand, people recognize an effect of disconnection and isolation in the subway. This self-absorption makes people more focused on their concerns, less attentive to people's needs, and less receptive to upsetting stimuli. As Honkatukiaa and Ssynarenkob (2019) have found it, the civil inattention or isolation enable undesired behaviors to be carried out, as there is no social control or simply

inhibition of helping or prosocial behaviors. As they reported, young women experienced sexual harassment in subway carriages surrounded of passengers.

Negative interaction between commuters could illustrate the low tolerance for non-compliance. Considering the participants' responses to the first vignette evaluated, it can be affirmed that participants perceive an environment prone to violence when a passenger breaks a rule and does not respond to a call for attention. This low tolerance for non-compliance could be related to the prevailing patterns of transgression and disrespect. In this context, transgression is a descriptive norm and not an exception; for this reason, the participants infer that the passenger who transgresses is conscious about the act and he is indifferent to the attention call. However, in a context where the rules are followed, people may interpret that the passenger had a problem, since this is a rareness.

Participant's interpretation of social transgression could not be decoded, unless we explore the beliefs that serve as parameters for such evaluations. As we could found in this study, participants would be more prompted to make a comment or expressed themselves through body communication to a passenger who disobey a norm than to maintain silence.

Participants used different strategies to communicate with a transgressor and to avoid confrontation. They gave short messages with emotional or rational contents to persuade and avoid conflict. In general, people needed to give an explanation why commuters shouldn't do that or, even in some cases, repeated the messages of the metro's driver to legitimize their comment. Only few participants would give direct orders to the passenger to get off the carriage. This necessity of giving an explanation or even persuasive emotional messages reflect the lack of power of the subway's norms. People are urged to develop communicative skills to convince people to comply with norms, and avoid conflict.

Participants also expressed they wouldn't say anything. Although they are a minority, it is important to know their reasons, because

according to several ecological experimental studies, people tend to avoid exerting social control (Balafoutas & Nikiforakis, 2012; Chekroun & Brauer, 2002). The majority of participant did not give a reason, but the ones who did expressed quite dissimilar reasons such as: fear to conflict, empathized with the passenger, and that it is not their role. These categories represent different motivation and believes which should be studied in more detail in future research.

This study presents some limitations. Regarding the instruments used, the dimension *conflictive actions* of the *Subway's Coexistence Scale* did not obtain acceptable scores. However, it was decided to maintain it for two reasons: (a) the reduced number of elements it contained, which could lower the reliability (Santisteban Requena, 2009; Virla, 2010), and (b) the diversity of characteristics to assess non-normative actions (Loevinger, 1954). As an exploratory study, we considered important to explore different actions. However, for future research will be convenient to add more of them, considering their aggressiveness and occurrence.

For future studies, cooperative behavior on the subway should also be evaluated in more detail. As it was found, participants felt mistreated from their fellow passengers, nevertheless, they agree that if they would have a problem or need help, people are going to help. Therefore, it seems that people share a community bond, where cooperative behaviors is expected, but nevertheless, this relationship is, at the same time, traversed by the transgression and lack of respect for social norms of coexistence. This possible interpretation should be studied in greater depth to know the scope of social bonds in a context of transgression.

To conclude, participant's perception and participation in conflicts reproduce violence and create a social climate of mistreatment, where transgressive behaviors are allowed and naturalized. This situation must be improved, since public spaces cannot become hostile spaces that diminish solidarity and respect among citizens. This is a social problem that cannot be addressed solely on an individual level but requires the implementation of institutional policies that promote new forms of coexistence. It is essential to design public policies that consider these

diagnostics, as the responsibility of public institutions extends beyond infrastructure issues to also include the creation of spaces where citizens can live in harmony. For this reason, it is important to continue exploring public transport dynamics to improve passenger's quality of life.

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