SAFETY AND SECURITY RISKS IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF DEVELOPMENT WORKER TRAINING IN A LATIN AMERICAN MEGACITY

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

The safety and security of international development workers has been neglected in the research literature. Protecting the safety and security of international development workers is a central part of protecting human capital for these organizations.

I was invited to complete this research with *Corredor*, an international development training program in a Latin American megacity. *Corredor* participants are primarily college students or recent graduates. Participants serve for two months to two years, working with a local faith-based organization or development agency while participating in Spanish language classes and living with a homestay family.

I conducted three studies with *Corredor* to address the identified gap in the literature. The first study was a qualitative study exploring the concerns of leaders of an international development training program. I found that leaders were primarily concerned with themes surrounding adult education and getting participants to apply the safety strategies provided during training. The second study was an adapted photovoice study looking at the concerns of participants, analyzed using grounded theory. The photovoice method was adapted to better fit within the time constraints of the *Corredor* summer schedule. I found that participants were most concerned with their vulnerability in transit and with concerns relating to losing the safety and security contexts of their home country. Participants did not report any concerns relating mental health to safety and security. The third study was a retrospective grounded theory of returned

international development workers. I found that participants reported primarily harassment and sexual assault incidents that took place primarily in transit.

These studies produced two major findings. First, these studies revealed the need for the category "gender-based risks" as a category for reviewing safety and security risks in international development work. Female participants in this study consistently reported sexual harassment. Additionally, returned participants reported elevated levels of sexual assault. Organizations should respond by assessing local conditions and developing training materials, focusing on case studies, that empower women to assess their own strengths, the location, and sources for assistance.

The second finding affirmed that international development workers were most vulnerable in transit. International development organizations should respond by providing leaders with training in adult education. Organization leaders should respond by providing training in specific strategies for addressing multiple incident types. In addition, they should prepare for the increased incidence of sexual assault by identifying a sexual assault nurse practitioner and telehealth counseling services.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to AH. Walking with you through your story inspired this work. Your friendship and courage in the face of trauma inspires me.

This dissertation is also dedicated to the brave individuals around the world who choose to pursue the good of others over their own countries.

Finally, it is specifically dedicated to the women of international development and to the women of *Corredor.*

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Contributors

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Edits and revisions were assisted by Dr. Manuel Piña, Jr. and Dr. Gary Briers. The analyses for this dissertation was completed independently by the student, with advising and editing by Dr. Gary Briers.

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This work was funded, in part, by the organization known by the pseudonym *Corredor*. The organization provided airfare and housing for an eight-week stay in the host city for the duration of this study. This study was completed to benefit their program and improve their safety and security training and response protocols.

NOMENCLATURE

CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EDS	EBSCO Discovery Service
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSAC	Overseas Security Advisory Council, Bureau of Diplomatic Security, U.S. Department of State
WHO	World Health Organization

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1. INTRODUCTION

Safety and security issues in international development have been neglected. Fast (2010) referred to the lack of research about safety and security as a "black hole." This lack of research becomes problematic when small organizations take on the role of training early career development workers.

Small organizations, often without the support of the larger aid industry, are charged with identifying risks and developing training materials. This comes with three inherent challenges. First, when building and maintaining a program, negative publicity resulting from safety and security incidents may damage a program's reputation. Many small organizations may be unable to rebuild following such a negative event. Second, a small program and lack of staff and resources may result in safety becoming a low priority. Third, a small organization may lack the financial resources to get guidance from industry experts, either from scholarly publications or through international safety and security consulting firms.

One such small program is *Corredor* (a pseudonym), an international development training program based in a Latin American megacity. I have obscured the name and location of this program to protect the privacy of the participants in my study. In keeping with this objective, I have referred to participants by pseudonyms and generalized other identifying details. The director described the *Corredor* program as a faith-based, international service and exchange program (Director, personal communication, 19 March 2019). *Corredor*'s key focus was providing participants with

a cultural and language immersion experience (Director, personal communication, 19 March 2019). This objective was achieved through participants living with national host families and participating in service projects, typically through a faith community or social service agency. For example, one program that many one- and two-year participants have served with works with young women who have experienced sex trafficking. Summer team participants have typically worked with churches, summer camps, and youth ministries. Participants also attended Spanish-language classes and weekly trainings. These activities highlight five of the ten core competencies and experiences Conner et al. (2013) identified as necessary for entry-level international development workers, including successfully working in a different culture, completing a field experience in a developing nation, and interacting with culturally-different people in an international setting.

The director of *Corredor* requested a study of the safety and security elements of its training program because of leaders' perceptions regarding increasing safety and security concerns (Director, personal communication, 23 July 2018). *Corredor* requested assistance from me, the researcher, for this study because I am a returned participant pursuing graduate studies specializing in evaluation and international agricultural development.

Corredor was created in 1971 to train early career development workers in language learning, culture acquisition, and cross-cultural communication (*Corredor* website). The director further emphasized that participants have the opportunity to select their desired level of engagement with *Corredor* (Director, personal communication, 19

March 2019). At present, *Corredor* offers three levels of engagement: summer, one-, or two-year periods (Director, personal communication, 19 March 2019). The key difference between levels of engagement is length of service.

Corredor participants have been recruited primarily from colleges and universities across the United States (Director, personal communication, 23 July 2018). Most participants were between 19 and 28 years of age and had completed at least one year of higher education, with the occasional high school graduate completing a gap year before college (Director, personal communication, 19 March 2018). When *Corredor* participants arrived in the host country, they received a short orientation, then were placed in homestay families and service placements. During their stay, participants engaged in language and culture classes, while working under national leaders at their service placement sites. Finally, each term of service concluded with a wrap-up conference. The summer team completed this cycle over the course of eight weeks, while one-year and two-year participants completed this cycle over one or two years, respectively. The one-year and two-year two team members may also have been invited to serve as facilitators for the summer team.

1.1. Background

The problem of violence committed against humanitarian aid and international development workers is far from solved. With a population that spans the known and formal programs of massive international agencies and national governments, to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the expansive faith-based outreach and development programs, it is no wonder that Fast (2010) referred to the safety and

security field as a “black hole.” Because of this condition, even the simplest statistics and incidence rates become nearly impossible to calculate, perhaps due to the challenges of documenting and reporting.

In reviewing the literature, I used search terms selected from keywords identified in an article by Kennedy and Flaherty (2015). Specifically, I used the terms “International Travel” AND “Risks OR Dangers” to search across several research data bases and identify safety and security issues. I conducted this federated search using EBSCO Discovery Service (EDS), which provides access to 1,153 scholarly databases to which the Texas A&M University Libraries subscribe, including popular databases such as ERIC, APA PsycInfo, and JSTOR. Results were limited to resources available in full-text format and from scholarly journals. Additional filters used were “hazards,” “risk assessment,” “safety,” “travel and health,” “danger,” “risk,” “travel,” “college students,” “resilience,” and “travelers.” Articles that did not deal with specific named threats were excluded from this search, as were articles dealing with threats related to specific environments, such as nightlife venues. Finally, risks. were identified utilizing well-recognized international travel sources, including the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the United States Department of State, as suggested by Hartjes et al. (2009).

1.1.1. Safety and Security Concerns

Fast’s (2010) assessment of the current research about the safety and security of international development workers has changed little over the past ten years. Wood

(2017) agreed that little is known regarding the type and frequency of safety issues encountered by those who travel or volunteer abroad. Despite a lack of statistical evidence, there are numerous indications of the kinds of risks faced by those who travel internationally.

1.1.1.1. Crime Related Risks

Kennedy and Flaherty (2015) discussed the elevated risk of sexual assault and rape associated with international travel, a risk affirmed by the United States Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs (2019). Hartjes et al. (2009) added physical assault in their study of study abroad students.

As of February 2019, the United States Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs (2019) listed the host country at a Level 2 travel advisory. Travel advisories range from level 1 to level 4, with 4 being the most severe, "Do not travel" (United States Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2019). Identified risks included pickpocketing, "armed robbery, carjacking, kidnapping, sexual assault, and extortion," and turf-related violence due to the drug cartels (United States Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2019). In addition, the United States Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs (2019) warned of fraudulent credit card charges; demonstrations and protests, which may turn violent; and criminal activity related to the transport of illegal drugs. The CIA (2019) expanded on the illegal drug trade, identifying the host country as a major hub of international illicit drug production and transit, including opium, cocaine, ecstasy, marijuana, and methamphetamine.

1.1.1.2. Risk of Accidents

International work and travel included the risk of accidents. Wood (2017) highlighted the risk of accidents and injuries related with vehicles, with people 15-29 years of age at highest risk for injury or death. Avoiding vehicular travel was not sufficient to avoid the risk of accidents; half of global road deaths are "pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcyclists" (Wood, 2017, p. 491). Hartjes et al. (2009) expanded on accidental risks to add "problem[s] related to drugs or alcohol," "mass transit accident involving plane, train, or subway," "fall from a hazard or height," "fire," and "drowning or near drowning" (p. 341) to the list of accidental risks.

1.1.1.3. Preventable Disease

The threat of preventable disease was a common concern. For example, Bryant et al. (1991) highlighted some of the most common medical concerns like malaria, diarrhea, fever, and rashes as potential risks of travel. Castelli (2004) expanded on this to include slightly rarer diseases such as hepatitis A, typhoid fever, HIV, and hepatitis B. Hartjes et al. (2009) further broadened the concepts of infectious disease to include categories such as "infection transmitted through the bite of an animal," "infection spread by coughing or sneezing," and "infection with other diseases spread by animals" (p. 341). They also listed rabies and sexually transmitted infections as potential risks (Hartjes et al., 2009).

While research has identified numerous preventable health concerns for international travel, most travelers turn to recognized organizations such as the WHO and the CDC for travel health information. The WHO (2019) listed three major health

threats for the host country, including two 2013 outbreaks of cholera and a 2015 outbreak of the Zika virus. The CDC (2017) corroborated the WHO warnings regarding the Zika virus in the host country. In addition, the CDC (2019) advised all travelers to obtain a measles vaccine and other routine vaccinations. In addition, they recommended vaccinations for Hepatitis A and typhoid, while additional vaccinations for Hepatitis B, malaria, and rabies are recommended for specific locations and extended stays (CDC, 2019).

As of March 31, 2020, while I was writing this dissertation, the United States Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs (2020) issued a "Level 4: Do not travel" advisory, related to a global health advisory, in response to the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. When this warning was issued, I had completed all but one retrospective interview. For this reason, I will not present further data on COVID-19 in this study.

Other medical risks were tangentially related to preventable disease. For example, Schommer and Bärtsch (2011) presented the potential for illness at higher elevations above sea level as a concern.

1.1.1.4. Political Risks

Additional risks were tied to local and national political situations. For example, Buda (2016), highlighted the risk of political violence. Hartjes et al. (2009) built on the threat of political violence with the threat of "armed conflict or a terrorist attack" (p. 341).

1.1.1.5. Natural Disasters

Regional differences in international travel suggested one risk that may be overlooked because it differs from region to region. Hartjes et al. (2009) highlighted the potential for natural disasters. This was reaffirmed in a conversation with the *Corredor* director and program coordinator (Director, personal communication, 19 March 2019; Program coordinator, personal communication, 19 March 2019).

1.1.1.6. Mental Health Risks

In a study of college students from the United States who returned from studying abroad, Bathke and Kim (2016) reported two notable findings. They found that students were reluctant to disclose prior mental health issues to their study abroad programs. Although 28% of study respondents reported mental health concerns prior to their study abroad experience, 55% chose not to disclose this information.

Bathke and Kim's (2016) second key finding related to the frequency with which students who experienced mental health issues abroad had previously experienced mental health issues. While about 20% of participants reported generally poorer mental health while abroad; only 8% of all participants had diagnosable mental health conditions while abroad. Of that 8%, 92% had previously experienced a mental health issue, prior to their international experience. Doki et al. (2018) posited six key stressors that could negatively affect mental health while abroad, including:

1. Cultural differences
2. Communication
3. Daily life

4. Relationships with family and colleagues
5. Financial problems
6. Social inequality

1.1.1.7. Other Risks

Other threats remained sufficiently mild or nonspecific, making classification difficult. One example Hartjes, Baumann, and Henriques (2009) included is the threat of "excessive sun exposure." Despite the typically mild and nonspecific nature, this risk should remain a concern for international development training programs because addressing the issue internationally may be more challenging for participants. For example, obtaining ointments for the treatment of sunburn may require language skills beyond the participants' abilities.

One category of risks is notably absent from the literature—gender-based risks. With the exception of rape and sexual assault, classified as a crime-related risk, above, all of the risks presented in literature were presented as gender-neutral in the research. For example, Hartjes et al. (2009), despite acknowledging a preponderance of female participants, presented the perception of risks as gender-neutral and did not disaggregate findings by gender.

1.1.2. Prior Knowledge of Safety and Security

Hartjes et al. (2009) conducted a survey of students on various study abroad listservs at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. They concluded that students viewed the following five issues, of 18, to be the most likely occurrences during international travel: "contaminated food and water," "psychological distress," "excessive sun

exposure," "physical or sexual assault," and "motor vehicle accident" (p. 341). The source of the list of 18 health threats was unclear.

In addition to ranking student concerns, Hartjes et al. (2009) looked at the percentage of students who reviewed various sources of safety and security information regarding their host countries. Safety and security information provided by the United States Department of State—Bureau of Consular Affairs website prior to international travel, was viewed by only 57% of student respondents prior to travel (Hartjes et al., 2009). This was concerning, because United States Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs recommendations can be perceived to be the first place to search for information countries around the world, i.e., "low-hanging fruit" of safe travel.

1.1.3. Safety and Security Programming

Wood (2017) argued that some of the risks inherent in travel to a new culture should be considered as part of the adventure and escape appeal of international travel. This also challenged readers to consider the potential consequences of poorly prepared travelers–specifically the negative publicity caused by injury or death of volunteers. The range of potential risks encountered makes planning effective prevention strategies difficult.

It is clear that international development training programs could address the many risks identified through literature. Although information seemed to be readily available, Hartjes et al. (2009) implied that young adults are less proactive than expected at identifying major risks and strategies to avoid them. If programs are unable to count on participants seeking information on local risks or identifying strategies to cope with

other types of experiences, it falls to the receiving program to teach local safety and security measures. Despite this, no evaluations of comparable training programs could be identified from the literature. An alternative perspective on the Wood (2017) and Hartjes et al. (2009) findings could be that young adults are not receptive to, or are not retaining, knowledge regarding safety and security precautions for international travel.

1.1.4. Evaluation Research

Evaluation research is a concept that provides direction and purpose to the research questions. Powell (2006) argued that evaluation research uses traditional research methods purposively, to support a number of organizational activities, ranging from planning and efficiency to decision-making and highlighting goals. For this study, evaluation research focused on assessing the impact of safety and security training on participants of the *Corredor* program and making recommendations for its improvement.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

1.2.1. The Patrilineal/Patrilocal Syndrome

Hudson's et al. (2012) theory tied the ways women are treated within a country to national politics and international relations. When resources were equitably distributed within the household, particularly between males and females within the family, the increased cooperation learned within the household extended outward to produce a more democratic nation. In contrast, inequitable distribution of resources—which typically favored the male interest—resulted in a more autocratic home, extending outward to produce a more autocratic state. Hudson et al. (2012) argued that the subjugation of women within the home was tied with the utilization of force for resource

acquisition, whether those resources were acquired within the home, between familial clans, or between autocratic nations.

Ultimately, the patrilineal/patrilocal syndrome suggested that the harsh treatment of women was linked with three things: increased fragility of the state, increased likelihood of the state engaging in violent conflict, and decreased ability of the state to provide for its citizens (Hudson et al., 2012). These three elements were central to the international development perspective, because they tended to increase the likelihood of intervention through foreign aid and assistance. Interventions which neglected gender relations as the underlying structure of a society were unlikely to succeed, as suggested by the patrilinearity/patrilocality syndrome (Hudson et al., 2012)

For international development workers, the key implication of the patrilinearity/patrilocality syndrome (Hudson et al., 2012) was that international development workers were entering a context where the cultural safety and security protections they had been accustomed to may not exist. This could give rise to elevated gender-based risks for female team members, a category notably absent from the research presented above. Equity requires that these unique threats be addressed satisfactorily.

1.2.2. Knowles' Assumptions of Adult Learners

Knowles (2015) argued that adult learners are affected by six key principles in their interest and ability to learn, as follows:

1. The learner has a felt "need to know"
2. The learner's self-concept

3. The learner's prior experience
4. The learner's readiness to learn the material
5. The learner's orientation to learning
6. The learner's motivation to learn

In an international development setting, safety and security knowledge may be threatened for a number of reasons, such as the learner's lack of felt need for the material or simply due to a lack of readiness to learn based on the learner's physical state of exhaustion and overwhelmed condition during the first few days in country.

1.3. Problem Statement

The problem addressed in this study was the lack of research about the safety and security of the international aid and development worker community. To respond to this need, I have answered the following question: "What are the core safety and security concerns affecting an international development training program in a megacity context?" To answer this question, I conducted a case study of one such organization, *Corredor*, and its program training of early career aid workers in a Latin American megacity. My work focused the core perspectives of three groups–current leadership, current participants, and past participants–through a series of three studies.

The central question of Section 2, titled "Safety and Security in a Latin American Megacity: Leading New Interational Development Workers" was "What are the core safety and security concerns expressed by leaders of an international development training program in a megacity context?" It was a qualitative case study, relying on participant observation and semi-structured interviews of leadership and current

participants. Data was analyzed using constructivist grounded theory, as defined by Charmaz (2006).

The central question of Section 3, titled "A New City: An Adapted Photovoice Study of Early Career International Development Workers," was "What are the core safety and security concerns expressed by participants in an international development training program in a megacity context?" The director indicated that public transportation is one area of the host city that has inherent, elevated risk, particularly for women (Director, personal communication, March 19, 2019). One major concern the director expressed regarding public transportation safety was a lack of retention of public transportation safety protocols by program participants (Director, personal communication, 19 March 2019). By identifying core safety and security concerns from the participant perspective, one can redesign training materials to highlight elements most salient to current participants.

The central question of Section 4, titled "Returned International Development Workers: A Grounded Theory of Safety and Security Incidents" was "What are the safety and security concerns experienced by returned *Corredor* participants?" This study sought to describe and give voice to the safety and security concerns identified by returned *Corredor* participants. Returned participants were selected for this study based on the Kolb (1984) learning cycle, which argued that reflective observation was a core element for learning. Returned participants have had the opportunity to reflect on and learn from the safety and security incidents they experienced. This perspective was investigated using a qualitative semi-structured interview.

1.4. Significance of the Research

Understanding the safety and security risks faced by international development workers is essential to the protection of valuable human resources and capital. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([OECD], n.d.) defined the term "human capital" as "the stock of knowledge, skills and other personal characteristics embodied in people that helps them to be productive." It included both formal and informal education and experiences, as well as personal connections with individuals and organizations.

One of the more difficult elements of human capital to quantify is the value of the personal network; however, in international development, personal connections are essential. Although it varies by project, a significant portion of international development work involves the diffusion of various types of innovations. International development workers often serve as change agents who seek local thought leaders to advance development agendas. Strong relationships with host country nationals and coworkers increase the effectiveness of a change agents' work and enhance their ability to target the individual's or community's unique needs in sharing innovative materials (Rogers, 2003). Therefore, the loss of human capital, even temporarily, due to unaddressed safety or security issues can be quite detrimental to the organization's agenda.

Despite the significance of human capital to international development, to date there remains little research on the topic in the literature, a fact highlighted by Fast (2010). In contrast, there is increasing anecdotal evidence (e.g., Edwards, 2017) that

female international development and aid workers face unique threats. Unfortunately, the sensitive nature of this topic means that victims may be reluctant to come forward with their concerns.

Understanding the threats that international development workers face will provide both researchers and international development workers with opportunities to research, develop, and implement increasingly effective responses. This study is also relevant to future international development workers, as it provides them with a greater understanding of the kinds of risks they will encounter in the field.

1.5. Definitions

1.5.1. International Development Training Program

International development training programs are training programs that target early career international development workers with training focused on language and culture acquisition. These programs are typically associated with the career explorations of current college students and recent graduates. Programs may be either faith-based or secular. They typically involve service work in an international setting. Many such programs target the same five areas of Conner's et al. (2013) core competencies of early career international development workers:

1. Successful work in a different culture
2. Successful completion of a field experience in a developing nation
3. Completion of a development course
4. Past enjoyment of living in a different culture
5. International experience working with people from different cultures.

1.5.2. Safety

Fast (2010) defined safety incidents as those stemming from illness and accidents. Safety risks are often perceived as those under minimal control of the individual involved. Based on the classification of risks above, safety risks also include natural disasters and mental health risks.

1.5.3. Security

Security risks stand in contrast to safety risks, as acts of violence (Fast, 2010). Security risks stem primarily from the actions of others, such as those stemming from crime and political violence.

1.5.4. Photovoice

Photovoice is a participatory research technique that invites policy change through discussion of images created by participants (Wang, 1999). Participants are invited to create images in response to a given theme over a period of time. Once images have been gathered, small group discussion of the images serves as an opportunity to identify and categorize key issues in ways that invite action and change.

1.6. Assumptions

This dissertation is based on a number of assumptions. A few overarching assumptions common to all three sections are identified. This is followed by assumptions unique to each section of this dissertation.

1.6.1. Overarching Assumptions

1. *Corredor* had policies and procedures which may not be reflected in other organizations.

2. The host city is a unique environment for international development training because it is primarily urban and a megacity; therefore, the issues identified here may not be transferable to other organizations and settings.
3. It is up to practitioners to determine whether this research is appropriately transferable to their context and concerns.

1.6.2. Section 2 – Safety and Security in a Latin American Megacity: Leading New International Development Workers

1. My past experience as a *Corredor* participant increased the trustworthiness of this study by giving me an *emic* perspective on the experience of both a *Corredor* participant and a *Corredor* leader.
2. The qualitative case study was thorough and achieved data saturation on the variety of safety and security issues identified by *Corredor* leaders, for participants in international development training programs.
3. Host country culture and the threats to safety and security, as experienced by participants, have been relatively consistent over time.

1.6.3. Section 3 – A New City: An Adapted Photovoice Study of Early Career International Development Workers

1. My past experience as a *Corredor* participant and sexual assault survivor gave me greater understanding and awareness of public transportation safety concerns.
2. The photovoice study was thorough and achieved data saturation in identifying safety and security concerns regarding public transportation for international development workers.

3. Participant safety and security concerns have been similar and consistent over time.

1.6.4. Section 4 – Returned International Development Workers: A Grounded Theory of Safety and Security Incidents

1. My past experience as a *Corredor* participant and my experience with a range of threats during my tenure gave me a peer perspective and increases my ability to understand and relate with participant responses.
2. Returned participants who responded were more likely to consider the safety and security concerns they faced as significant and worthy of understanding.
3. Returned participants who responded were more likely to believe that more can be done to improve safety and security training and awareness than non-respondents.
4. Host country culture and the threats to safety and security that participants experience were relatively consistent over time.

1.7. Limitations

This dissertation faced a number of limitations which were presented by each section.

1.7.1. Section 2 – Safety and Security in a Latin American Megacity: Leading New International Development Workers

1. The qualitative case study was limited to the issues and concerns of the *Corredor* participants, facilitators, and leaders engaged in the program at the time of this study.

2. The study was situated in the conditions of the host country and the social concerns of the United States during the summer of 2019.

1.7.2. Section 3 – A New City: An Adapted Photovoice Study of Early Career International Development Workers

1. The photo elicitation study was limited to the safety and security concerns present during the summer of 2019.
2. The study was also limited by those concerns identified by the *Corredor* participants in the program during this study.
3. Concerns were influenced by the conditions in the host country and the awareness of social concerns in the United States at the time of this study.

1.7.3. Section 4 – Returned International Development Workers: A Grounded Theory of Safety and Security Incidents

1. The study of past participants was limited by small sample size.
2. The concerns identified were limited to those of participants who elected to respond.

1.8. Delimitations

1.8.1. Section 2 – Safety and Security in a Latin American Megacity: Leading New International Development Workers

1. Research participants were delimited by focusing on the bounded case study of a single organization—*Corredor*—and its leadership and participants at the time of this study.

2. Although *Corredor* is part of a larger umbrella organization, the larger organization and its associated personnel were not included in this study.
3. The research was delimited by the study period, from June 12, 2019 to August 9, 2019.

1.8.2. Section 3 – A New City: An Adapted Photovoice Study of Early Career International Development Workers

1. Research participants were delimited by focusing on the bounded case study of a single organization–*Corredor*–and its participants at the time of this study.
2. This research was further delimited by the study period–*Corredor's* Summer 2019 program, June 12, 2019 to August 9, 2019.

1.8.3. Section 4 – Returned International Development Workers: A Grounded Theory of Safety and Security Incidents

1. Research participants were delimited by a bounded case study of a single organization–*Corredor*–and its past participants.
2. This research was further delimited to returned participants who were involved with *Corredor* within the past five years at time of writing, from June 2014 to May 2019.

1.9. Dissertation Organization and Research Questions

This research is a dissertation composed of three journal-ready manuscripts. The three manuscripts are: (1) a qualitative case study exploring safety and security from the perspective of leaders of an international development training program, (2) a photovoice study of participant perceptions of safety and security, and (3) a grounded

theory exploring the safety and security experiences of past participants. Each section will address one of the following questions:

1. What are the core safety and security concerns expressed by leaders of an international development training program in a megacity context?
2. What are the core safety and security concerns expressed by participants in an international development training program in a megacity context?
3. What are the safety and security concerns experienced by returned *Corredor* participants?

The three-article, journal-ready manuscript format of this dissertation differs from a traditional, five-chapter dissertation format. Section 1 provides an overview and rationale for this study, citing literature that will influence and inform the four manuscripts. Sections 2, 3 and 4 are in the form of independent research articles ready for submission to academic journals. Section 5 presents final conclusions across all three articles.

1.9.1. Section 2 – Safety and Security in a Latin American Megacity: Leading New International Development Workers

Section 2 was a case study of the safety and security concerns expressed by leadership of an international development program in a megacity context. This case study provided insight into the primary concerns of working with new international development workers in a context perceived as novel by the leadership team.

The purpose of this study was to follow one team of leaders in an international development training program, exploring their perspectives regarding safety and security

and how those perspectives impact participants. This study was also intended as evaluation research; therefore, I identified specific strengths and weaknesses of the training program and provided recommendations for program improvement.

The case study sought to answer the research question: What are the core safety and security concerns expressed by leaders of an international development training program in a megacity context? One additional research question guided this study's findings: How do those safety and security concerns compare to concerns expressed by program participants?

This study involved participant interviews and naturalistic observation data, analyzed using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). Constructivist grounded theory was selected to analyze the data in order to create a framework for understanding the concerns of program leaders within the organizational context. This resulted in a theoretical model grounded in the data obtained for this study.

1.9.2. Section 3 – A New City: An Adapted Photovoice Study of Early Career International Development Workers

Section 3 was designed to explore how new international development workers understood their safety and security. To do this, I adapted the participatory action research technique photovoice to fit within the context of the *Corredor* program to gather data. I asked several participants to take photos and submit them with short descriptions. I asked another group of participants to discuss and evaluate the photos and descriptions based on their longer experiences within the Latin American megacity context. The data was then analyzed using grounded theory to develop an understanding

of how new international development workers perceived safety and security in a Latin American megacity context.

The primary purpose of this study was to observe, document, and describe the perceptions of safety and security risk as experienced by early career international development workers in their first extended international development experience. A secondary purpose of this study was to provide program leadership with insight into the experiences and perceptions of their participants and to facilitate response to significant concerns, if necessary.

1.9.3. Section 4 – Returned International Development Workers: A Grounded Theory of Safety and Security Incidents

Section 4 was intended to explore the stories of past *Corredor* participants, focusing on safety and security incidents they experienced while working internationally. To complete this study, I connected with four returned *Corredor* participants, conducted phone interviews with them, and analyzed the data using grounded theory.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of *Corredor*'s training program, looking specifically for gaps in safety and security training. To achieve this purpose, I collected the stories of returned *Corredor* participants who had experienced some form of threat to their wellbeing. I used these experiences, as well as their recollections of the training they received to build a grounded theory based on their experiences and present suggestions for improvement.

1.9.4. Section 5 – Developing a Safety and Security Framework for International Development Work: A Conclusion

In Section 5 I summarized the findings of s II, III, and IV. The summary allowed for synthesis of overarching themes and patterns. It also facilitated the development of specific recommendations for current international development workers and future research on the topic of safety and security in international development.

1.10. Conclusion

This dissertation was a three-paper dissertation designed for use by practitioners in international development. To facilitate this objective, evaluation research was selected as tool for providing the host organization, *Corredor,* with specific feedback, based on data gathered through traditional research methods.

This study was also designed to begin filling Fast's (2010) "black hole" of research on the safety and security of international development workers through a series of studies focusing on the safety and security perceptions and experiences of members of one organization in a Latin American megacity context. The lack of research on safety and security in international development also meant an absence of theory upon which to base future research. This research was designed to provide a framework for understanding the primary safety and security concerns and threats faced by international development workers while working in a megacity context.

1.10.1. Impact Areas

Impact areas for this study included:

- International Development

- Agricultural Development
- International Leadership
- Leadership Development
- Adult Education
- Missiology
- Women's Studies

1.11. References

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2. SAFETY AND SECURITY IN A LATIN AMERICAN MEGACITY: LEADING NEW INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

Leading an international development training program can be a daunting task, with all its moving parts. One element that creates a unique degree of challenge is the need to provide participants with training so that they can keep themselves safe during their time in the program. The *Corredor* (pseudonym) program, an international development training program in a Latin American megacity, faces such challenges daily. Participants—generally from the United States and native English speakers—complete Spanish language coursework while living with homestay families and serving in local development programs. *Corredor* offers program tenures lasting two months, one semester (four to five months), one year, and two years in length.

Corredor typically serves 10 to 15 young adult participants at a time. To protect participants' privacy, I have referred to the organization by a pseudonym. Likewise, I referred to all participants by pseudonyms. I also referred to the location as "a Latin-American megacity." In addition, I have obscured identifying features of the host city.

Little has changed in the literature since Fast (2010) referred to safety and security literature in international development as a "black hole." While large organizations can invest in international security firms, many small organizations rely on travel advisories issued by the Overseas Security Advisory Council. *Corredor* also gathers safety and security data from other sources, including Lonely Planet (2020), the Red Cross (2020), and local news stations.

In this context, it is a challenge to design and implement safety training policies, protocols, and procedures to manage risks. *Corredor* responds to the challenge of the megacity context by providing participants with training on using public transportation, responding to natural disasters, and navigating the city safely. Participants also receive training on the host country's culture and its impacts on safety and effective development work, as participants engage the culture through service placements, homestay families, and travel around the city.

2.1. Theoretical Overview

Central to leading an international development training program, like *Corredor*, is the element of training participants, a form of adult education. Knowles (2015) presented six core assumptions of adult learners. These assumptions are (1) the learner's felt "need to know," (2) the learner's self-concept, (3) the prior experience the learner brings to the situation, (4) the learner's readiness to learn, (5) the learner's orientation to learning, and (6) the learner's motivation to learn. Each learner approaches training with a unique positionality, relating to each of these assumptions, which affects how they receive training materials.

Based on that understanding, Knowles (2015) proposed four principles of andragogy: (1) participant involvement in planning and evaluation of learning, (2) focus on experiential learning practices, (3) immediate relevancy, and (4) problem-centered teaching models. Applying these principles is essential to effective adult learning programs. However, currently, these principles may not be adequately applied to safety and security training in international development.

2.2. Purpose

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the perspectives of one team of leaders in an international development training program regarding safety and security and the impact of these perspectives on the training of program participants. Because this study was also intended as evaluative research, I identified specific strengths and weaknesses of the training program and have provided specific recommendations for program improvement.

2.3. Research Questions

One question guiding this study was: What are the core safety and security concerns of leaders of an international development training program in a Latin American megacity context? A second was: How do those safety and security concerns compare to concerns expressed by program participants?

2.4. Statement of Positionality

Two of my identities are most salient to this study. First, I was a graduate student researcher. I was learning the research process and developing my perspectives. Second, I am a former *Corredor* participant, with significant experience in international development.

As a researcher, I was in the process of defining my theoretical perspective, the lenses through which I make sense of my observations. Given my interest and history with international development experience, I leaned toward a pragmatic perspective in research. I believed that the methods selected for a study should respond to the research question, but also be feasible given the limited resources of an international development

situation. Methods should also be flexible because situations can change quickly and unpredictably in participatory research.

I also believed that I, as a researcher, was part of creating data in partnership with participants in my studies. This perspective became particularly salient in two ways for this study. a) As mentioned, I am a former *Corredor* participant. I was part of the Summer Team in 2009 (two months). I returned for one year from September 2010 to August 2011 and served as a facilitator for the 2011 Summer Team. b) I was on site with *Corredor* for the duration (June 12, 2019 to August 9, 2019) of this study.

Because I was on site for the duration of the 2019 summer program, I held the *emic* position of being consistently present for *Corredor* events. This led to greater rapport with the Summer Team. My experience gave me further *emic* insights into the participants' experiences and *Corredor* structures, policies, and processes.

I also had an *etic* perspective, given that my experiences with *Corredor* were nearly 10 years prior, and significant changes had been made to the program. For example, *Corredor*'s umbrella organization merged with a larger organization. This had increased the structure and resources available to *Corredor* participants, both during and after their service. I also held an *etic* position with the leadership team. Leadership team members spent several months getting to know each other and settling into their positions and friendships. I did not have the opportunity to build rapport with most of these individuals prior to the Summer Team's arrival and most of my interaction with them occurred with the Summer Team present.

In the years between my original service with *Corredor* and my return for research, several things changed in the city. In addition to a steady increase in population, a new subway line and several new bus lines had been added. With the proliferation of smart phones, ride-share companies in 2019 competed with taxis. Many changes coincided with new political leadership.

My position as a researcher was known by *Corredor* participants. As an observer, I struggled to find my balance between participating in *Corredor* events and observing them. Based on Gold's (1958) typology, I moved between "participant as observer" and "observer as participant." While this facilitated greater rapport with the Summer Team, it created a challenge in building rapport with some members of the Leadership Team.

2.5. Participants

Prior to this study, I received authorization from Mark, the *Corredor* director, to observe *Corredor* participants during the Summer of 2019. Mark both participated in this study and served as a gatekeeper to the rest of the *Corredor* participants. All Summer Team participants and individuals holding leadership positions over them were recruited for this study.

I recruited *Corredor* participants directly (face-to-face, in-country) for this study. Following a brief overview of my research, I provided participants an information sheet and a consent form. Participants had the opportunity to complete the consent form immediately or to think about participation and return the consent form the following day.

All ten participants in the Summer 2019 program at *Corredor* agreed to participate in this study. (Each signed a consent form and returned it to me.) The participants in the research were Mark (the director), four members of the Leadership Team responsible for leading the Summer Team, and five Summer Team participants, who arrived on site in June 2019 and departed in August 2019. Participants were grouped based on their role in the Summer Program. A breakdown of participants by team and essential demographics is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Pseudonyms and Demographics

Pseudonym	Position	Team	Age	Gender	Primary Racial or Ethnic Identity	Time in Country at Interview
Mark	*Corredor* Director	Leadership	52	Male	White	14 years
Brandon	Coordinator: Ministerial Relations	Leadership	26	Male	White	2 years
Jonathan	Coordinator: Summer Program	Leadership	25	Male	Mexican	18 months
Abigail	Facilitator	Leadership	22	Female	White	1 year
Nikki	Facilitator	Leadership	23	Female	Mixed Race	7 months
Grace	Participant	Summer	23	Female	White	4 weeks
Locki	Participant	Summer	21	Female	White	6 weeks
Shaelynn	Participant	Summer	20	Female	White	5 weeks
Kelsey	Participant	Summer	21	Female	White	6 weeks
Alyssa	Participant	Summer	22	Female	Latina	4 weeks

2.6. Methods

2.6.1. Data Collection

Qualitative methods were selected for this study. Qualitative data is necessary to facilitate the development of theory. The small sample size was also more suited to qualitative data. To gather data within the structures of *Corredor*, including regular meetings and events, naturalistic observation and individual interviews were selected as primary data collection methods.

2.6.1.1. Naturalistic Observation

I selected naturalistic observation for this study because of the short duration of the *Corredor* program, with several structured events each week. I observed regularly scheduled *Corredor* activities in coordination with Mark, the director, and Jonathan, the summer program coordinator. I was able to observe both formal, including training presentations, and informal activities, including meals and excursions. During or shortly after each activity, I prepared written or oral memos. Oral memos were recorded and transcribed utilizing the cell phone application Otter Voice Notes (Otter.ai, 2019).

I initially intended to utilize an observation schedule. In practice, I found the observation schedule inhibited my building rapport with participants. Prioritizing rapport over a formal observation schedule facilitated gathering increased qualitative data and a deeper level of understanding in participant interviews for writing of thick descriptions of participants and their perceptions.

2.6.1.2. Individual Interviews

Starting four weeks into the summer program, I personally invited all participants to engage in individual interviews. Each participant had the opportunity to select a time and location for the interview. I used two interview protocols for this study, one for the Leadership Team and one for the Summer Team.

At their request, I interviewed Leadership Team members at a coffee shop, a local restaurant, the *Corredor* meeting space, or a private home. These interviews ranged from 25 to 45 minutes in length. The Leadership Team interview protocol is shown in Table 2.

Summer Team interviews were conducted at coffee shops or local restaurants near the *Corredor* meeting space. All interviews were conducted before or after a *Corredor* event, which facilitated coordination of locations. These interviews ranged from 30 to 110 minutes in length. One of the participants (Alyssa) requested that her interview be divided into two sessions. The Summer Team interview protocol is in Table 3.

Table 2

Leadership Team Interview Protocol

Introduction
Thank you for agreeing to speak with me, today. We will be discussing the *Corredor* program and your perceptions of current safety and security current. We will take a few minutes to explore how you came to *Corredor* and the training you received. I understand that confidentiality is a concern. Prior to publication, all names will be replaced with pseudonyms. If you would like to receive or provide input on the pseudonym assigned to your data prior to publication, please let me know. This interview should take approximately one hour. **Consent** 1. Do you agree to participate in this interview? 2. May I record this interview, so that I can better retain and review the data gathered? **Demographics** 3. Do you identify as male, female, or something else? 4. What race or ethnicity do you most closely identify with? 5. How old are you? **Personal Background** 6. What is your current position with *Corredor*? 7. How long have you held this position? 8. Describe the types of training you received along the way. 9. Describe the training you received related to your safety and security. 10. Other than *Corredor*, please describe your international experience. 11. What are your career goals following your *Corredor* experience? **Safety and Security Concerns** 12. In regard to the safety and security of the *Corredor* [Summer Team] participants, what are your top three concerns? Why? 13. How prepared do you feel to respond to those concerns? 14. How likely do you think any of your identified concerns are to happen? **Wrapping Up** 15. What questions or concerns regarding safety and security do you feel were missed? 16. Do you have any questions for me? **Conclusion** Thank you so much for talking with me, today. I really appreciate your participation.

Table 3

Summer Team Interview Protocol

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me, today. We will be discussing the *Corredor* program and your perceptions of current safety and security current. We will take a few minutes to explore how you came to *Corredor* and the training you received.

I understand that confidentiality is a concern. Prior to publication, all names will be replaced with pseudonyms. If you would like to receive or provide input on the pseudonym assigned to your data prior to publication, please let me know.

This interview should take approximately one hour.

Consent

1. Do you agree to participate in this interview?
2. May I record this interview, so that I can better retain and review the data gathered?

Demographics

3. Do you identify as male, female, or something else?
4. What race or ethnicity do you most closely identify with?
5. How old are you?

Personal Background

6. What is your current role with *Corredor*?
7. How long have you held this role?
8. Other than *Corredor*, please describe your international experience.

Safety and Security Concerns

9. In regard to your personal safety and security during your time with *Corredor*, what are your top three concerns? Why?
10. How prepared to you feel to respond to those concerns?
11. How likely do you think any of your identified concerns are to happen?

Wrapping Up

12. What questions or concerns regarding safety and security do you feel were missed?
13. Do you have any questions for me?

Conclusion

Thank you so much for talking with me, today. I really appreciate your participation.

2.6.2. Procedures

Each interview began with a brief introduction to the research project. I asked participants for their consent to participate in the project and record their interviews. I selected Otter Voice Notes (2019) to record and transcribe the interviews. Then, prior to coding, I checked the transcripts for accuracy. Interview protocols for both the Leadership Team and the Summer Team participants were presented in Tables 2 and 3, above.

2.7. Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using constructivist grounded theory methods, based on the work of Charmaz (2006). Charmaz's (2006) grounded theory methods were specifically selected based on the central assumption that the researcher co-creates data with the participants. I believed that my past participation with *Corredor* made this perspective most appropriate. Constructivist grounded theory consists of three phases: initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006). I checked the interviews and verbal memos for accuracy within Otter Voice Notes (2019), and then uploaded them into Nvivo 12 Plus (QSR International, 2019) for coding.

During initial coding, I coded interviews and memos thought-by-thought, using the "Code in vivo" feature in Nvivo 12 Plus (QSR International, 2019). This allowed for word-for-word codes to be created from text notes. Hand-written notes were scanned and uploaded into Nvivo 12 Plus to be coded "by region," highlighting a rectangle on the document (QSR International, 2019). This process allowed me to highlight codes of interest, drag-and-drop the regions into the code list to create a summarized text code.

All codes were organized by participant, event, or interview section, as appropriate, to facilitate later phases of coding.

During focused coding, I examined each section of codes and reorganized them into categories using the constant comparative method. This process consisted of comparing codes to one another within each individual interview, grouping similar codes into categories. I then compared these categories across interviews to further collapse the categories into higher order categories. I elected to code in this order to summarize each participant's concerns; the summary or each participants' concerns is shown in Table 4.

During theoretical coding, I related the higher order categories to one another to develop a theoretical model. I identified the two major categories that emerged from the data and contextualized them within the *Corredor* program structure. I concluded this process by developing the central theoretical concept that describes the theoretical model developed.

To increase the credibility of this study, I spent two months fully engaged with the *Corredor* leaders and participants during the course of this study, which corresponded with the duration of the 2019 summer program. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that "prolonged engagement and persistent observation" are sufficient to establish credibility in a qualitative study. Thick description, as I have done through providing detailed descriptions of participants and direct quotes for the interpretation of the reader, is sufficient to produce transferability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, dependability and confirmability of this study have been achieved through maintaining a detailed audit trail, in keeping with Lincoln and Guba (1985).

2.8. Results

The ten participants in this study represented unique perspectives and experience. I previously presented participant pseudonyms and demographic data in Table 1. I have included additional, descriptive data on each of the participants in Table 4, including the major concerns reported by each participant. In Table 4, I listed the Leadership Team participants based on their length of service (most to least) with *Corredor*. Given that Summer Team members arrived at about the same time, I listed them in no order.

Table 4

Description of Participants

Participant	Description	Major Concerns
Leadership Team		
Mark	Mark is originally from the Midwest. Mark lives in the host city with his wife and two children. He participated in *Corredor* as a participant and, later, as an intern.	Prevention Response
Brandon	Brandon is from the Southern region of the U.S. He just transitioned to a five-year commitment with *Corredor*. He was on site during a recent natural disaster.	Robbery Kidnapping Natural Disasters
Jonathan	Jonathan is from the Southwest region of the U.S. Prior to *Corredor*, he was a fire fighter and a collegiate cheerleader at a large university in the Southwest.	Immaturity Not Learning
Abigail	Abigail is from the Mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. She graduated from a large midwestern university and is taking a break from her education. She plans to pursue advanced education in mathematics.	Oblivious They stand out Street Smarts
Nikki	Nikki has lived in major cities in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest regions of the U.S. She self-identifies as a cook and her passion for cooking and food is evident.	Theft Street Smarts

Table 4 Continued

Participant	Description	Major Concerns
Summer Team		
Grace	Grace is completing a graduate degree in school counseling at a major southern university.	Getting Lost Robbery No Communication
Locki	Locki is completing her bachelor's degree at a small, faith-based college in the Southwest. Prior to participating with *Corredor*, Locki was diagnosed with anxiety.	Sexual Assault Robbery Public Transportation Unsafe People
Shaelynn	Shaelynn is from the Midwest. She is a collegiate athlete at a faith-based university in the Midwest. She is currently participating in track, after reaching the concussion limit for contact sports.	General Safety Injuries Getting Sick No Communication
Kelsey	Kelsey grew up in a major city in the Rocky Mountains. She is also a collegiate athlete at a faith-based university in the Midwest, where she plays volleyball.	Murder Kidnapping Human Trafficking
Alyssa	Alyssa is from the Pacific Coast. During this study, she was between undergraduate and graduate programs at a university in a Midwestern city.	Back Injury Sexual Assault or Harassment Traffic

2.8.1. Central Theoretical Concept

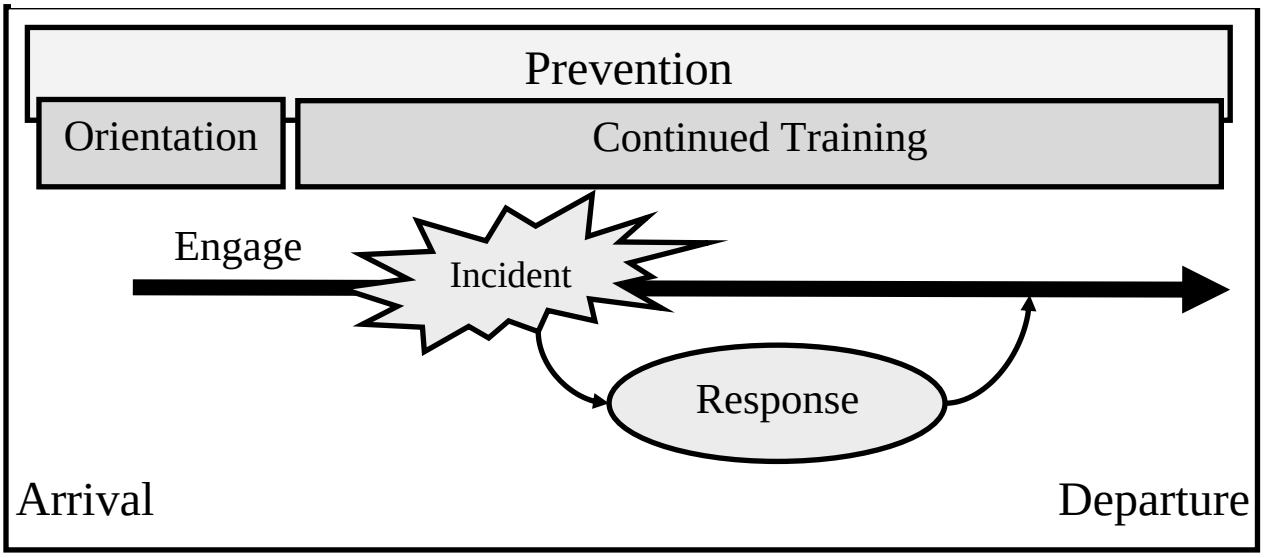
Charmaz (2006) describes the central theoretical concept as the concept that unites the categories identified during the research. For this study, I identified "Prevention and Response to Safety and Security Incidents" as the central theoretical concept. I based this specifically on the words of the *Corredor* director, Mark. He discussed "preventing things that are preventable… and having effective response when something doesn't go well." His statement proved an effective summary of the data.

2.8.2. Theoretical Model

After I identified the central theoretical concept, I proceeded to build the theoretical model. The concepts of prevention and response were significant, but the model took some time to come together, because *Corredor's* strategy for prevention and response to safety and security incidents is deeply embedded within the program structure. Participants arrive, complete an orientation program, and begin engaging with the host country through living with a homestay family and working at their service placement site, while participating in regular training until their departure for home. While safety and security incidents are by no means guaranteed, I included one in the model in order to illustrate the process of responding to an incident. This model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Theoretical Model of Prevention and Response to Safety and Security Incidents



Shaelynn, a member of the Summer Team, best articulated the overarching goal of *Corredor*'s safety and security training program, saying, "I would like to return home in the same condition that I got here… No brokenness or other injuries would be ideal… I want my interactions here to be safe." The goal is that participants navigate the city, utilize safe interactions with host country nationals to engage in effective development work, and return home unharmed by their experience.

2.8.2.1. Prevention

In the *Corredor* program, work to prevent safety and security incidents generally takes places within two phases. Jonathan describes orientation, the first phase, here:

> Everyone goes through orientation. Orientation is the bare bones basics of what you need to get by…. To get by [in] the city and, like, understand basic structures. So, we have [the] transportation talk, there, dress and attire, public safety, such as what not to do, and what not to do in public with your phone, with your behavior, with English, transportation, [and natural disasters].

Jonathan highlights several specific training seminars participants are required to attend and some of the information covered in those seminars.

The second phase, continued training, tends to focus more on culture and language, explaining why many issues exist within the host city's context. Abigail describes those meetings here:

> The first semester I was here, I had training every week, once a week… That would be cultural trainings, language adaptation, cultural adaptation, adapting to

> the familial culture, and just the [host country] culture in general. Learning how to be effective in my position… in the context of this culture.

Corredor, as an organization, places significant value on working within the host country's culture to create lasting change. This also facilitates a greater understanding of the cultural structures and how they contribute to the various safety and security incidents participants might encounter.

I had the opportunity to observe most of the orientation and continued training sessions. During that time, I observed training over transportation, natural disasters, appropriate attire, and the protection of one's money and belongings. *Corredor* leaders conducted these trainings primarily through digital slide show presentations. Participants were engaged and responded to questions asked; however, most safety information was presented the morning after arrival. That afternoon, participants were given the chance to reenact what they learned in short skits. Participants consistently selected themes regarding response to natural disasters and protecting their belongings.

Regarding the continued training sessions, I occasionally observed members of the Leadership Team address safety and security issues with participants individually. They also elected to conduct the slide show presentation on dress and attire a second time. During this second session, Jonathan, a former cheerleader, animatedly discussed his understanding of male behavior toward attractive women. Following that presentation, one participant reported purchasing dressier clothing for *Corredor* meetings, as was expected of participants—a level of dress not required at her service

placement site, for which she packed and prepared. Even so, one Summer Team participant reported, during her interview, that

> I do appreciate [the study] in the sense that, like, just being asked… 'Hey, what makes you uncomfortable?' Everybody wants to hear about what's great, and nobody wants to be like 'Hey, what are you struggling with?' or… 'When do you not feel safe?'… Being asked, that makes me feel safe, like someone cares about my safety and my health and everything.

Her comments suggest that by neglecting to address concerns of team members, the Leadership Team may have missed some opportunities to facilitate the Summer Team's learning.

2.8.2.1.1. Host Country Context

As mentioned above, each country's context is unique and can vary by region. Understanding the cultural and geographic conditions is essential to ensuring participant safety. One clear example of this is in the potential for natural disasters. One reacts very differently to a typhoon, compared with an earthquake or a tornado.

At the time of this study, the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC, 2019) listed the host country as a level two travel advisory. This rating was due, primarily, to higher rates of crime and violence than in the United States (OSAC, 2019). Key concerns included armed robbery, kidnapping, credit card skimming and fraud, and street crime (OSAC, 2019). OSAC also issued specific warnings regarding taxis hailed from the street, recommending taxis from a base or ordered by phone (OSAC, 2019). Alternatively, travelers were encouraged to use ride-share services (OSAC, 2019).

A country's culture can also have a significant impact on safety and security. One example a participant brought up was in the concept of obeying traffic laws. Alyssa discussed her experiences, saying, "Codified traffic laws seem to be ignored, and this set of unspoken traffic laws are followed that I'm not fully aware of…" *Corredor* generally receives participants from the United States, where the authority of most traffic laws is observed with relative consistency. While many of those traffic laws are similar in the host country, the general response to those laws requires participants to adjust their frame of reference to adapt to the local context.

2.8.2.1.2. Changing Contexts

Over the decades that *Corredor* has been in operation, the recommendations *Corredor* provides participants have changed. Jonathan, for example, highlighted how recommendations regarding taxis have changed during his time with *Corredor*, in part in response to a report passed along by his homestay family:

> …A bunch of stuff [has] happened over the past month involving taxi drivers. Women who have been kidnapped, raped, [and] murdered over the past month, and that's already a change that we've been putting into place, as, in previous years, we've recommended to be cautious when taking a taxi. We've changed that to don't take taxis, take [a ride-share service]. [Ride-share services] have become so cheap. A lot of people would take taxis because it's cheaper, but especially with the racism or colorism that happens, we'll be overcharged by taking taxis anyway. So, it's most likely cheaper to take [a ride-share service] with a regulated price.

Here, we see both the change in *Corredor's* recommendation, paired with Jonathan's perspective on why that reasoning makes sense. In this case, *Corredor*'s recommendation is stronger and clearer than the OSAC recommendations, in response to changing local conditions. It also stands in contrast to recommendations regarding ride share companies, in the United States, where female passengers have been assaulted by Uber drivers, with a lawsuit arguing that many drivers were inadequately screened or had criminal histories (e.g., Gambino, 2015).

Some changes in context happen more quickly. Here, Brandon discusses a season when participants were at increased risk and how *Corredor* responded:

> There was a rash of kidnappings. And we were sending people out messages and we were constantly letting them know we changed the [curfew], because we usually don't have to come home until 9:30 at the latest… So, we reached out to the families and we talked to the [*Corredor* participants], and we kind of told them this is happening. {Kidnapping] is on the increase right now. And the city responded by putting new… like, police officers and things like that, because it was happening at several different [subway] stops. They found out, you know, the type of girl they were looking for, because they were kidnapping women at that point…

Brandon specifically talked about a few ways *Corredor* responded to the kidnapping of women and girls. He talked about sending out messages to participants, to ensure that they were aware of the changing circumstances, as well as changing rules, like curfew. While curfews can feel overly restrictive, *Corredor* has found them helpful for

addressing the higher levels of street crime after dark. Although the kidnappings that prompted the *Correder* response were gendered, Brandon discussed *Corredor*'s response in a gender-neutral manner.

Still other safety and security concerns are very isolated, but with the potential to be severe. During the two months I was on site with *Corredor*, a minor natural disaster struck the host city. I got this text in response: "[Natural disaster]. Everyone ok?" This particular incident was so minor many participants were unaware of its occurring.

2.8.2.1.3. Creating Awareness

A few specific risks were repeated in my interviews with the Leadership Team. Specifically, theft, kidnapping, and natural disasters were risks mentioned by the Leadership Team. Mark discussed awareness here, "Preventing things that are preventable [and] creating awareness of things that aren't preventable but are part of this context." Brandon highlighted the overall objective of the awareness and prevention-based model for addressing safety and security incidents, saying, "You just gotta learn how to find that medium sweet spot where you're not completely careless, but you also are paying attention to everything around you." This degree of awareness is seen as necessary to prevent some incidents and respond to others appropriately.

The most commonly mentioned risk was the risk of theft. Nikki discussed how a lack of awareness can increase one's chances of experiencing theft, here:

> When they're attached to their technology, they may not know…. They may just get their technology plucked out of their hands. My friend calls that apple

> picking, when someone takes your phone out of your hand, that's an Apple phone.

Distractions and a lack of awareness can put people at increased risk.

Likewise, awareness is tied to the risk of getting kidnapped. Brandon discussed his concerns with kidnapping related to taxis, here:

> I'm not as concerned about kidnapping via [a ride-share service] … I'm more concerned about kidnapping via, like, taxis, taxi drivers, stuff like that. It's something that happens a lot here. They do go, kidnap, and then hold them for ransom, and then they'll let them go.

Brandon specifically ties his concern to taxis, as opposed to ride-share services. If participants are aware of the risk, they are able to easily modify their behavior to protect themselves.

The concept of awareness also applies to responding to natural disasters. Recognizing and responding to natural disasters appropriately is a significant concern. During my time with the program, I observed the participants engaging with the natural disaster training session. Based on another activity I observed, in which participants developed short skits based on a selection of safety and security measures from their training, it was one of the most memorable elements of training because both pairs (Alyssa had not yet arrived) included it in their

2.8.2.1.4. Participant Responses to Training

As Knowles's (2015) theory of adult education suggests, providing education for adults may be insufficient to produce learning. Leaders found this to be a challenge. For

example, Jonathan discusses his concerns, saying, “They’re not listening to what we say, [and] that puts them in situations that are avoidable.” He goes on to say:

> This is an internship… They’re expected to act as adults. Adults, in my mind, would behave in a way that when they receive information, that they understand that they should follow the information from more experienced people… [If] they don’t, [or] they choose not to listen to the advice [that] has been given…

Jonathan’s comments suggest the common assumption that providing information is sufficient to produce both knowledge change and behavior change.

Jonathan was not alone in his assumptions. Abigail also expressed her frustration with the participants’ learning, here:

> Not that I want them to get hurt, or I want them to be endangered at all, but they’re adults, and so I can’t really control how they, yeah. How to act as much as I want to. I so want to, sometimes. I so wish I could just like mind control them.

Like Jonathan, Abigail realized that the consequences of not learning safety strategies could be significant but feels powerless to increase learning strategies.

This perspective that, because education has been provided, learning should occur does not consider several aspects of Knowles’s (2015) assumptions of adult learners. Specifically, it fails to consider how well their presentation lined up with the expectations of participants, as well as participants’ unique backgrounds and experiences. These issues had a significant impact on participants’ choices to adopt the materials presented—that is, to change behavior.

2.8.2.1.4.1. Participant Concerns

Some participants believed that the training provided by *Corredor* was sufficient to help them feel safe. For example, Locki, despite self-reporting anxiety, discussed how she felt prepared because:

> I think, during orientation, they did a good job of explaining just like safety stuff, like where you should keep your wallet, where you should keep your phone, or [where] you should have your backpack when you're on the Metro. Like, how you should carry yourself when you're walking…

In several instances, Locki tied her behavior and willingness to adapt to *Corredor*'s recommendations to her anxiety, like here, "I have anxiety, and I am very aware of all the things. I don't think I could get any more aware." Relating Locki's comments back to Knowles's (2015) assumptions of adult learners would suggest that her self-concept, specifically relating to her anxiety, increased her readiness and motivation to learn.

In contrast, Alyssa expressed some unwillingness to adapt her behavior to *Corredor*'s training, based on her identity as a Latina and her experiences in West Coast and Midwestern cities. Her self-concept as a Latina led her to question many of the recommendations *Corredor* presented to her, specifically relating to the tendency for *Corredor* participants to experience sexual assault and harassment. She discussed her perceptions, here:

> It still rubs me the wrong way, because everybody's being like, 'Be careful, because men here are different.' I'm like, 'Hey! I'm sure not all [of] them.' And then to another extent that, like, how much is that, like, it's a problem

everywhere. Is it? And how much is it actually more of a problem here? Versus… Just because people stand out more, which then, is a whole 'nother thing… Is this a warning because people stand out?... How much do I stand out?

Her questions and self-concept, then, led her to question how much the safety and security recommendations applied to her, specifically.

> Sometimes, depending on how I'm dressed, and if I keep my mouth shut, I don't stand out. So, sometimes, it's like, should I be extra careful about this thing, or should I be like, somewhat careful, but like, kind of relaxed? Like, if I'm honest, I break lots of the safety recommendations that I have been given. Like, I have my phone out, and…I'm fine. I'm not bothered… No one notices me. [If] I'm not talking, you won't realize I'm not from here.

While Alyssa's assertion that her appearance did not cause her to stand out is true, that status did not, necessarily, afford protection. OSAC's (2019) recommendations suggest that foreign appearance may be less salient to criminals than the victim's perceived wealth and vulnerability.

2.8.2.1.4.2. Participant Experiences

Other participants relied more on past experiences. Kelsey, for example, discussed her experiences here, "I come from a large city, lived in a large city my whole life. I'm, like, used to this environment, in terms of a large city." Kelsey also talked about her experience with the host city, which made her feel more comfortable, here, "[My homestay family lives] in a really, what I've been told, a good, good part of the city. It's rather touristy. And, like, I've been told it's like hipster-y, if that's a word." The

OSAC (2019) listed Kelsey's neighborhood as among the top six neighborhoods in the city, based on number of crimes committed.

Kelsey's self-concept as being someone from the city created the perception that she was better prepared for the host city context than she was. Kelsey discussed her habits relating to her phone, here:

> I've never thought about having my phone, like, not out. It's always been in my pocket. Always. And it's honestly, it's kind of a habit that I'm trying to break here, because, like I said earlier, I do realize that I have it out all the time, or not even out in my hand, but just in my pocket (*Corredor*'s recommendation is to stow cell phones deep within a backpack or purse). And I've never really thought about that before.

Kelsey's phone use drew the attention of both the Summer Team and the Leadership Team. It was not unusual to hear Kelsey's roommate, Shaelynn, talk about how Kelsey's cell phone use made her uncomfortable during their commute. Abigail admitted to thinking this about Kelsey, "I think, in the beginning of the summer, I would have been like, 'Oh, this girl is definitely going to get robbed, probably multiple times." Even Kelsey acknowledged that theft was likely, here, "Getting cat-called. Being stolen from. I would say those are all… fairly likely. I would say getting lost is fairly likely." Knowing the risks, Kelsey still had difficulty breaking her phone habits.

2.8.2.1.5. Lack of Street Smarts

The single most common concern reported by leadership was a lack of street smarts exhibited by the participants. The concept of street smarts was a multifaceted and

dynamic posture that involved being prepared to react, a degree of defensiveness, and understanding the consequences of one's actions. Regarding defensiveness, Abigail gives a personal example of how she defines street smarts here:

> When I walk down the street and somebody tries to make eye contact with [the Summer Team participants], I don't know. I have a sense of like if it's an older woman, sure, great, cute, nice. I don't know you. But if you're a guy. I don't care how old you are, unless you're my friend. If you're a guy and you're making eye contact at me, I'm glaring at you, or I'm just ignoring you, or I'm going to do something to you to tell you that, like, back off, because… I'm not threatened by you. You should be threatened by me.

Abigail contrasted this posture with one of trusting the people around her. To avoid issues, she took on a defensive posture of communicating distrust to those around her, as she moved around the city.

Nikki talked about how street smarts affects the ways one engages with the structures of a city, here:

> You look both ways before you cross the street. You don't follow the signs. Very basic thing, but in most cities, that's kind of true. You look both ways. You don't just cross because the light is green, because people are crazy.

Nikki focused on the street and traffic aspects of street smarts to highlight the idea that people, and vehicles, do not always behave as one might expect. Taking the extra step to verify those expectations is essential.

Nikki ultimately settled on the conclusion that street smarts is essential, but not sufficient to ensure one's safety in the city, saying:

> That just all comes down to street smarts. You're not street smart. You don't think before you act. I mean, sometimes it is circumstantial, that you're just in the wrong place at the wrong time. But you can avoid a lot of things by just being street smart.

The concept of street smarts, then, implied that doing these things would prevent participants from accidental harm, as well as some forms of street crime and harassment. Even so, as Nikki articulated, there remain situations that are outside the participants' control.

2.8.2.2. Response

2.8.2.2.1. Responsibility

There was a clear and noticeable shift in the responsibility felt toward helping participants address issues that arose based on length of commitment to the organization. Leaders with a two-year commitment to the organization were largely less willing to take responsibility for coping with concerns than were leaders with longer-term commitments. Mark talked about responding well, here, "Having, like, effective response when something doesn't go well. When the unavoidable or even the avoidable becomes a reality. So, to walk people through those circumstances or situations, or things that sometimes happen."

Given Mark's fourteen years of experience with *Corredor* and life in the host country, his general statement was deliberately designed to encompass the many safety

and security incidents he had personally experienced, helped lead people through, or heard about from friends and family in the host country. Since I met Mark in 2009, he has shared a few of these stories with me, personally, ranging from the theft of two of his personal vehicles, to the armed robbery of a former *Corredor* participant, among many others.

Brandon was beginning his transition from being a *Corredor* participant on a two-year commitment to beginning his first five-year commitment to *Corredor* leadership. He also tied his responsibility and preparation to his past experiences, specifically of being robbed and surviving a natural disaster that hit the host city. He talked about it here:

> After what I've gone through, I feel pretty, pretty okay with it…. As far as being robbed, you know, the police and all of that, and deal with that, I know how, I would be, I'd feel very capable of helping them through that, as well as helping talk them through, you know, what they've gone through…. As well as [natural disasters]. Yeah, I feel like those are pretty easy. As long as you know where you are, like, I wouldn't worry as much. They just need to stay where they're at until either they can get contact with us or we're gonna meet at the meeting place. And I feel like it'd be pretty easy to find people, because I know where they are, generally.

Although Brandon addressed very specific concerns, he never questioned that he would be responsible for assisting participants in addressing concerns or issues that could arise.

Mark and Brandon also take a uniquely reflexive tone in their response, identifying specific issues that they do not understand well enough to respond to well. Brandon discussed his lack of knowledge about kidnapping, saying, "I'm not totally sure what to do in that kidnapping situation. I would have to lean pretty hard on other people." Given Brandon's position as a senior leader, his lack of awareness regarding protocols relating to kidnapping, a typically gendered concern, is problematic. Mark addressed a different variety of concerns that he would like to learn more about, here:

> Pieces like suicide prevention or working with people with addictions. Not, not in a clinical sense, per se, but in a sense of, you know, what can someone in a position like mine do? How can we more effectively work with someone when they come from that background? How can we detect when there's situations that are really beyond our level of ability? How to effectively support people with different kinds of things.

Mark's desire to increase his understanding of mental health concerns was understandable, given that *Corredor*'s target participants were current college students and recent graduates. Bathke and Kim (2016) looked at students in a study abroad program, a demographic relatively similar to that of *Corredor*'s participants, and found that 28% of participants experienced mental health challenges prior to traveling abroad; of those participants, 55% elected not to report those challenges prior to departure.

In contrast, Jonathan, Nikki, and Abigail expressed sympathy but limited responsibility in the event that an incident did occur. Nikki's perspective was the gentlest, saying:

> You can't force people to see things how you see them, and that's just being human. So, it's like, the concerns I have, I can warn somebody 20,000 times, but they may not get it until something bad happens to them. And that's unfortunate, but that's how it is sometimes, and then some people do listen right away.

Abigail, likewise, expressed frustration with the limits of her role, while also acknowledging limitations to her responsibility, here:

> All I can really do is tell them, 'Hey, like, this is not good. You're not gonna be okay if you're doing this stuff here.' And then, beyond that, if they don't listen to me, then they have to learn from their mistakes, not that we want them to… They're adults.

Jonathan was the most outspoken, regarding his responsibility in the event of a safety or security incident, saying:

> That's not my responsibility… I think because we provide them the tools… They're expected to act as adults… Unfortunately, the results of their decisions are not on my conscience… We've guided them and provided them tools they need, that they should follow.

To an extent, Nikki, Abigail, and Jonathan were correct. In the event a safety or security incident did occur, the primary responsibility would have fallen first to Mark, as the director, then to Brandon, as long-term staff. Their individual roles in addressing any given incident would have been limited, depending on the nature of the incident.

I did not, however, observe the reflexivity or self-awareness in Nikki, Abigail, or Jonathan that led Mark and Brandon to discuss potential safety and security issues and

that would be beyond their current abilities. This lack of reflexivity seems most consistent with the career goals each expressed. All three anticipated returning to the United States to continue their careers after their two-year commitments with *Corredor*, in fields ranging from culinary arts to cryptography to emergency response.

2.9. Conclusion

Corredor's Leadership Team focused on prevention of safety and security incidents through training. The training provided focused primarily on the kinds of street crimes an individual is most likely to encounter while traveling to and from a homestay family's home to service placement site or to a *Corredor* meeting. Despite their best efforts, however, the biggest challenge remains getting participants to act on the training provided. Leadership Team members often chose not to account for individual differences among the participants and their experiences or adapt to their needs and perspectives.

The selection to pursue safety and security training in two phases is practical, effective, and scale-able, enabling *Corredor* to use their training model with all its participants, regardless of their length of commitment to the program. Specifically, this model allows for the flexibility to address issues that arise quickly and locally. The use of this continued training model, however, did not seem to take full advantage of the opportunity to engage participants. I, as the researcher, seemed to be the only person asking about negative experiences and perceptions, specifically relating to safety and security. This suggests that there may be a missed opportunity to build relationships and to engage in individualized training with participants.

I have recommended that *Corredor* invest time in discussing safety and security incidents either individually with each participant, or collectively, during group training sessions. This will serve to build rapport with participants, while communicating openness and receptivity of leadership. While this might sound time consuming, it will also serve to lower the barrier to help-seeking behavior in the event that significant safety and security incidents, specifically sexual harassment and assault, were to occur. *Corredor* already has the structures in place to implement this change, in the form of one-on-one mentor and coaching relationships. These structures involve same-gender pairings of one leader with one participant, to discuss personal, spiritual, and occupational growth. Integrating the concept of safety and security into these groups would facilitate relationship building.

The criticism of the 2019 Summer Team by some members of the Leadership Team indicated a lack of understanding of adult learning. This resulted in unrealistic expectations of participant learning. It also produced an unwillingness to reflectively consider opportunities to make training more accessible to and impactful on participants. Long-term staff should consider incorporating elements of adult education into facilitator training, to prepare leaders to respond to *Corredor* participants in alignment with Knowles (2015) theory of adult learning.

Responding to safety and security incidents created differential responses based on the Leadership Team member's experience and intention to pursue longer-term engagement with *Corredor*. Mark's fourteen years of experience allowed him to learn and grow into his position over time. While Brandon showed an awareness of his need

for additional training, he also tied his ability to respond to incidents to his own experiences. These responses indicated that organizational learning has been primarily experiential or in response to past incidents.

Based on the results of this study, *Corredor* leadership has opportunities to pursue additional training, as well as passing on knowledge to new long-term staff. Given Bathke and Kim's (2016) findings that study abroad participants, a population similar to *Corredor*'s target participants, found an overall underreporting of mental health concerns. Therefore, the ability to respond appropriately to common mental health concerns could be productive. Depression and anxiety stand out as priorities, based on Bathke and Kim's (2016) report. Mark, the director, asked about ways to identify mental health concerns that exceed their capabilities. Bathke and Kim (2016) highlighted Heavy Episodic Drinking, more commonly known as binge drinking, as a strong correlate of Major Depressive Disorder. Given that *Corredor* does ask participants not to drink for their first year, difficulty following this policy may be a strong indicator to seek outside assistance.

In addition, focusing on knowledge transfer to future *Corredor* leaders should be a priority, focusing on developing protocols in response to the most common incidents experienced by participants. These protocols will be integral to passing on knowledge to future long-term staff members. Ensuring that at least 50% of new facilitators are committed to serving for two years, and can therefore serve a second summer as a facilitator, may be one way to better retain and transfer knowledge among *Corredor* leaders.

Another opportunity would be to provide self-defense training for long-term staff. Based on my experience with *Corredor*, it is unlikely that long-term staff will seek certification in self-defense training. It is likely that long-term staff will pass on the elements of self-defense training they find most helpful to shorter-term participants. Additionally, self-defense training may be a helpful recovery tool following some sexual assault incidents, as it can be a means of restoring the participant's voice and authority over their own body.

2.10. Implications

The results of this study led to two key implications. First, long-term leadership is needed to produce international development training programs that enable learning from experience. While short-term leadership can be effective in training participants, long-term leadership enables leaders to learn from their experiences and to develop a deeper understanding of the host country context.

The second implication focuses on the need for an understanding of adult education concepts. Specifically, understanding that adult learners arrive onsite with specific experiences and characteristics that will impact how they engage and learn from the presented material.

2.11. Limitations

The participant-observer stance taken created different levels of rapport between the various team members. I did not have the opportunity to build the same degree of rapport with the four facilitators as I have with the director, although I was introduced to

the Summer Team participants shortly after their arrival and was present at as many *Corredor* activities as possible.

In addition, this study was conducted in a Latin American megacity context. Results obtained in this context may not be applicable to other locations or in locations with elevated threat levels, as assessed by the OSAC.

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3. A NEW CITY: AN ADAPTED PHOTOVOICE STUDY OF EARLY CAREER INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

Research into the safety and security of international development workers (IDWs) has been neglected, to the point where Fast (2010) referred to this topic as a "black hole." This lack of research is uniquely detrimental to small-scale organizations, who often take on the challenging task of training new IDWs. This often means that these organizations are left to produce their own materials, independently.

One such organization, *Corredor* (renamed for the privacy of research participants), is a faith-based international development agency located in a Latin American megacity. *Corredor* regularly invites college students and recent graduates to consider international development work through participation in one of their internship programs, with timelines ranging from a summer through two years in length.

Corredor's program model utilizes a homestay model, where new *Corredor* participants live with national hosts for at least their first year, to facilitate language and cultural immersion. *Corredor* participants complete language and culture classes. In addition, they engage with a service placement project, typically in partnership with a faith-based community, like a church or faith-based youth development project, or social services agency, such as one working with women removed from sex trafficking situations.

3.1. Conceptual Framework

3.1.1. Theoretical Framework

Based on a thorough literature review, I identified seven central categories: risks related to crime, accidents, disease, political situations, natural disasters, mental health, and those risks otherwise unclassified. I describe the seven categories of risk in Table 5.

Table 5

Seven Categories of Safety and Security Risk for International Development Workers

Risk	Description
Crime Related Risks	Crime related risks include risks to the individual posed by physical assault (Hartjes et al., 2009); rape and sexual assault (Kennedy & Flaherty, 2015; United States Department of State [State Department], 2019); assorted forms of theft, including fraud and extortion (State Department, 2019); kidnapping (State Department, 2019); and the drug trade (The Central Intelligence Agency, 2019).
Risk of Accidents	Risk of accidents stem from the potential for incidents involving motor vehicles (Wood, 2017); mass transit; drug or alcohol use; falls; fire; and drowning (Hartjes et al., 2009).
Preventable Disease	Preventable disease risks range from common issues like malaria, diarrhea, and fever (Bryant et al., 1991) to multiple forms of hepatitis, typhoid fever, and HIV (Castelli, 2004).
Political Risks	Political risks include political violence (Buda, 2016), armed conflict, and terrorist attacks (Hartjes et al., 2009).
Natural Disasters	Natural disaster risks vary by region (Hartjes et al., 2009).
Mental Health Risks	Mental health risks stem from the increased stress on individuals working abroad, resulting from the challenges of adapting to life in a new culture, far from traditional support structures (Doki et al., 2018).
Other Risks	Other risks are frequently mild or non-specific in nature, such as risks related to sun exposure (Hartjes et al., 2009).

One concept seemed absent in the literature. A careful reading of the literature would assume that all of the risks presented in Table 5 are gender neutral. Hudson et al. (2012) would disagree, suggesting that every incident that involves a victim and perpetrator of differing genders is, in fact, gender-based, with the preponderance of violence targeting women.

3.1.2. Statement of Positionality

I, the researcher, am a returned *Corredor* participant; I participated in the *Corredor* summer program in 2009 and year one program in 2010–2011. During my time with *Corredor*, I encountered a number of safety and security concerns, both directly and indirectly, which inspired my research. Specifically, one of my teammates and close friends was assaulted by a member of her host family, and I was personally assaulted while riding the subway to work.

Based on these experiences, I have chosen to pursue graduate education in international development, with a focus on the safety and security of men and women working abroad. I believe that organizations have the responsibility to acknowledge the potential for risks to their participants, provide training to reasonably mitigate risks, and provide resources to facilitate recovery from incidents that happen while their employees and participants are working abroad. From my perspective, these things are required for the reasonable protection of the time, money, and space that these organizations have invested in their human resources.

As a researcher, my unique emic perspective as a former *Corredor* participant, as well as two months of direct immersion in the program for the current study, make a

constructivist approach to research most appropriate. Charmaz (2020) described constructivist grounded theory as allowing researchers to "concentrate on what is happening in the research field, acknowledge that they are part of it, remain flexible, follow empirical events, attend to language and meaning, and take on moral responsibilities arising through their research."

3.2. Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of this study was to observe, document and describe the ways new international development workers document their perceptions of safety and security risk as experienced in one of their first extended international development experiences. A secondary purpose of this study was to provide program leadership with insight into the experiences and perceptions of their new participants and to facilitate response to significant concerns, if necessary.

Several objectives were central to achieving these purposes. To facilitate the observation of participant perceptions, my first objective was to build rapport with all study participants, to elicit cooperation.

A second objective was the consistent submission of photos by the photovoice participants. This was achieved with three of four photovoice participants. The fourth participant's photos, though few, addressed the most concerning issues presented by these participants. Given the significance of the images presented by this participant, her lack of consistent submission was interpreted as an intent to provide rigorous data for the study. Based on her expressed intent and the quality of submissions, her limited participation was determined not to detract from the stated objective.

Finally, the third objective was the consistent review of images by program leadership, in the form of focus groups. I invited five individuals to participate in a series of four focus groups. Four of five individuals attended all four focus group sessions. The fifth individual encountered a scheduling conflict with the final group and was not able to attend. This lone conflict was judged not to detract from the objective of consistent review by program leadership.

3.3. Methods

A qualitative study based on photovoice methods was selected for this study. I selected a photovoice study to explore the experience of safety and security in a new culture through the gaze of new program participants (*Corredor* summer team 2019). I adapted the photovoice structure, which is a participatory action research technique, to present the concerns brought up by new *Corredor* participants directly with *Corredor* leadership, which became additional data for this study. Data were then analyzed utilizing constructivist grounded theory to develop a theoretical framework for understanding the experiences of early career international development workers. This is consistent with Lopez et al. (2005), who used photovoice to experience quality of life through the eyes of rural African American breast cancer survivors, combined with grounded theory to "generate a conceptual framework of 'what is going on.'"

3.3.1. Photovoice Overview

To ensure participant safety and ethical photography, I conducted a short training session with the photovoice participants, covering photography ethics and safety, consistent with Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001). A copy of this training protocol can

be found in Appendix E. I then asked these participants to submit up to five photos per week, utilizing the concept "aspects of safety and security" as a guide. As part of their submissions, I asked the photovoice participants to include brief descriptions of each photo, including elements like where it was taken, why it was selected, and what aspect of safety or security it represented for them.

For this study, I elected to adapt the photovoice methods presented by Wang (1999) based on the availability of *Corredor* leadership and participants. The modifications for this study took two forms. First, photovoice participants were asked to submit a set of images and descriptions each week, to facilitate capturing their changing concerns over their experience. A second modification was made at the request of *Corredor* leadership. Traditionally, study participants who took photos would be involved in presenting them for discussion in a focus group setting. This would have required excessive modifications of the *Corredor* operational procedure. Instead, photovoice participants introduced photos through short descriptions, and only *Corredor* leadership was involved in the focus group discussions. While this resulted in a missed opportunity to share insights and model curiosity and a learning-orientation to participants, it did facilitate increased candor and greater depth within the focus group discussions.

After each week's photos had been submitted, I organized those photos for discussion in a focus group setting. I asked the focus group, each week, to review each photo and description pair submitted that week. Focus groups lasted approximately 30 minutes, each. The focus group participants and I first viewed the photo alone and

discussed interpretations of the image. I then shared the description of the photo and these participants and I continued the discussion by evaluating the concerns identified.

One issue that arose during this study was in relation to images not created by one of the photovoice participants. I did not specifically prohibit the inclusion of images not created by the photovoice participants. Because I did not specifically prohibit it, I received one image taken from the internet and submitted as part of this data set. Where appropriate, the creator of each image is cited.

3.3.2. Participants

I invited a total of 10 participants to participate in the two parts of this study. Nine participants consented to participate in the photovoice project. To facilitate descriptions of participation, I divided participants into individuals who participated in the photovoice project by submitting photos, hereafter referred to as "photovoice participants," and those who participated only in the focus groups, here after referred to as "focus group participants." One participant submitted photos and participated in the focus groups.

3.3.2.1. Photovoice Participants

Of the 10 individuals I invited to submit photos for this study, five submitted photos. Descriptions of the five photovoice participants can be found in Table 6. Photovoice participants submitted a total of 38 images.

3.3.2.2. Focus Groups

A total of five *Corredor* leaders were invited to participate in the focus group discussions surrounding the photos submitted. All five leaders consistently attended

focus group sessions and all but one session was fully attended. Descriptions of the participants in the focus groups can be found in Table 7.

Table 6

Description of Participants Submitting Photos

Pseudonym	Gender	Position	Photos Submitted
Alyssa	Female	Participant	9
Kelsey	Female	Participant	6
Locki	Female	Participant	1
Mark	Male	Director	2
Shaelynn	Female	Participant	18
		Total	38

Table 7

Description of Participants in the Focus Groups

Pseudonym	Gender	Position	Groups Attended
Abigail	Female	Facilitator	5
Brandon	Male	Ministry Coordinator	5
Jonathan	Male	Facilitator	4
Mark	Male	Director	5
Nikki	Female	Facilitator	5

3.3.3. Photovoice Procedures

Over each of the four weeks of this study, photovoice participants took photos using their personal devices, as they experienced life in a Latin American megacity. To coincide with *Corredor* activities, photovoice participants submitted their images and

descriptions each week, on Monday. All images and descriptions were submitted utilizing WhatsApp (2019). WhatsApp (2019) was selected because it is the preferred messaging service by *Corredor*. As a researcher, I also found WhatsApp to be among the easiest services to privately share and collect data, because its computer extension allowed for the easy transfer of photos and descriptions. In the event that I received fewer than five images from a photovoice participant, I verified that all intended images were submitted. All photovoice participants were thanked for their images at each round.

3.3.4. Focus Group Procedures

During each focus group, all focus group participants gave permission to record the focus group meeting. Each focus group roughly followed the outline in Appendix C. I used Otter Voice Notes (2019) to audio record and transcribe each focus group session. I then checked transcripts for accuracy prior to analysis by listening to the audio recordings and verifying that the text matched the audio recordings.

I structured each focus group session into three sections. Each session opened with a brief introduction, which included reviewing key themes identified in previous weeks. Next, I presented new photos via Microsoft PowerPoint, and I encouraged focus group participants to discuss each image. After that initial discussion, I presented the photovoice participant's description, and discussion of the image continued, focusing on the description provided. This continued until all photos and descriptions were reviewed. To conclude each session, I asked focus group participants to identify any larger themes identified from that week's photos and how they, as leaders, should respond to concerns the photovoice participants had identified and presented.

As the researcher, I played an active role in the focus group discussions. I had the opportunity to build rapport with the photovoice participants and the focus group participants. I also had the opportunity to re-experience life in the Latin American megacity context. I would occasionally challenge, reframe, or push back on interpretations of an image. I would also attempt to seek out the perspectives of focus group participants when they seemed quieter.

3.4. Data Analysis

I analyzed data for this study using techniques stemming from constructivist grounded theory, consistent with Lopez et al. (2005). Based on Charmaz's (2006) assumption that the study participants and the researcher co-construct the data in cooperation, I selected constructivist grounded theory for the analysis of data. This was appropriate given the degree of involvement I had with all participants in this study.

Grounded theory proceeds in three key phases: initial coding, focused coding, and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006). For the purposes of this study, initial coding involved coding the photos and descriptions submitted by the photovoice participants and analysis of the focus group discussion transcripts. I coded photos based on the participant who submitted the photo, the location in which the photo was taken, the hazard depicted within the photo—if visible, and the week the photo was submitted. I coded the photo descriptions thought-by-thought, utilizing the "Code In Vivo" function in Nvivo 12 Pro (2019) to create word-for-word codes. I then repeated this process for the focus group transcripts. To facilitate later coding, I categorized description and focus group codes by image.

Two factors influenced the focused coding stage of analysis. The centrality of the image in a photovoice study became the "unit of study," rather than the participant. Then, within each image, the adaptations to the photovoice method revealed unique differences in perspective between the photovoice participants and the focus group participants. Thus, I used the constant comparative method within each image and description submitted by the photovoice participants, to identify the theme or hazard the photo addressed. I repeated the constant comparative method with the codes from the focus group discussion of the image, collapsing codes into an assessment of the image. I then collapsed the codes from each image into categories.

In the theoretical coding stage, I explored the relationships between the categories created during the focused coding stage. The categories created above collapsed even further into two key categories, coming from the two data streams. These two categories were united under a single, central theoretical concept, identified from the data.

3.5. Results

3.5.1. Central Theoretical Concept

The central theoretical concept that unified the data was "Adapting to a new environment." This concept came from a quote from Mark, the program director. He said, "[There] are things that you notice when you're in a new environment…. They stick out more." This quote proved significant because I observed a significant difference between the images submitted by the photovoice participants and the ways the focus group participants assessed those images. One significant difference between the

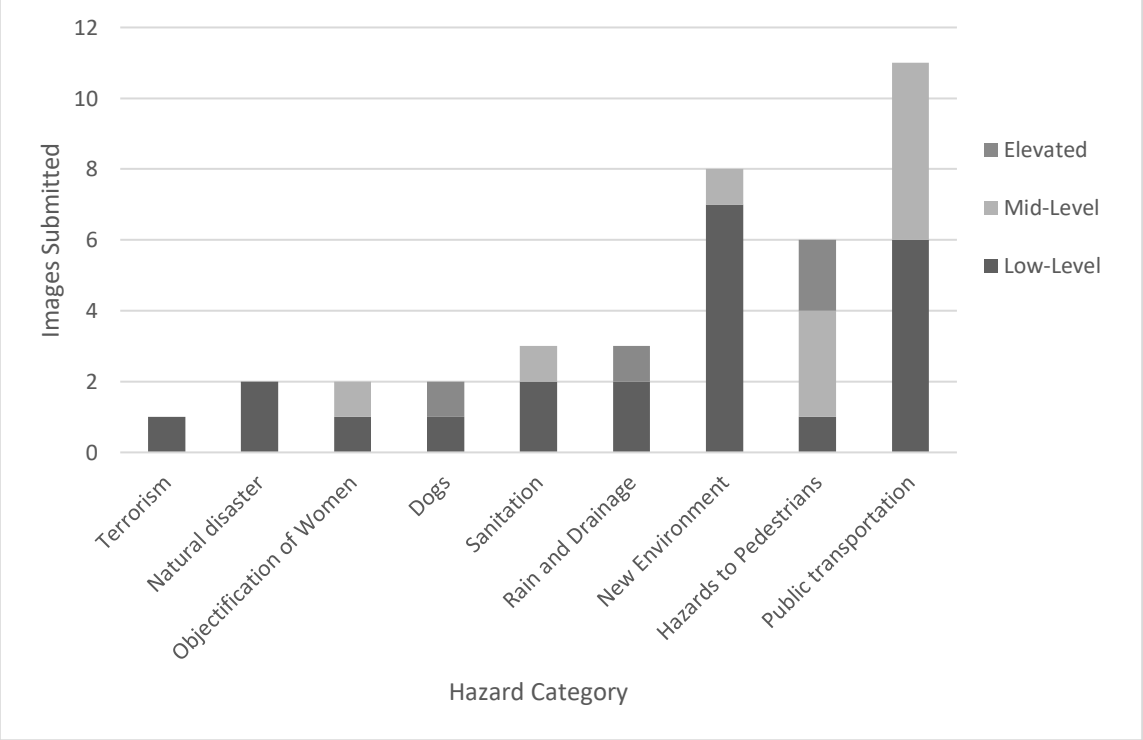
two groups was in the amount of time each group had spent in the host city. Four of the five photovoice participants had a total of two months of experience with the host city by the end of the study. In contrast, the least experienced member of the focus group participants had been onsite for over six months.

3.5.2. Theoretical Model

Under the central theoretical concept of "Adapting to a new environment," two categories emerged as significant: "Hazards" and "Assessment of the hazards." Hazards, as a theme, were gathered from the images submitted by the photovoice participants. Assessment of the hazards was based on the focus group participants' discussion of each image. These two categories are illustrated in Figure 2 and summarized in Table 8.

Figure 2

Frequency of Hazard Categories Reported by Their Assessed Threat Levels



The risk assessment given by the focus group participants was classified based on the discussion. Photos that triggered statements like “I think [a given hazard] is one of the first actual safety concerns” and “Yes, that [hazard] is something” were classified as high risk. Photos classified as mid-level threats were typically defined by comments about how one or more of the Focus Group Participants had observed the risk from another source, making statements like this one from Nikki, “I was on the [subway], the other day. It had a video describing this exact scenario.” These contrasted with the images classified as low-level threats, which were identified primarily as personal responsibility or even as outright disagreement, such as this comment by Abigail, “Yeah, I don’t agree with that one,” or this one from Mark, “it’s definitely a different approach here in public transportation than it is in the U.S.” Likewise, images that appeared to be consistent with international standards were also classified as low-level threats.

Table 8

Hazards Ranked by Their Threat Assessment

Hazard Type	Level of Threat		
	Low-Level	Mid-Level	Higher-Level
Terrorism	• Unattended bag		
Natural Disasters	• Natural Disaster • Natural Disaster		
Objectification of women	• **Posters objectifying women**	• **Getting cat-called**	
Dogs	• Allergies		• Stray and unleashed dogs
Health and Sanitation	• Man wearing a mask • "Gross" ground • Glass on the ground	• No public trash cans	
New Environment	• No construction barriers • Low hanging wires • Uneven sidewalks • Power lines too close to trees • Low level of Spanish • Narrow passageways	• No rails on the stairs	
Hazards to Pedestrians	• Not enough time at crosswalks	• Drivers do not understand crosswalks • No crosswalks • Lack of street lighting at night	• **Men stopped talking and stared as photographer and roommate (both female) passed by** • **Pickpocketing**

Table 8 Continued

	Level of Threat		
Hazard Type	Low-Level	Mid-Level	Higher-Level
Public Transportation	• No gates at the bus station • No seatbelts on public transportation • Lights out on the subway • Lights out on the subway • Getting pushed in front of the subway • Bus doors do not fully close, and buses do not come to a complete stop	• Not all bus routes are clear • Getting caught in bus doors • Subway braking hard • Crowded and heavily policed subway station • **One woman squished among many men on the subway**	

*Texts in bold indicate that the image portrays a gender-based risk

3.5.2.1. Terrorism

One image was submitted under the theme of terrorism. Kelsey submitted an image of a bag left on a bus station bench, saying, "This picture is of an unattended bag. This type of situation can be a very serious threat in [the United States] and was something that made me question my safety." Abigail made the connection between the image and terrorism more explicit during the focus group discussion, saying, "I think, after the Boston Marathon pressure cooker explosion and stuff… As [citizens of the United States], we have more of a concern for left [unattended] bags." Despite understanding Kelsey's concern, the consensus was that, in the host country's culture, the left bag was a low-level threat. Mark explained his assessment, saying, "People know that an unattended bag means it will disappear." Brandon was quick to agree to

Mark's assessment. This is consistent with Hartjes et al. (2009), who reported the risk of "armed conflict or a terrorist attack" as a concern for study abroad students.

3.5.2.2. Natural Disasters

Two photovoice participants submitted photos that they equated to reminders of the local natural disaster concern. Both of these participants expressed a lack of real concern over the potential for a natural disaster to strike but acknowledged the potential. For example, Alyssa made the comment that she was, "Worried but not worried… We know it's a real threat, but out of sight, out of mind." Likewise, the focus group discussion revealed their lack of concern about the potential for a natural disaster based on how little was said about these two images. While the potential exists—in fact, Brandon survived the last major natural disaster to strike the city—the focus group participants were more concerned with the suspicion that Alyssa's image was caused by another natural phenomenon. The potential for natural disasters occurred more frequently than the threat of terrorism in this data set. Hartjes et al. (2009) found that participants in their study rated the threat of "armed conflict or a terrorist attack" as more likely and more worrying than a natural disaster. This difference is likely connected to the frequency of exposure, as Kelsey's photo was taken near her homestay family's home, creating regular reminders of the potential for natural disasters. In addition, Brandon, one of the leaders, occasionally discussed his experience in surviving a major natural disaster just after his arrival in the host city. Finally, Alyssa's home state shares concerns for the most common disaster in the host city. Her description used a common phrase to describe living with the uncertainty of this natural disaster.

3.5.2.3. Objectification of Women

Shaelynn submitted two images under this category that were very similar but described differently. Both images were of posters by a national makeup brand, featuring women applying makeup while traveling by subway. The caption on both posters is "*No importa como, se llega hermosa,"* which translates to "No matter how, arrive beautiful." The key difference in these two images is in the way Shaelynn described them.

I categorized the first image as a low-level threat, because it focused on the cultural impact of the advertisement, which was described as follows: "…Ads like this are not only demeaning and shattering the self image (sic.) and confidence of girls all over the world, but it's toxic to men and changes the ways in which they think it's ok to treat girls..." Unfortunately, this description was preceded by the sentence "This is what's wrong with this society." The focus group discussion centered primarily on this statement, which was described as "hateful" and "extremely critical." Despite this, Mark acknowledged that this perspective "does have implications for [safety]."

Shaelynn described how she was personally impacted by the cultural significance of the posters in the second image, saying:

> …The amount of times I've done nothing more than stand on the [subway] or simply walk down the street and have gotten cat called or looked upon as if I'm nothing more than an object to play with is absolutely disgusting. Also, not that it should matter what I'm wearing… but I've always been dressed modestly in long jeans and simple shirts, nothing 'attention seeking' at all…

Mark acknowledged that the cat calls and leering were problematic, saying, “That’s too bad… In the sense that that has to be a reality… Because, unfortunately, it is a reality of here.” Abigail also responded, saying, “The states have it, but I travel with music. Then I avoid hearing them say degrading things to me.” Abigail continued that she experienced cat calls primarily on the street, as opposed to on the subway. I acknowledged her discomfort from these encounters and Abigail’s personal experiences as the basis to classify this image as a mid-level threat.

The concerns over objectification of women did not strictly line up with previous studies. For example, Hartjes et al. (2009) asked about their participants concerns relating to “physical or sexual assault.” In their data set, this threat was ranked the highest worry, but seen as the fourth most likely. Kennedy and Flaherty (2015) listed this concern as “sexual assault and rape,” in their study on travel medicine, while the State Department (2019) listed only concerns of sexual assault on their advisory for the host country. While the concerns Shaelynn raised do not rise to these levels, her assessment of them is consistent with Hudson et al. (2012), who asserted that all forms of subjugation of women are forms of violence, which would include the objectification of women indicated in the posters, as well as the cat calling that Shaelynn and Abigail reported.

In contrast to the views of *Corredor* leadership, I would consider both of these images to be gender-based risks. The first image, then, would highlight the cultural conditions that serve as precursors to gender-based violence. The second, highlighting

cat calls and other obscenities directed toward women, would be a clear example of gender-based insecurity.

3.5.2.4. Dogs

Photovoice participants submitted two images around the theme of dogs. One of the images was of a homestay family's pet chihuahua, which triggered the photovoice participant's allergies. The second was a meme of a fluffy white dog wearing goggles, captioned "Nobody: Doggos (sic.) off leash: I am speed" (Lil Pupper, 2019).

These two images were assessed quite differently. *Corredor* asks new participants to submit wellness information in addition to their application process, to facilitate placing new participants with suitable homestay families. Jonathan immediately pulled out his phone to access electronic copies of those forms and found that the participant had not submitted her wellness form. Mark expressed his concern with the application process, saying, "We do have an issue, though, because they don't always notify us of those things… It's not always flagged for us to get [from the application], which is why we often have to send out our own [paperwork]." Mark suggested that, if the participant had submitted her form, they could have worked with her to find a homestay family without a dog. The preventability of this risk, as well as the relatively minor outcomes resulted in my classifying it as a low-level risk.

In contrast, the issue of stray and unleashed dogs addressed was deemed "a valid concern" by Abigail, and thus I classified the image as an elevated-level threat. She went on to describe a couple of stories about friends who had been attacked by dogs, saying:

> [My friend's] son had been bitten by a dog… It was really terrible…. And like, [my friend] Franco almost lost his arm one time, because of a pit bull, but he was locked away in his house, but you get close enough to the gates and they can bite through and grab stuff.

Curiously, though, stray dogs were not considered as much of a threat within the host city. Abigail went on to share that "the strays are a lot more behaved than a lot of the ones that people actually own." This statement was consistent with an experience I had the day before, described here, "I was at the [stationary store]… and I got caught in a rainstorm and [a large stray dog] just kind of wandered in, just laid down right in front of me." These comments were contrasted with stories from Brandon, who had lived in other parts of the host country where packs of stray dogs were threatening, with many dogs carrying rabies.

Again, the two risks presented here do not fit neatly into the framework presented above. While allergies may be a concern during international travel, I have not found research to support this. Likewise, dog bites, themselves, are not listed in the research, although Hartjes et al. (2009) did reference rabies and biting or stinging insects as possible causes for concern.

3.5.2.5. Health and Sanitation

I received four photos on the theme of health and sanitation. Kelsey submitted an uncaptioned image of a man wearing a mask on the subway. Shaelynn submitted two images on littering, and a final image, from Alyssa, portrayed the subway floor. Shaelynn said this about her image of trash, including broken glass, on the ground, "If

someone stepped on here, it would be so easy to get severely cut and likely catch a nasty infection, as well." Likewise, Alyssa captioned her image of the subway floor like this, "The ground is always really gross, and yet my [homestay] family won't let me take my shoes off when I come home… You never know what you could catch or what you might step in."

The focus group participants did not, initially, relate these concerns to safety and security. Jonathan outright questioned how I had phrased my prompt to the photovoice participants, asking, "What is the prompt that you gave them? Take pictures that make you feel uncomfortable?... What I remember you talking about is security and safety… So I guess I don't see how … this fits into that." Catching a preventable disease has been identified as a risk of international travel (Bryant, et al., 1991; Castelli, 2004); however, the potential impact of the hazards identified within these images were classified as low-level risks.

Kelsey's image of a man wearing a mask on the subway comes closest to the types of preventable diseases cited Castelli (2004). In contrast, Shaelynn's and Alyssa's images suggest potential causes for symptoms like the fever and diarrhea reported in Bryant et al. (1991), because these symptoms may be caused by a variety of pathogens and transmitted in a variety of ways. Shaelynn's and Alyssa's perceptions indicate that the types of understanding of health-related risks presented in research may not fully or adequately address the concerns international development workers may actually experience.

This study took place prior to the novel coronavirus pandemic, associated with the illness Covid-19, which began in December of 2019. As a result, participants did not and were not expected to report concerns related specifically to this disease. Participants did, however, report some concerns relating to the perception of poorer sanitation practices, when compared with their home country and culture.

3.5.2.6. Rain and Drainage

Three images were submitted on the theme of rain related drainage concerns. Two were similar, relating to poor drainage after normal rainstorms. Kelsey described her image here, "This one represents the poor drainage here. This makes me wary of flooding, especially since it's (sic.) rains heavily almost every day." Mark did comment that he had heard discussions about the "*encharcamientos*" or "big puddles" on the radio but did not mention either a hazard or conclusion relating to them. As a result, I classified both images as low-level risks.

Mark also submitted an image relating to rain and drainage. The image was a blurry image taken while driving in a particularly heavy rainstorm, described here, "Driving in rain with manhole [manhole emoji] covers shooting off due to overflow in sewer systems." During the focus group, Mark continued to explain the situation, saying the rain that night turned a 20-minute drive into an hour and a half. He continued:

> It was extremely unsafe… Everyone was going extremely slow, because if you went too close to that manhole… There were like for or five manhole covers that were… The water was coming out so strongly from the sewers that they were just staying in place… They were like this far off the ground. [Mark gestured to

> indicate several inches] … It was like a fire hose, you know, the way it was coming out of the sewers…. That whole stretch from the [street name] sewer, every manhole cover was like that.

Mark's assessment of the situation caused this image to be rated as elevated-level threat.

Of the three images in this section, only one links neatly to the risks laid out in Table 1. Mark's concerns relating to driving in heavy rain with poor drainage relate to the potential for motor vehicle accidents, highlighted by Wood (2017). The two images relating to puddles and lack of drainage may loosely connect to Bryant et al. (1991), if the purported bacterial contamination lead to illness, but are probably better labeled in the catch-all category, other risks, based on their minor and non-specific nature.

3.5.2.7. New Environment

Seven images were submitted that were identified as risks related to a new environment. Images in this section included an image of a construction site that, in the participant's perspective, lacked appropriate barriers. Two images depicted overhead wires that were perceived as dangerous, one due to low-hanging wires and the other due to proximity to trees. One image depicted a participant's feelings of uncertainty surrounding her low level of Spanish ability. Another image depicted a lack of railing on stairs. A final image depicted a narrow passageway on the sidewalk.

Six of these images were assessed to be low-level risks, relating to different standards. Abigail discusses her perspective, here:

> The standards and regulations here are not the same as far as construction goes... That's just not something that you see [in the United States] these days, really, or

> if you do, there's gates, there's…. precautionary measures that are taken to protect the public.

Brandon followed with a discussion of common sense gained from growing up as the son of a mortician.

One of the few incidents regarding safety reported during the 2019 *Corredor* program triggered the mid-level risk associated with one photo. Shaelynn submitted a photo depicting a lack of railings on stairs just prior to receiving a WhatsApp (2019) message from Alyssa, saying she fell down the stairs and injured her back. This triggered Brandon's response, saying, "In light of what happened to a particular participant [Alyssa] and the stairs, maybe…" This was followed by confessions of fears of falling on stairs, actually falling down sets of stairs, and Brandon's confession of falling going up stairs.

The risks reported in this section tie most closely with risks related to accidents, such as those caused by falls, reported by Hartjes et al. (2009). Many of these potential accidents seemed novel to the photovoice participants, not because the threat was any greater than their home culture, but because their home culture has adopted and enforced policies and procedures to mitigate those risks. For example, the United States Access Board (n.d.) addresses guidelines for ensuring that stairways meet current requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (2004), discussing details ranging minimum tread depths and riser heights to railing requirements; however, these requirements are "limited to places of public accommodation" and government-owned facilities. Many

requirements do not extend to private homes, except as required by state or local building codes.

3.5.2.8. Hazards to Pedestrians

Six images were submitted depicting hazards while walking around the city. Of these, three images addressed street lighting after dark, the potential for pickpocketing, and an uncomfortable experience. An additional three images addressed the theme of crosswalks.

Shaelynn submitted an image depicting a lack of street lighting, which she described as, “It’s quite difficult to get an idea of my surroundings and see other people or potential hazards.” I rated this image as a mid-level threat, in part because *Corredor* does ask all participants and leaders to follow a curfew, returning to their homestay family’s house by 9:30 each night. Brandon commented that “They did what we told them not to do,” despite being able to identify her roommate’s backpack in the photo. The non-specific nature of this image precludes clear alignment with previous research. It could provide support for the potential for falls or other injuries, reported by Hartjes et al. (2009). Alternatively, it could support any of the risks associated with crime, referenced in Table 1, as many forms of crime are committed under cover of darkness. Given that this image was submitted by a woman, I would argue that this image could be portrayed as a gender-based risk, as women often perceive themselves, and are perceived by others, to be more vulnerable when walking, either alone or in groups, after dark.

Shaelynn also submitted a staged photo of a statue attempting to pluck her cell phone from her back pocket. Even though none of the summer team members reported

pickpocketing during the program, Abigail responded to the image, saying, “I would say that this concern about pickpocketing is one of the first I’ve seen that I’m like, ‘Yes, that is something.’” Abigail later shared that her bank card had been stolen while grocery shopping, earlier in the summer. The focus group participants agreed the threat of pickpocketing was an elevated-level threat, due primarily to frequency. They also acknowledged that their oversharing related to pickpocketing may have inadvertently created paranoia among the photovoice participants. This lines up with the State Department’s (2019) assessment of the host country’s assessment of threat level, based in part on higher levels of theft compared with average data in the United States. Although thieves may target individuals of any gender for pickpocketing, women may be perceived as more vulnerable targets, making this a potentially gender-based risk.

Locki submitted only one photo as part of this study; however, her photo was significant. After an unpleasant experience, she returned to photograph a location the next day. She described her experience here, “By this wall I had to walk through a group of guys and they all went silent and stared as I walked by and I felt very unsafe.” While the photo immediately prompted stories of how Mark and Brandon recognized that their presence might be perceived as threatening, this photo came up again while wrapping up the discussion for the day. Jonathan and Abigail both returned to this image, articulating that they understood why Locki experienced the encounter as threatening. Jonathan’s response triggered the rating of elevated-level threat, saying, “I think the one with the men is one of the first actual safety concerns we’ve seen.” Despite this image’s rating as an elevated-level threat, its non-specific nature makes it difficult to link to themes in the

current research canon, although the men's presence does suggest some form of crime-related risk from Table 1 to be most likely. Again, a gendered lens would label this a gender-based risk, given that the male gaze was perceived as threatening by the female participant and her female roommate.

3.5.2.8.1. Crosswalks

Alyssa submitted a series of three photos on her experiences with crosswalks in the host city. This series focuses the risk of accidents involving collisions between motor vehicles and pedestrians, highlighted by Wood (2017). Alyssa described the first image, here, "I was looking down to jump this huge puddle and I didn't see that the time to cross the street had run out." This was considered a low-level risk. Abigail describes her assessment of the incident, here, "So that was their fault. That wasn't (sic.) actually something that was a danger to them. That was just them not watching." This assessment will contrast sharply with the following two images.

Alyssa's second image depicted the street surrounding a national monument. This photo is described here, "There are no crosswalks to reach the [national monument], so we just had to run for it." The Focus group participants were more sympathetic to this photo, making comments like "There's no safe passage," and referencing the classic arcade game Frogger (Konami, 1981).

These sentiments played into the response to Alyssa's third image on crosswalks, described here:

> Crosswalks usually exist, but I don't think drivers are aware of that… your only hope in some streets is that a nice driver will stop and let you cross or you

acquire a large enough group that the drivers are intimidated and scared to hit you.

Brandon confirmed Alyssa's assertion by sharing his recollections of a news report on the topic with the focus group, here, "They went around and in [the host city] and they're interviewing people about those, the *zebras,* the zebra lines on the street. What do they mean? And stuff, and like, almost nobody knew that they're actually crosswalks." The confirmation of these two concerns led to their rating as a mid-level threat.

3.5.2.9. Public Transportation

I received eleven images under the theme public transportation. These images represented hazards ranging from a lack of gates at bus and subway stations to heavily policed crowds at a subway station. I classified these images as low-level or mid-level threats.

3.5.2.9.1. Low-Level Threats

I rated six of the eleven images as low-level threats, related primarily to the standard operating conditions of public transportation. For example, Shaelynn submitted photos of both a bus station and a subway station, commenting that there were no gates or rails to prevent accidental falls when the bus or subway was not present. With a few exceptions, such as airport trams and rollercoasters, the concerns reported were consistent with international standards. The same logic was applied to an image depicting a lack of seatbelts on all public transportation and two images depicting subways powering down, briefly, to allow trains to change tracks at the end of the line.

Of these, one did cause focus group participants to acknowledge their own fears. Shaelynn's image of the subway station was accompanied by the statement, "I could easily see this being a murder location on [the popular television show NCIS] because it's so readily accessible and easy to make pushing someone look like an accident in a crowd." Brandon acknowledged his concern, saying, "I'm not gonna (sic.) lie, though. It's a fear literally every time I'm in the [subway]. I'm like, 'Man, someone's gonna (sic.) push me. But it's just stupid, like, no one's gonna (sic.) push me." Abigail shared his fear, responding "I always just have my power stance ready, with one foot in front and one foot in the back, because I also think about this all the time, too. I watch Law & Order." Mark provided some contextual information on the topic, saying:

> Suicide, yes. I've been in stations that they've shut down because someone just jumped or something, which is terrible…. But…. As crazy as people get sometimes, it's rare that you hear a report about someone pushing someone else in, here. It's very rare. It's extremely rare.

Mark's contextual explanation was sufficient to leave this issue as a low-level threat. It was also consistent with Lin and Gill's (2009) study of subway fatalities in New York City. Of the 211 deaths studied, between 2003 and 2007, only four were ruled to be homicide, two of which involved pushing the victim into the path of an oncoming subway train.

One other image addressed a relatively more local concern. Shaelynn submitted an image of an open bus door, while the bus was in motion. Although this would not be considered safe in the United States, this practice is common in the host country. Focus

group participants discussed how the open doors are preferable, making comments like "I love [standing in the open bus door]!" and Abigail's comment, "I love that, too! I get a nice breeze, and my hair is like waiving!" Mark summarized the conversation, saying: "It's definitely a different approach here in public transportation than it is in the U.S."

3.5.2.9.2. Mid-Level Threats

While the low-level threats were relatively consistent, mid-level threats were more varied. For example, one image depicted the "ruthless" doors on the subway and some buses. Another discussed hard or unexpected stops on the subway. Crowded subways and stations were the focus of two more images. A highly complex bus system rounded out the images for this category and threat level. Based on the personal experience of focus group participants or corroboration from outside sources, I considered these threats to be mid-level threats.

Public transportation may be confusing to newcomers to a city. The megacity in question, for example, has at least five different types of buses, each with its own challenges. Alyssa highlighted the challenge of navigating with the medium-sized busses that often run between the city's neighborhoods, saying:

> [These buses] worry me a bit. The city trains and buses are available on Google Maps and the [subway app], but these are unofficial and unmapped (as far as I can tell). It seems to me that the only way you can figure them out is if you know your way around an area.

The buses in question display placards in the windshields, indicating streets and major landmarks the bus passes; however, even Mark, with his fourteen years of experience,

was quick to jump in and say, “Yeah, it’s easy to get mixed up on these. Especially at the beginning. But it’s also easy later if you get on the wrong one.” He then described a trip where he had been instructed to take one of these buses, highlighting some of the more curious directions he received, like “Get off when you see the sunset,” for a morning visit.

Another class of buses was highlighted in an image Alyssa submitted, which she describes here, “The doors on the [largest buses] are RUTHLESS (emphasis in original). My [friend’s] bag got caught halfway when we got on, and we couldn’t pull it in until the doors opened at the next stop.” Nikki was quick to respond, “You can lose your belongings that way.” Mark extended the concern to the subway, saying, “It happens in the [subway], too. I was in there. This guy got stuck, and the other guys are trying to pry open the door so he could get in.” Brandon followed with a personal story of a friend prying open the subway doors to help a woman who had gotten stuck.

Alyssa then turned toward the subway, with her photo describing an uncomfortable experience, here, “When the [subway] drivers brake too hard, I slide into the next person over (sometimes across multiple empty seats).” While this image first was labeled an exaggeration, Nikki quickly shared about a public service announcement she had seen on the subject, saying:

> So, the [newest] line has the TVs with the videos, right. So, I was on the [newest] line, the other day. It had a video describing this exact scenario…. Where you hold onto the pole. Everybody was holding and there’s this guy that doesn’t and flies… It’s not uncommon.

Public transportation can get crowded at times. The last two images looked at crowds on the subway and in the subway stations. Mark submitted an image captioned, "One woman squished among many men." During the focus group session, Mark continued to explain that being in the woman's position is "not the most pleasant place to be." Based on his male gaze, Mark then argued that she appeared to be traveling with one of the men in the photo. Abigail further elaborated, saying, "They're not just, like, they're squishing. They're always looking, too, like vultures." Abigail highlights the highly gendered concern portrayed here. I added to the gendered challenge, asking "Where are their hands?" of the men in the photo. Crowded subways have been known to provide cover for certain types of harassment of women, ranging from objectifying gazes, like Abigail mentions, to sexual assault, such as the one I experienced, which triggered this study. One Latin American city sought to reduce gender-based violence by implementing women-only sections on public transportation, although Dunkel Graglia (2016) argued that, without cultural change, these measures are insufficient to reduce gender-based violence.

Finally, Kelsey submitted a photo of a crowded subway station, as she and her roommate were at an interchange station, moving between subway lines when they encountered a large crowd. She describes it, here:

> This was the second time this happened to [my roommate] and I (sic.) and the first time it was backed up wayyyy (sic.) more and not moving at all and we suspected that there was some sort of crime due to the heavy police presence… That made us SUPER (emphasis in original) uncomfortable! One, not knowing

> what wa (sic.) going on, two feeling like a sitting duck in a huge crowd of people.

Kelsey went on to discuss how they coped with the situation by backtracking and taking a different interchange to the correct line. The focus group discussed fighting as one possibility, which would have explained both the crowds and the increased police presence, which could correlate with a crime related risk from Table 1.

3.6. Conclusion

One of the challenges of safety and security research is the difficulty in classifying threats. For example, Shaelynn's image depicting an open bus door while the bus was in motion is both an image of relating to changing cultural contexts. Likewise, many incidents that make individuals feel unsafe are legitimately perceived as threatening, even though the specific threat cannot be clearly named, This was observed in Locki's image of the wall where she and her roommate passed through a group of men who stopped talking as they walked through.

Despite the challenges, a pattern emerged. Of the 38 images submitted, 17 (44%) depicted hazards specific to navigating the city via public transportation or as a pedestrian. An additional twelve images (31%) may not address moving about the city, specifically, but the chances of encountering those hazards increase as one navigates the city, including images like those relating to sanitation and drainage. Understanding that international development workers face the greatest number and variety of threats while navigating the city or between destinations is critical to designing effective safety and security measures and training.

One major contributing factor to the hazards reported related to the loss of contextual safety tools they were accustomed to in their home culture. Barriers at construction sites and railings on stairways stand out as key examples of this phenomenon. The focus group participants demonstrated how these concerns can become a new normal. Even Nikki, who arrived just six months before all the photovoice participants but Mark, had become accustomed to many of these concerns.

The challenge that comes with adapting to these concerns is the tendency to trivialize or belittle these kinds of experiences. While well-intentioned, only Mark, with his fourteen years of experience training new international development workers, refrained. This tendency has two major implications for practice. One implication arises out of the tendency to neglect trivial concerns, which may result in neglecting to share needed information. For example, Shaelynn submitted a photo of a hole in the sidewalk, which was trivialized for being too small to cause the kinds of concerns Shaelynn mentioned. Neglecting to address uneven walkways may result in neglecting to address first aid issues like dealing with sprains. The second implication concerns relationships and organizational culture. In the event that a newer participant or employee was to raise one of these concerns, brushing it off or trivializing it could affect the relationship between the two individuals. Over time, this has the potential to create a negative organizational culture, where new participants or employees feel unwelcome or unable to access help, if needed.

A second theme that emerged was that of gender-based risks, which intersected with several other risk classifications, including public transportation, risks to

pedestrians, and the objectification of women. The women in this study repeatedly reported feeling vulnerable in gendered situations. Even Mark, the director, through his male gaze, identified the gender-based risk associated with crowded subway trains. In that case, Alyssa commented to me that the threat was "young, able-bodied men."

Two other concerns came up, relative to the literature. One was related to mental health, which is covered in the literature. The second, animals, is alluded to, but rarely covered in depth.

Doki et al. (2018) explored stress and mental health while working abroad and Bathke and Kim (2009) looked at study abroad and mental health. Despite differing populations, both reported increased mental health concerns while abroad. Depending on the severity of concern, this could pose a safety threat, particularly in the sometimes-stressful conditions of international development. Despite this reality, none of the participants, either in the photovoice group or the focus group, reported concerns tied to mental health.

This finding related to mental health could be unique to this study, given the small sample size. The first night of the *Corredor* summer program, one of the photovoice participants mentioned to the group that she struggled with severe anxiety, rarely leaving her home, prior to her time with *Corredor* (Locki, personal communication, June 12, 2019). Although she struggled early in the summer with anxiety, she seemed to thrive with the structure of her homestay family, service placement, and *Corredor* activities. I followed up with her near the end of the summer and she described her mental health to me in conversation as improving, specifically

relating to her social wellness, which she described as “Quite blossoming” (Locki, personal communication, July 30, 2019).

Animal-related concerns, specifically bites and allergies, seldom appear in the literature, except in terms of animal-born illnesses, like rabies. In this data set, two different participants submitted photos of animals as threats, including one of which achieved an elevated threat level ranking. Within international development, the risk due to animals cannot be ignored, but it is also context specific. Even within this data set, Brandon indicated differences between the megacity and rural contexts in the host country.

3.7. Implications

From an adult learning perspective, adult educators must have an awareness of the types of concerns new international development workers are experiencing. This awareness is essential to providing empathetic and relevant training. Instructional designers who are aware of and acknowledge the unique threats that stand out to new participants will be able to develop targeted training modules that address the kinds of concerns most relevant to new arrivals. Specifically, instructional designers for international development programs must be aware of and teach women to address the specific risks associated with gender-based violence. This material must be specifically tailored to the gender-based risks of the host country.

Given the differences between the perspectives of the photovoice participants and the focus group participants, this study also suggests that training methods and topics should change over the duration of an individual’s participation with the

organization. This will allow program leaders to target participants' increased comfort and confidence in navigating the city, as well as their increased awareness of local concerns over time.

Leaders must also take care not to trivialize or belittle the not-yet-normalized structural changes in safety and security of new arrivals. Doing so is both a mistake and a missed learning opportunity. Being too quick to dismiss another's concerns can inhibit relationship building and models dismissiveness toward future new arrivals. Dismissing a concern models that local conditions are not worth learning about, while responding with acceptance, asking questions, and assisting in the learning process models openness and willingness to learn and adapt to the local context, while strengthening the relationship.

3.8. Recommendations

Future research should focus on tracking international development training program participants over a longer timeframe. While two months provided a depth of engagement with the participants in this study that prompted rapport, longer-term engagement is likely to better depict how an individual's concerns change over time.

To facilitate mental health awareness, future studies should balance the perception of threats with encouraging participants to document things that increase their sense of safety and security. In addition to the mental health benefits, this will likely work to counteract the negative perspective of identifying threats. It may also leave participants with a more positive perception of their host country and culture.

The absence of reported mental health concerns among early career international development workers is significant. It may suggest that participants do not link their mental health with their perceptions of safety and security. Alternatively, it could suggest that the excitement of experiencing a new place may obscure the real impacts of mental health on safety and security. Additional research should explore the concept of mental health among international development workers, specifically as it relates to their perceptions of safety and security.

Additionally, the concept of gender-based risks must be further explored within other international development contexts. Hudson et al. (2012) ranked every country in the world on a five-point scale, ranging from zero, or "Women are physically secure," to four, "Women lack physical security," based on a multitude of factors. It can be expected, then, that countries ranked two, "Women have medium levels of physical security," such as the United States; would differ from those ranked three, "Women have low levels of physical security," as in the host country; would further differ from countries ranked four, "Women lack physical security." Likewise, countries that share a ranking, of two, for example, may have achieved that ranking through different combinations of factors, requiring each country's risks to be assessed individually.

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4. RETURNED INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKERS: A GROUNDED THEORY OF SAFETY AND SECURITY INCIDENTS

The potential for traumatic experiences while working in international development has long been underreported. Fast (2010) highlighted the lack of a framework for considering how to think about and address the risks of international development work.

Roth (2015) connected aid work with Lyng's (2005) concept of edgework, the decision to enter voluntarily into a situation that has the clear potential to be hazardous to one's physical, mental, or emotional health. Despite Roth's (2015) assertion that aid work involves knowingly taking on risk, Roth acknowledged that different types of work embrace different levels of risk and ranked organizations that encourage workers to live independently on the lower-risk end of a risk spectrum. In addition, Roth (2015) acknowledged that workers select locations of service, at least in part, based on the degree of risk involved. For younger, single adults, Roth (2015) asserted that their lack of social ties and responsibilities increases their likelihood of selecting locations with greater risk, although this neglects the pressures of parents toward less risky environments.

One organization introducing men and women to the field of international development is *Corredor* (a pseudonym), a small development program located in a Latin American megacity. *Corredor* is a faith-based agency that employs immersion-style language learning, service learning through internships with local organizations,

and homestays with local families to give participants a fully immersive experience in international development. Participants can select a summer, one-year, or two-year term of service. Because increased time in the field increases the potential exposure to safety or security concerns, participants with longer lengths of service will be over-represented in this study.

Note that *Corredor* is a small organization, serving approximately 10 to 15 young adults at a time. Given the small numbers of participants, I have taken significant steps to protect participants' identities. I refer to the organization and all participants by pseudonyms. I refer to the location only as "a Latin-American megacity." To further increase anonymity of participants, I replace major events with descriptive phrases. Finally, I remove uniquely identifying features of the city or replace them with descriptors.

4.1. Theoretical Overview

Safety and security for international development workers is a field that continues to lack centralizing theories. As a result, I identified underpinning theoretical constructs from sources outside the international development literature, specifically from the field of gender and national security. The core theoretical construct underpinning this study is that of Hudson, et al. (2012) and their theory of the Patrilineal/Patrilocal Syndrome (the Syndrome), which contends that the comparative distribution of resources within the household, specifically by gender, are a training ground for national political structures. Thus, according to the Syndrome, more gender-equitable cultures are more likely to be democratic, while gender-inequitable cultures are

more autocratic in nature. The Syndrome is built on the perspective that all forms of discrimination between genders are forms of violence, most often against women (Hudson, et al., 2012).

The Syndrome is of interest to international development work because nations scoring highly on Syndrome scales are associated with the kinds of negative outcomes that attract development work. Little work exists to track or theorize upon the experiences of women who leave one cultural context, with its unique Syndrome score and cultural issues, to live and work in another cultural context, with a different Syndrome score and underlying cultural issues.

4.2. Purpose

The purpose of this study was to assess the application of Hudson's et al. (2012) patrilineal/patrilocal syndrome to women who leave one cultural context to live and work in another, each with its unique Syndrome score and cultural issues. A secondary purpose of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of *Corredor*'s training program, looking specifically for gaps in safety and security training. To achieve this purpose, I collected the stories of returned *Corredor* participants who had experienced some form of threat to their wellbeing.

4.3. Research Question

The research question for this study was: What are the safety and security concerns experienced by returned *Corredor* participants? This study was evaluation research regarding the training participants received through *Corredor*.

4.4. Statement of Positionality

I am a white female in my early 30s. For this study, several other of my core identities are relevant to my experience as a researcher. These identities include that of a graduate student of international agricultural development and leadership and my experiences as a participant in the *Corredor* program, and as a sexual assault survivor. This study allows me to hold simultaneously *emic* and *etic* perspectives on the stories presented in this research. I hold the *emic* perspective of having participated in *Corredor* and having experienced sexual trauma and the *etic* perspective of not having significant personal relationships with the participants.

As a graduate student and researcher, I approach research with the dual lenses of pragmatism and constructivism. My experiences with international development in a Latin American context have given me the pragmatic perspective of learning to make do with available materials, because supplies and opportunities are often limited. The pragmatic approach lends itself to the flexibility required of international development work, because so much remains beyond the worker's or researcher's control. This perspective enables me to select research methods and techniques most appropriate to the research question.

I also believe that researchers and participants work together to co-construct data, particularly when the researcher shares identities and experiences with participants. This interactive approach to research is a constructivist approach, highlighted by Charmaz (2006). This approach facilitates the exploration of biases, attitudes, assumptions, and interests I bring to this study as researcher and co-constructor of data. Charmaz's (2006)

approach to grounded theory facilitates the examination of and incorporation of my own experience in its interaction with data for this study.

I knew I shared the identity of returned *Corredor* participants as I developed this study, which gave me an *emic* perspective. To distance myself from the stories in this research, I deliberately sought out participants who did not overlap with either my time as a *Corredor* participant or as a researcher when I returned to *Corredor* to conduct research in the summer of 2019.

Despite my best efforts, I was not completely successful in achieving the desired social distance. One participant and I met briefly at a *Corredor* event in 2019 during her return visit. Another participant and I met during my first summer with *Corredor,* in 2009. In the intervening years, the latter and her husband have returned to *Corredor* as staff members and currently serve as directors of a similar program in Europe.

I also knew I was bringing the identity of sexual assault survivor to this discussion. I did not anticipate the degree of salience this identity would bring to this study. During my year with *Corredor,* my team was uniquely afflicted by sexual violence. Four months into my time, a teammate was sexually assaulted by a member of her homestay family, which resulted in her return to the United States. Several months later, I was sexually assaulted on my way to a *Corredor* event. Together, these experiences were instrumental in my doctoral education, serving as a motivating force and the inspiration of my research question.

These shared experiences proved significant, as two of the three participants indicated interest in my experiences with *Corredor* and sexual assault. My experience

facilitated a deeper rapport with my participants, which is evinced by the continuation of conversations for 30 to 60 minutes beyond the interviews with two participants. These participants asked to hear my stories and asked about my opinions on matters of faith surrounding safety and security issues.

4.5. Participants

4.5.1. Recruitment

This study was conducted as part of a larger evaluation research project conducted at the request of *Corredor* leadership, i.e., the director and staff, who also served as gatekeepers for the community of current and past *Corredor* participants. For this study, I asked *Corredor* leadership to provide a list of email addresses for participants who had previously experienced some form of safety and security threat. To minimize overlap with my personal contacts with *Corredor*, I recruited past participants who had participated in *Corredor* within a five-year period from 2014 through May 2019.

The recruitment process involved a series of three invitations emailed to potential participants over a period of three months. Participants received a brief description of the study and an information sheet, in compliance with institutional review board policies.

4.5.2. Sampling

A purposive sample of 12 returned *Corredor* participant email addresses was provided by *Corredor* leadership. I invited all 12 *Corredor* participants to participate in the study. Four individuals responded to my request. A summary of their demographics can be found in Table 9.

Table 9

Corredor Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Age as *Corredor* participant	Gender	Hispanic Identifying	Ethnicity	Years of Service	Incidents Reported
Michelle	24	Female	No	White	1	3
Erin	26	Female	No	White	2	3
Reagan	18	Female	No	White	1	4
Jenna	26	Female	No	White	5.5	1

4.5.3. Screening

Participants were asked two screening questions, one to verify participation in *Corredor*, and a second to verify that the individual experienced some form of safety or security threat. All four respondents identified in Table 1 were screened into the survey.

4.6. Methods

4.6.1. Data Collection

Data for this study was collected using telephone interviews. Telephone interviews were selected based on the dispersed nature of returned *Corredor* participants. Participants were given the opportunity to select a date and time convenient to their schedules for the interviews. Interviews ranged in length from 35 to 75 minutes.

4.6.2. Procedures

Prior to the interview, I gave participants a short introduction to the study, followed by requests for consent to participate and to record the interview. Interviews were recorded and transcribed utilizing Otter Voice Notes (2019), a free smartphone application. I reviewed transcripts for accuracy. The interview protocol is presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Interview Protocol

Introduction:
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. You should have received an information sheet detailing the information to be collected as part of this interview. Please be advised that, other than your name, email address, and phone number, the only other identifiable information you will be asked to provide will include your age, gender, race and/or ethnicity, and dates of participation with *Corredor*. Please be advised that any published data will be published under a pseudonym and identifying features will be removed.
1. Did you receive the information sheet?
2. Have you had a chance to read through the information sheet provided?
3. Do you agree to participate in this interview?
Demographic Questions:
4. What is your current age?
5. What gender do you most identify with?
6. Do you consider yourself Hispanic?
7. What race or ethnicity do you most identify with?
***Corredor* Participation:**
8. Have you participated in the *Corredor* program?
9. Which *Corredor* programs have you participated in?
10. What year(s) did you participate?
11. What was your age at the start of your first participation with the *Corredor* program?
Training Received:
12. What do you remember about the training you received on public transportation during the *Corredor* program?
13. What do you remember about the training you received on interacting with your host family?
14. What do you remember about the training you received on interacting with your service placement site and coworkers?
15. What do you remember about the training you received on personal safety?
16. What were the primary risks you felt were most highly emphasized in *Corredor*?

Table 10 Continued

Training Session Evaluations:
17. Do you remember attending any of the following training sessions? • Men Talk/Women Talk • Roommate Talk • Money Talk • Dress Skit • Transportation Skit • Roommate/I Don't have a Roommate Skits • Family Skit
18. Which training session was most useful to your experience with the *Corredor* program? (Selected from list in question 17.)
19. Why did you select that session?
20. Which training session do you wish you had paid more attention to? (Selected from the list in question 17.)
21. Why?
22. Regarding personal safety, what information do you wish had been presented during the training sessions? (May include information covered insufficiently.)
Team Experiences of Violence and Harassment:
23. During your time with *Corredor*, are you aware of any members of your team who experienced any form of violence or harassment? If yes: • How many incidents are you aware of? • Is one or more of those incidents your own?
Personal Experiences of Violence and/or Harassment:
24. Did you personally experience any incidents of harassment or violence?
25. If you are willing, would you share a little about the incident(s) you experienced?
26. Tell me about your decisions regarding who you shared this incident with.
27. Did you choose to tell one or more specific individuals with *Corredor*? Why?
28. Did you specifically choose not to tell one or more individuals with *Corredor*? Why?
29. Now that some time has passed, would you choose to share about this incident differently?

After completing each interview and phone call, I recorded a verbal memo using Otter Voice Notes (2019). These memos facilitated reflection on the conversation with

each participant and her story. They also served as an opportunity for me, as the researcher, to reflect on and evaluate the experience using the interview protocol or my interview technique.

4.7. Data Analysis

A grounded theory approach was selected for data analysis. Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory approach was selected based on its assumption of data as co-created by the participants and the researcher. Charmaz's (2006) grounded theory approach utilizes three phases of coding: initial, focused, and theoretical coding.

Interviews and memos were coded utilizing NVivo 12 Plus (QSR International, 2019). In the first stage of data analysis, the initial coding, data from the interviews and memos was coded thought-by-thought, utilizing NVivo 12 Plus's "Code in vivo" feature, to create word-for-word codes from the text (QSR International, 2019). These codes were then loosely organized by section of the interview, following the section headings in Table 10. Codes relating to specific incidents identified by participants were connected to facilitate further coding. During the initial coding, three memos were created. I used these memos to explore topics such as ideas for coding future data, personal reflections on coding sexual assault data as a survivor, and initial thoughts on categories observed and how those categories interacted with one another.

In the second stage of data analysis, focused coding, in vivo codes created during initial coding were collapsed into categories. To accomplish this, I compared the codes using the constant comparative method to identify commonalities between the codes. Thus, similar codes were collapsed into larger categories. Large categories were further

described using memos. I collapsed related smaller categories that were into increasingly complex larger categories.

During the third and final stage of data analysis, theoretical coding, the categories developed in focused coding were organized based on their relationships to one another, creating a model. I described this model by creating a central theoretical concept, which united all the categories and their relationships to one another.

In practice, theoretical coding involved identifying and labeling the two largest categories in the data set, then arranging the categories within each in a logical way. As the model solidified, I identified the process being described and named the central theoretical concept, i.e., the category that united the model. The theoretical model I derived is presented in Figure 3 below.

4.8. Results

Prior to introducing results and theory that emerged from my grounded theory approach, let me introduce the four participants in this study, in no order. Erin served for two years, during which she worked with several projects, including two organizations working with women in the commercial sex industry, a community dinner, and a small international school. During her service with *Corredor*, she reported three incidents, two of harassment and a sexual assault.

Reagan, at 18 years of age, was among *Corredor*'s youngest participants. She served one year, working with the same school where Erin worked, although their tenures did not overlap. During her time, she reported four incidents, three of harassment

and one a natural disaster. Reagan was also among the few *Corredor* participants who served for a year without participating in training others.

Michelle served with *Corredor* with her husband, Nathan who was invited but elected not to participate in this study. Together, they worked with an English club serving university students. Michelle's service overlapped with Reagan's; thus, she and Nathan also experienced the natural disaster. Michelle reported two incidents, one of sexual assault and an incident of insecurity with their homestay family.

Jenna's service with *Corredor* was intermittent over several years. During her first year, she and her husband served with a faith-based organization. During that year, she experienced the theft of a cell phone. Jenna and her family returned to *Corredor* twice more to work with the leadership team. She and her husband now direct a similar program in Europe. I want to share two notes on Jenna's interview. First, she referred to her experience as, "The incident that [the director] is probably thinking about…" This suggested that other incidents may exist. Additionally, Jenna elected not to talk about the incident with some people, here:

> When I was a leader that following summer, I didn't choose to tell my students…. It's not really wise… It's just kind of fear engendering to share all your stories… It's wise to help people stay safe, but you don't need to burden them with all the, 'And this happened to me, and this…' Be wise about how you share your personal experiences.

Given Jenna's extensive experience with *Corredor,* her leadership roles may have influenced her reporting of incidents in the interview.

4.8.1. Central Theoretical Concept

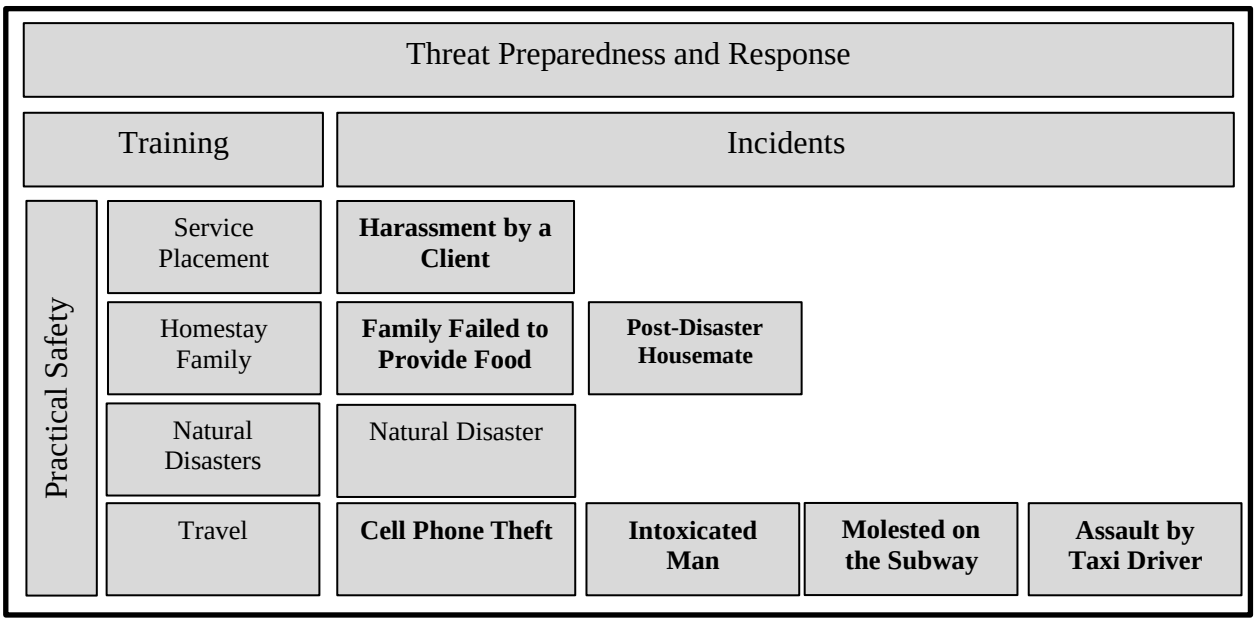
The central theoretical concept unites all the elements of the grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). The central theoretical concept identified during theoretical coding is Threat Preparedness and Response. This concept was selected as central to the grounded theory developed to unite the training participants received with the safety and security incidents they reported.

4.8.2. Theoretical Model

Under the central theoretical concept of Threat Preparedness and Response, a theoretical model was created using the categories identified in the focused and theoretical coding stages. Theoretical coding identified two key stages: Training and Incidents. Selected elements of the model are depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Theoretical Model of Threat Preparedness and Response



*Incidents in bold were gender-based

The categories identified in the second stage, focused coding, were arranged under the central theoretical concept, Threat Preparedness and Response, in two key phases. The first phase is Training, because *Corredor* participants receive an initial orientation and training session during their first few days in the megacity. Although Training continues throughout the duration of a participant's time with *Corredor*, all the reported safety and security incidents occurred after an initial training session. The second phase is the Incidents phase, during which participants are engaging with their homestay families and service placements, as well as moving about the city.

4.8.2.1. Training Phase

During the Training Phase, participants reported receiving "Practical Safety" training. This code originated from Michelle's description of her safety and security

training as “mostly practical safety things.” Safety recommendations included themes like using public transportation, sharing their locations via their cell phones, and abiding by a curfew of 9:30 PM. This concept of practicality will be visible throughout the following categories of training. Although these concepts were presented as gender-neutral, participants routinely made comments indicating that, in practice, these recommendations applied differently to female *Corredor* participants than to their male counterparts.

Although the participants in this study recalled attending, and giving, additional training by gender, referred to in the interview protocol as the Men Talk/Women Talk, this training was never referenced in regard to safety and security. Based on my experience and familiarity with the *Corredor* program, both men and women are instructed to avoid the appearance of unintentional relationships by avoiding spending too much time alone or being overly friendly with an individual of another gender.

Beyond this point, the two talks diverge rapidly. Men are instructed to “shield” women from unwanted encounters with men on public transportation and to otherwise display chivalrous behavior, such as walking between a woman and the street. While women are also instructed to “shield” each other from unwanted encounters, the primary focus of this talk has, historically, been one of protecting the woman’s reputation through excessively modest behavior in the homestay family home. Instructions focus on modesty while changing, if sharing a room with host siblings, and on managing feminine hygiene products. This focus came about because tampons and birth control, products acceptable for use in the United States, are unacceptable for respectable, single women

in the host country's culture. This perception is heightened in more conservative, faith-based communities, such as those *Corredor* works with most often. While preserving one's reputation is important for international development workers, the lack of attention to gender-based risks may place participants at greater risk.

4.8.2.1.1. Service Placement Training

As discussed above, participants described the service placement sites as varied, with up to four different service placements. The different service placement sites and their unique training and safety and security concerns required *Corredor*'s training to be generalized. Michelle explained it as follows:

> I don't know if [*Corredor*] specifically trained us on [the specifics of] what to do. Like, our ministry partners definitely trained us on that… [Within *Corredor*] it was repeated a lot… Kind of avoid being… the White savior, and really be listening and following the [service placement] leadership, and just serving in any way we could. So, it was just kind of general advice because we all had different ministries.

Jenna described her training very similarly to Michelle, saying:

> I remember seeing [service placement leadership] as our general leaders, and even though they might do things differently than us, or I don't understand why they would do certain things, to attempt to do things their way versus try to come in with all my different ideas or try to do things my way, and come in as a learner, basically… and to try and jump in, wherever possible and participate as much as possible.

Based on these descriptions, two concepts are apparent in their training. The first is the concept of following local leadership. The second is the concept of participation.

4.8.2.1.2. Homestay Family Training

Corredor's model includes participants living with homestay families for the duration of their service. Thus, training on living with a culturally different family is central to their training protocol. Much of this training centers on cultural differences. Reagan gives an example of "cultural sensitivity":

> They were… explaining to us that in [country] … everything is very… family oriented, so people spend a lot of time together, and it's not really normal to… close yourself off, like, in your own room, which I guess is what Westerners do…. They made a point of telling us to like spend time with our family and to… be aware of if we're sending signals like we hate people, because it just gets misinterpreted.

Reagan highlights the cultural value of family here. On the surface, it does not appear to be tied to the participant's safety or security.

Jenna helps us look a little deeper at the significance of adapting to the homestay family's culture and building relationships with them, saying, "It's important to… come under [the homestay family's] wing and follow their advice, especially in regards to things that don't always seem normal to you regarding safety, etc., because they have a better understanding of the culture, climate, etc." In a megacity context, homestay families may live in different neighborhoods that reflect different socioeconomic contexts. While *Corredor* can address general safety and security knowledge, the

homestay family is most equipped to provide specific knowledge about neighborhood conditions.

Another aspect of training around homestay families involves the participants' expectations of their homestay families. Erin talks about how "They're going to act like… they raised you from the… ground up." Likewise, Michelle talks about how "host moms should be really loving and caring." While varying from cultural norms is not necessarily problematic, these norms may serve as indicators of healthy families.

4.8.2.1.3. Natural Disaster Training

Within this study, one concept appeared consistently but without as much depth as the others. Jenna says, "I remember giving and receiving information about… natural disasters." Two participants in this study reported that they experienced a natural disaster shortly after a natural disaster training event. Reagan discussed how "all the [*Corredor* participants] just happened to be together that day [when the natural disaster occurred]." I have confirmed this specific training event with the *Corredor* director.

4.8.2.1.4. Travel Training

Perhaps the most extensive training relating explicitly to the *Corredor* participant's safety and security relates to travel. Jenna discusses different forms of transportation, saying, "I remember… training about general basics of how to use public transportation, specifically since… there are different forms of transportation in [the city], Metro, micro (bus), taxi, etc." Naturally, these diverse forms of transportation require some training. Reagan discusses how, "a few people took, like, the Metro or the bus with me a few times. A lot of people helped me figure out where… I was going."

Erin provided a slightly different perspective, saying, “Hang on. And it’s gonna [sic.] be tight, usually in the public transportation. And you pay for the bus, some [local currency].” Most participants did not discuss the specific details of travel, relating to my *emic* perspective with *Corredor* and the host city.

Given the unknowns of traveling in a megacity, participants received some specific instructions. Michelle highlighted the training to not travel alone, if possible, saying, “They definitely encouraged us to travel together, or in pairs.” Jenna’s reflection took it a step further, saying, “Also, traveling, it’s important to try to travel in pairs whenever possible, especially as a woman to try not to be on your own.” Here, Jenna highlights the gendered risks associated with traveling in the city, where men could travel the city independently, women faced greater risks.

This care extended to the participants’ belongings, specifically purses and backpacks, technology, and carrying cash. Michelle discusses it here:

> We talked about stuff like careful with your purses and your backpacks…. Like being really careful being on your technology while walking or on the Metro, just like being aware of your surroundings, because people are always watching and that’s when they take advantage, or they’re like kind of keeping tally of what you have with you.

Erin agreed, saying, “Keep everything in the front pockets, nothing in the back pockets of your pants or coat. Keep your purse or backpack in front of you, not behind you, and things like that.” These guidelines also extended to carrying cash, as Reagan highlights:

> "It's important not to have all your money on you at once, in case you get robbed… And just keeping different, like, money… in like separate places in your backpack, so if you get robbed, it's like not as big of a deal..."

Robbery or pickpocketing, particularly during travel, was consistently identified as one of *Corredor*'s primary concerns for participants. When asked about risks that Erin highlighted this concern, here, "So definitely pickpocketing was one…. And there were some that have gotten their phones stolen."

Other travel safety recommendations focused on the use of taxis. Erin discussed her experiences here:

> Taxis there... I remember [the director] telling us… if you feel uncomfortable with a taxi or something, they usually have this documentation on the window of the car, and has their picture and everything, and you just take, take a picture of that. So just in case anything happens, I can locate them and make a complaint… We were advised not to take the [old colored] taxis, but the [new colored] taxis seemed to be a bit safer.

Jenna's experience was a bit different. She talked about taxis as follows: "Avoid taxis altogether unless they're from a base, or from a taxi service, because of risk of being kidnapped or used for your debit card." Of the forms of transportation available to *Corredor* participants, it was clear that taxis were considered among the least safe.

The proliferation of ride-sharing services was viewed positively. Participants referred to only one ride-sharing service–Uber. Michelle discussed the comparison, saying, "We talked a lot about Ubers versus taxis... Definitely feeling like Ubers were

safer. Being able to track where we were and pay on our phones and being able to share our location with people." The increased technology, specifically of location sharing and limiting of cash transactions, made Ubers feel safer. This stands in contrast to women's concerns regarding ride-share services in the United States, where companies have come under scrutiny for failure to adequately screen drivers, while targeting advertising campaigns at women, putting them at risk (e.g., Gambino, 2015).

4.8.2.2. Incidents Phase

The second stage is the Incident stage, which extends throughout the participant's time in-country. Incidents were organized in relation to the trainings described above, to facilitate the evaluation of the training participants received. This resulted in incidents relating to the service placement, the homestay family, natural disasters, and transportation.

4.8.2.2.1. Service Placement Incidents

One participant reported an incident of sexual harassment at her service placement site. Reagan describes the incident, here, "One of the [clients] at [the service placement site] was… kind of harassing me a little bit, but I kind of told him to stop…. It was like nothing like really bad, but just like things you could get away with kind of thing." She described her frustration with this client's behavior further, saying:

> The whole thing at the [service placement site] was just really aggravating because it was like, this is where I'm supposed to be, like this is my stomping grounds and you're making me feel uncomfortable, like before and after [my service activity], and *I didn't really know what to do* (emphasis added).

Not knowing how to respond compounded Reagan's frustration with the situation and motivated her to seek help.

Working in an international setting, Reagan's first instinct was to seek help from her coworkers, people who knew the man involved. She talked about that a bit, here, "I think I told some people and they're like, 'Yeah, he's kind of like that.'… I think I told [another *Corredor* participant on site] and I think I told the [service placement site director]." Reagan also discussed how she felt her choices were constrained by the man's position within the community. Because he held a position of power, she worried about impacting her career over the harassment:

> I didn't want to like, because he's a [leader in the community], right, so I don't want to be like 'this guy did this' and then ruin his career…. I wanted to be careful with that, like I don't want to… wreck his image.

Reagan's moderated response to behavior that clearly made her uncomfortable inspired questions about the extent of the harassment. Reagan responded:

> The worst he did was… He said weird things, like 'You're my favorite [worker]…" He'd, like, bring me a gift, or like the worst thing he did was he, like, gave me a shoulder rub… I could see the way that he looks at me, so I just, like, I don't feel comfortable around him in general. And then, we were in a group, and he, like, grabbed my shoulder and like massaged my shoulder, and it's just like really uncomfortable. And so, it's not like… he raped me or anything, but it's like, it just makes you uncomfortable and angry…, I mean, like, you're not going to call the cops on him for that.

The man's behavior clearly crossed lines of respect and propriety, into the territory of sexual harassment. In a cross-cultural situation, Reagan's confusion about how to respond is understandable; however, this assessment is appropriate, given that Reagan previously described her feelings toward the situation, using words like "uncomfortable" and "angry."

Reagan talked to her mother about the situation. She discussed acting on her mother's advice, here:

> She's like, 'Just tell him off.' She's like, 'Just tell him you don't want him touching you anymore," kind of thing. So, I did that, and then he literally just stopped coming to the [service placement site], and like I didn't even see him again until I left.

Finding her voice and speaking up ended Reagan's uncomfortable encounters with the man sexually harassing her

4.8.2.2.2. Homestay Family Incidents

Corredor interviews potential homestay families and evaluates their suitability, prior to placing participants in the home. Even thorough evaluations, however, may not prevent changes in a family's behavior toward participants in the family's living situation. Two incidents were reported regarding issues with the homestay family.

Reagan reported an incident in which her living situation changed, secondary to a natural disaster. A male housemate at her new living situation was sexually harassing her and making her uncomfortable. She described the incident here:

> I was in a family, and because of the [natural disaster], they didn't want to live in their apartment anymore, so we moved into, like, their great aunt's house. So I was, like, a guest in a guest's house… And there was a guy there who wasn't even, like, biologically a part of their family, but he was like their son kind of thing, and then he was just harassing me a little bit… Just always there, always… It was just really annoying.

Although Reagan's original homestay family's home had been evaluated by *Corredor*, the natural disaster resulted in damage that made the home temporarily unlivable. In the chaos of responding to the natural disaster, she ended up staying in another location that had not undergone the same evaluation for several days, until *Corredor* staff could make alternate arrangements. Ultimately, this situation was resolved by moving Reagan to another homestay family placement.

Michelle also reported an incident with her homestay family. She and her husband, Nathan, lived with a homestay family whose behavior did not line up with the expectations *Corredor* described. During her description, Michelle referenced money given to the homestay family. As part of the homestay family agreement, *Corredor* participants give the homestay families an offering of approximately $150 USD every two weeks. This money is intended to somewhat offset the cost of providing room and board, and some transportation costs for the participants during their stay. Michelle described the incident here:

> Our [homestay] family just wasn't very honest with the money we were giving them, and they had some marital problems that were going on, so Nathan and I

> just weren't really being fed, or we were kind of getting a little bit sucked into the drama. They thought the mom was cheating on the husband and had a boyfriend, and then they were selling stuff. They were just doing weird things, like financially, basically.

Over approximately eight months, the situation with this homestay family continued to deteriorate. Michelle continues:

> At first, we just kind of thought, like, our [homestay] family was struggling. We didn't realize, 'til we heard, like, people at the church asking questions, and [the *Corridor* director and his wife] started asking questions, and that's when we realized, like, 'Oh, maybe this isn't okay.'

As more people started getting involved with the situation, the difficulties became increasingly apparent, both to Michelle and Nathan, and to *Corredor* leadership.

Ultimately, another *Corredor* participant spoke up about Michelle and Nathan's situation. Michelle described it, here:

> Actually, I think another [*Corredor* participant] actually kind of said something. Nathan and I had lost like a ton of weight, and so I think that was part of it… I don't think Nathan and I honestly would have done anything, because it was like, we really loved the [homestay] family, we just would have powered through.

Positive relationships complicated Michelle and Nathan's decision to seek help.

To honor the relationship with their homestay family, Michelle and Nathan chose to find creative ways to supplement their diet. Michelle discusses their effort:

> I think we were kind of problem solving on our own, like one of the other [*Corredor* participants] was … really generous, like her [homestay] family packed her, like, an extra lunch every day, and so she would share that with us, and then we went [to the United States] in June, and brought back, like, some meals with us, like snacks and stuff, to kind of tide us over.

This effort, on their part, may have impacted *Corredor* decisions regarding the family.

The *Corredor* director's initial decision was to work things out between the homestay family and Michelle and Nathan. Michelle discusses it, here:

> [The *Corredor* director] was able to problem solve, like they gave us extra food money, and encouraged us not to give our [homestay] family as much money. And [the director] did a lot of that, talking with our [homestay] family, of like, 'Well, they're, you know, they're going to pay a little bit less, every month.'

Ultimately, however, the decision was made to move Michelle and Nathan to a new homestay family. Michelle described herself as "disappointed," over the "bittersweet" and "awkward" end to that experience.

4.8.2.2.3. Natural Disaster Incidents

As mentioned above, Reagan's and Michelle's participation with *Corredor* coincided with a major natural disaster that hit the megacity. Michelle described the natural disaster as follows:

> We were there during the year of the [natural disaster], and I would say… the [natural disaster] itself was scary, but also, like, a lot of our [service placement] partners and those families were really nervous about our safety afterwards,

> because, like, people were just doing really awful things, that week. There was a lot of fast and, just, really scary things that were happening…. I remember being kind of nervous because everyone else was really nervous… Like, people were just really on edge.

Michelle described a sense of anxiety in response to the disaster, which seems to rise out of the traumatic experience of the city.

Reagan describes her experience with the natural disaster as a more prolonged experience, here:

> I only felt like, like I cared about it way more than other people did, like I felt like it, like maybe psychologically, it like really had a bad effect on me, and like I was just really worried all the time, kind of thing.

Again, the experience of trauma is evident in Reagan's description of worry and anxiety.

4.8.2.2.4. Travel Incidents

Incidents occurring during travel from one site to another were the most reported type of incident. These incidents ranged in severity from verbal harassment by people on the street, to robbery, to sexual assault. The constant change associated with travel conditions may be tied to the increased prevalence of incidents associated with travel.

4.8.2.2.4.1. Sexual Harassment

Many *Corredor* participants encounter various forms of harassment during their travels. Some of these encounters are harmless, simply salespeople trying to get the attention of the foreigner, shouting "*Guerra*! *Guerra*! (Fair one! Fair one!)," which I have personally experienced on multiple occasions. Similar comments from unknown

men, however, become much more uncomfortable. Reagan reflected on that, here, "Most of the time it was basically just like, 'Oh, you're so beautiful!' 'Oh, this, that,' '*Que guerra*! (How fair!)' '*Que guapa*! (How pretty!)'" After a while, the unwanted attention, better classified as sexual harassment, from strangers can wear on women. As microaggressions, these comments are often among the first indications of gender-based risks, specifically female-targeted risks.

Some uncomfortable encounters can stem from curiosity about differences, while others are much more uncomfortable. Erin shared one example, here:

> There's this one time I was by myself, just getting off the bus, walking to my [homestay] family's house, and there's this guy standing on the sidewalk there, and he said something to get my attention. And he started talking about his wife and son, and how his son is in karate, and just talking, and then he asked me some things, like 'Would you like lessons?' ... 'Well, no, thank you.' And then he wanted to talk some more, and he was trying to keep me there.

While uncomfortable, it is unclear what this man's motives were. Erin's discomfort with the interaction suggests the potential for such gender-based risks as sexual assault or kidnapping, as the man's intent in prolonging the conversation may have been to keep her in place until an accomplice arrived

Other interactions feel much more sinister or uncomfortable. Reagan discussed an example, here:

> Like, when there's like seven guys all staring at you, and it's like, there's no one else around kind of thing. Or… It feels, like, especially bad when like policemen do that to you, because… the fact that you can't really trust the authorities.

As a woman, she felt unsafe navigating her neighborhood within the host city, based on the actions of men. This lack of security even extended to the police, whose gendered reactions toward her contributed to her perceptions of insecurity.

Likewise, encounters with people who are behaving unusually can feel threatening. Erin provided an example, here:

> I was on the bus. I had a window seat, thankfully, and… there was a guy that came up on the bus. His eyes were like so big, like, maybe dilated from doing some stuff that he probably shouldn't have been doing. And he was just making a racket on the bus… And he sounded angry with the passengers… I kind of made eye contact with him and he came over to me, and thankfully someone was sitting next to me and he couldn't, like, get to me very well… but he was talking to me.

Erin did not share the content of the man's speech. Her words seem to indicate that she could not understand him, but whether that was due to language barriers or impaired speech is unclear. Even so, Erin's discomfort with the experience is understandable, and again, gendered. As a woman, she felt threatened by the behavior of a man, who singled her out on the bus. Further, this man's presence went unchallenged by the bus driver, likely also a man—I have personally never encountered a female bus driver in the host country—despite his unusual and inappropriate actions.

4.8.2.2.4.2. Pickpocketing, Theft, and Robbery

Given *Corredor*'s emphasis on pickpocketing, theft, and robbery, the fact that I collected only one direct story along these lines was unusual. It was also the only story collected outside of the intended study dates. This story took place in approximately 2007; however, I am electing to share it because I have two similar stories within the timeframe of this study, in another data set from more recent *Corredor* participants.

Jenna was out walking when she encountered a young man. At first, he did not seem threatening, but that quickly changed. Jenna described what happened, here:

> A young man, probably, like, a little younger than I… Came walking opposite me and asked me the time. And I, like, 'Oh, let me check…' I pulled out my tiny little cell phone that [*Corredor*] had given me… It was just this little tiny Nokia, probably like, I don't know, $15 cell phone... He was like, 'Okay, thanks!' and then he kept walking… And he came around the corner again… And I thought, like, 'Well, that's kind of weird that he's walking toward me again.' And then he walked up to me, he and the other guy… They lifted up their sweatshirts, kind of, as if to show me that they had a gun…. I saw it. No, I saw the gun. He showed me the gun… And told me to give him my cell phone… And so, I handed him the cell phone, and then he walked off.

While this is the only story of this nature within this data set, *Corredor*'s focus on this threat would suggest that this sort of occurrence is more common than this data set would suggest. And here, again, this incident is gendered. A woman was accosted by two men, threatened with violence using a gun, and robbed. Although men also

experience theft of this sort, Jenna was perceived as more vulnerable as a woman, walking alone, based on her willingness to engage with the young man. Her vulnerability was exploited.

4.8.2.2.4.3. Sexual Assault

Two other stories cross the line from sexual harassment to sexual assault. Michelle discussed her experience of a man touching her inappropriately, here:

> The one time I wore a dress without leggings on the Metro, it was a really busy Saturday. And a guy put his hands kind of up my dress…. I just swatted him away really quick, and it threw me off a little bit.

Michelle's response was quick and appropriate, swatting the man away. Even years after the experience, Michelle continued to make light of the situation and blame herself, talking about how she happened to not be wearing leggings. Her choice not to wear leggings was not sufficient to trigger sexual assault.

Erin's story was much longer and more difficult. After having lunch with one of her homestay families, she struggled to find an unoccupied taxi. When a free taxi finally appeared, she described her concern:

> I got in. And I remember the man saying, he was all smiles, and just, 'Hey, I saw you… Pretty sure you aren't from here.' And I, I should have got out of the car right then, but I didn't. I didn't feel very good about it.

The driver began talking about another of his jobs, at a weight loss massage clinic. As the conversation continued, the driver's comments became increasingly more uncomfortable, crossing the line to sexual assault. Erin relates the conversation:

> ‘Hey, let me feel your ankle,’ and so he felt my ankle… And he just kind of, he reached over to touch my waist, and, but, instead of touching my waist on the outside, like where my shirt was, he actually went under my shirt and started touching my waist that way…

Over time, he became more insistent:

> I remember him asking me to turn my head, and I thought there was something outside the window… but that wasn’t it, he, he said it again. And then he emphasized, ‘No, no, like, get on your knees, and, you know, turn yourself to the windows, so I can see your butt and feel your butt.’ I told him ‘That’s *extraña*! That’s very strange! Not doing that.’

Erin’s fear and concern were compounded by several key factors:

> I didn’t know how to get to [where I needed to go] … I just had enough, enough money with me for the taxi ride, and my phone was really low, really low, and it was almost dying…. I just didn’t know where to start if I could get out of the vehicle.

Erin’s lack of resources created the sense that her only alternative was to stay in the taxi, so she used the one resource she had – her words, “Let’s just talk about [my faith], maybe I’ll get him off this, off his mind… That spared me about 20 minutes into the ride…” Eventually she reached her destination and was able to exit the taxi, despite the driver’s attempt to circle back to discussion of bodies.

Erin briefly described her feelings after getting out of the taxi and sitting down to begin to process the experience:

> I started to feel just very, like, this dirty feeling, and I can't get past it. I couldn't believe what had just happened… [I talked to a friend at my destination and told her what happened] And then I stopped shaking a little bit after that.

The shock and adrenaline responses characteristic of a sexual assault are evident in this passage. Later in the day, Erin contacted *Corredor* and received support to start to work through her trauma.

4.9. Conclusion

Returning to the theoretical model I developed from this study, presented in Figure 1, I found that the most common situation in which study participants experienced safety and security incidents involved moving about the city. Incidents occurred while walking and on each of the three most common forms of public transportation—buses, subways, and taxis. The only major form of public transportation absent from this list is ride-shares. The absence of ride-shares from this list likely has two sources. First, the small number of participants indicates that only a small subset of incidents is included in this study. Second, ride-share companies are the newest form of public transportation and have taken time to increase in popularity. One of the better-known ride-share companies, Uber (n.d.), first launched internationally in Paris, France, in December of 2011. Its history in the host country is short.

Although homestay families and service placement sites were present in the data—and no evaluation of a service placement or homestay family can fully capture the potential risks a participant might face in those environments—the greatest potential for harm to participants was reported in transit. From a logistical perspective, the challenge

of evaluating transportation options is simply outside the scope of many international development programs, particularly those in urban contexts, like *Corredor*. Alternatives to public transportation may be cost-prohibitive with limited benefits.

The types of incident reported are also significant. Three of the ten incidents involved sexual harassment. Two other incidents involved cases of sexual assault, both involving public transportation. In fact, of the incidents reported, only the natural disaster can be described as gender neutral. Although the incident with Michelle's host family affected her and Nathan equally, the root of the family conflict that created the incident was objectively gendered.

A gendered finding may seem overreaching in a sample of four women; however, I would argue that it is significant and proportional. During the four different times I have personally been onsite with *Corredor,* I have worked with 35 women and 13 men. In repeated conversations with the program director, I have been assured that these ratios are consistent with his fourteen years of experience.

Gender-based risks and threats, including sexual harassment and sexual assault, are the single most common type of incident reported. This finding is significant, because the category of gender-based risks does not exist in international development work or work in related topics like international travel and study abroad research. Women face categorically different kinds of risks, when compared to their male counterparts. This finding is consistent with Hudson et al. (2012) and the patrilineal/patrilocal syndrome.

This, then, requires creativity for organizations to prepare participants well and to provide sufficient resources in response to trauma. As the participants indicated, they, largely, felt that *Corredor*'s training was satisfactory to perhaps fear inducing. In that case, adding information is not the best course. Instead, *Corredor* should consider tactics to empower participants to prepare themselves to make the best possible choices when facing unfamiliar threats.

Corredor should be prepared to attend to the short-term needs of trauma victims. Identifying a sexual assault nurse practitioner in the host city, or investing in a sexual assault forensic exam kit, will facilitate evidence collection, should the need arise. Additionally, *Corredor* should attend to the mental and emotional health of participants who have experienced trauma by preemptively developing connections with trauma counselors willing to provide telehealth counseling services. The preemptive development of these relationships will facilitate providing services in their first, and most comfortable, language—English—as well as facilitate the continuation of the counseling relationship upon completion of the participant's tenure with *Corredor*.

Steps have already been taken to improve follow-up with participants upon completion of their *Corredor* tenure. The new umbrella organization provides member care services, which include debriefing upon completion of service. For trauma survivors, the debriefing should include verification that the participant has continued counseling services.

4.10. Implications

It is imperative that international development organizations consider local contexts and provide women specific advice and instruction regarding safety concerns. This must include a protocol for reporting even the simplest harassment, to facilitate identifying patterns. Additionally, thorough preparation should focus on empowering women to assess their personal strengths, weaknesses, and assets; assess their surroundings, including hazards and escape routes; and identify sources of assistance. This training, however, comes with the significant risk of creating anxiety in participants. The challenge, then, comes in balancing the need to provide context-specific advice with response strategies that empower women to act.

Two options can facilitate bridging the gap between knowledge and empowerment. The first is working through case studies with participants. This encourages participants in a controlled environment to think through and practice how to handle situations. The second is like it, but allows participants to invent their own cases by asking themselves, "What if…?," for example, a woman might ask herself, "What if this man on the subway touches me inappropriately?" This practice enables participants to take charge of their own safety and security. It encourages participants to notice and become familiar with their surroundings—their bus or subway routes, the homestay family's neighborhood, and their service placement sites, among others. It further encourages them to think through sources of assistance, perhaps places where they have begun building relationships, like a favorite coffee shop or corner store, where they can ask for help.

In these two alternatives, three elements are critical. First, participants are empowered by thinking through situations and creating plans. Second, participants increase their awareness of their own capabilities and resources, as well as become aware of their limitations. This increases their creativity and facilitates more productive responses. Third, thinking through the potential for these experiences normalizes them, lowering the barrier to reporting incidents and asking for help.

4.11. Limitations

This study reflects a small sample of women returned from international development work. Participants in this study represent work completed in the context of one Latin American megacity and within the bounds of a single organization. As a result, findings here may not be applicable to all international development contexts. This is consistent with the Syndrome theory presented by Hudson, et al. (2012).

This study was also designed to interact only with the secular aspects of stories of safety and security. Despite this design, participants repeatedly addressed spiritual components relating to their safety and security. This is consistent with my own experiences, which suggests that a full understanding of the impact of safety and security issues can be fully understood only within a context of one's spirituality.

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5. DEVELOPING A SAFETY AND SECURITY FRAMEWORK FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORK: A CONCLUSION

The safety and security of international development workers has historically been neglected, to the point where Fast (2010) labeled the field a "black hole" as she attempted to share a few stories from the field. The lack of research becomes increasingly more problematic, as organizations decrease in size. Small organizations often lack the funding to pursue external safety and security training for their participants. Alternatively, some safety and security training programs available may not align with the organization's goals and values.

Many small organizations respond to this challenge by developing their own training materials which lead to three major challenges. First, maintaining the image of a safe program is essential to developing and maintaining an organization's positive reputation. Safety and security incidents may be interpreted as negative and damaging to an organization's reputation, regardless of the organization's role or fault in the incident. Second, small program size and limited staffing may result in the prioritization of other program elements over safety. Finally, small organizations may lack financial recourses to seek guidance from industry experts.

5.1. Summary

My dissertation emerged out of my own experiences with safety and security working with *Corredor*, as well as increasing anecdotal evidence (e.g., Edwards, 2017) indicating that the prevalence of similar incidents may be higher than expected. It was

spurred on by Fast's (2010) assertion that there is a lack of research on the safety and security of international development workers and the little knowledge that exists on the types or prevalence of safety and security concerns these individuals face.

These sources inspired the question that guided my dissertation: "What are the core safety and security concerns affecting an international development training program in a megacity context?" I selected my research question with practitioners in mind; therefore, I chose to organize my dissertation to prioritize the dissemination of my findings through a journal-ready three-article format. In keeping with that choice, Sections 2, 3, and 4 are stand-alone research studies. Each section represented the perspectives of a key group of international development workers. Section 2 focused on leaders, who are tasked with training new participants and responding to safety and security concerns that arise. Section 3 focused on current international development workers and their active safety and security concerns. Section 4 focused on individuals who have returned from their international service after experiencing a safety or security incident. According to Kolb's (1984) learning cycle, these individuals have had the opportunity to reflect on and make meaning from their experiences. I presented each section with its research question.

5.1.1. Section 2 – Safety and Security in a Latin American Megacity: Leading New International Development Workers

RQ—What are the core safety and security concerns expressed by leaders of an international development training program in a megacity context?

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the perspectives of one team of leaders in an international development training program regarding safety and security and the impact of these perspectives on the training of program participants. To achieve this purpose, I selected a qualitative method featuring participant interviews and naturalistic observation, with data analysis following constructivist grounded theory methods, as defined by Charmaz (2006). I interviewed ten participants and conducted 30 naturalistic observations over two months during the summer of 2019.

Corredor leaders expressed that their biggest concern was related to participant retention and application of the training provided. This concern was specifically related to strategies implemented while navigating the host city. This result is significant because it shows a lack of effective diffusion of research on adult education principles. Further, *Corredor* leadership exhibited a gendered awareness of potential hazards. Long-term leaders should make a point of educating themselves and younger leaders on gender-based threats to participants.

Additionally, *Corredor* participants indicated that I, the researcher, was the only person consistently asking them about the negative issues they encountered as part of their *Corredor* experience. This was concerning because it represented a missed opportunity to build relationships with the participants. Further, it indicated that participants may perceive barriers in reporting certain safety and security threats, specifically those relating to sexual assault and sexual harassment,

5.1.2. Section 3 – A New City: An Adapted Photovoice Study of Early Career International Development Workers

RQ—What are the core safety and security concerns expressed by participants in an international development training program?

The purpose of this study was to observe, document, and describe the ways new international development workers perceive safety and security as they launch their international development careers. I designed this study using a photovoice method for collecting data from new *Corredor* participants. This was supplemented by contextual data from *Corredor* leadership, provided through focus group discussions. I employed grounded theory methods to make meaning of the data collected.

Participants reported the greatest number of concerns relating specifically to navigating their new city. A second, occasionally overlapping, concern related to the loss of safety and security structures and policies as participants transitioned from their home culture to that of the host country. A third finding was the tendency of shorter-term leaders to trivialize or belittle concerns expressed by participants, particularly those stemming from cultural transitions. Finally, I found that participants did not report mental health concerns relating to safety and security.

These findings are significant because they support the growing hypothesis that travel is a significant opportunity for threats to safety and security to emerge. They also highlight the importance of training and organizational culture in responding to participant concerns. Finally, the lack of reported mental health concerns is significant because it may suggest that, despite the stress of international development work,

international development workers may not associate mental health with their safety and security.

I also found that participants reported a number of gender-based concerns, a category that does not currently appear in the research. Participants reported gender-based concerns ranging from a cultural objectification of women, to sexual harassment, to the potential for elevated violence such as sexual assault or kidnapping. Again, this theme is repeated from the study in Section 2.

5.1.3. Section 4 – Returned International Development Workers: A Grounded Theory of Safety and Security Incidents

RQ—What are the safety and security concerns experienced by returned *Corredor* participants?

The purpose of this study was to collect and report on the safety and security incidents experienced by returned *Corredor* participants. Additionally, this study was designed to evaluate the efficacy of *Corredor*'s training program, looking for gaps in safety and security training, because these participants have had the opportunity to reflect on and make meaning of their experiences. According to Kolb's (1984) learning cycle, time and reflection are essential elements of learning. To achieve those purposes, I selected a retrospective qualitative survey of four former *Corredor* participants. I analyzed the interview transcripts using constructivist grounded theory, as defined by Charmaz (2006).

This study reported ten unique stories of incidents that the participants experienced. Participants reported sexual harassment and sexual assault with the highest

frequency. Threats occurred most frequently, and in the greatest variety, while traveling around the host city. The complexity of public transportation makes it difficult to evaluate, placing such evaluation outside the scope of most international development agencies. Training provided is sufficient to deal with some forms of incidents, like robbery and natural disasters, but remains inadequate for other concerns, specifically for harassment and sexual assault.

This study is significant because it provides evidence of the elevated frequency with which female international development workers experience harassment and sexual assault. This finding is supported by findings from both Section 2 and Section 3, indicating that the categorical risk of gender-based incidents is significant.

This study also provides support for the concept that international development workers are most vulnerable during travel. This vulnerability stems from the complexity and constant change associated with travel, as well as the relative isolation of travel.

5.2. Conclusions

Across the three studies, participants reported that the greatest risk to participants stems from their gender. Being female was repeatedly reported to be a vulnerability. Further, nine of the 10 incidents reported in Section 5 were specifically related to gender. Only the natural disaster was gender neutral; therefore, we must recognize that safety and security for international development workers is gendered and must be addressed as such.

Additionally, participants indicated the greatest awareness of vulnerability while navigating the host city. This vulnerability appears to be associated with the relative

isolation, potentially limited communication, and lack of familiarity with the new environment. Being female appeared to increase perceptions of vulnerability for some participants. Participants also reported that “looking different” than most other people exacerbated perceptions of vulnerability.

This dissertation accomplished the objective of this study, to crystalize core safety and security concerns of international development workers. This objective was accomplished by exploring the safety and security concerns of three unique groups. International development leaders were most concerned about women’s vulnerability and participant retention and application of defensive strategies. New international development workers were most concerned with navigating their new city and with their vulnerability as women. Returned participants reported 90% of safety and security incidents were gender-based and most incidents occurred while navigating the city.

This research stands as evidence of the safety and security concerns relating to the process of navigating a new and unfamiliar location. Not only was this process reported most commonly as a cause for concern by new participants, but also it was reported as the time when leaders view participants as most vulnerable. This was confirmed by the prevalence of safety and security incidents reported by past participants.

This study also stands apart based on its ability to drive specific research on the protection of human resources while working abroad, with a focus on the safety and security of women while navigating a city. Future program development should look at

cost-effective strategies for training women, to assess their resources and respond effectively to a variety of threats, independently.

5.3. Implications

While this dissertation focused primarily on the safety and security of international development workers, its design and findings informed and commented on discussions taking place across several branches of research. These included gender equity, methods and methodologies, and education.

5.3.1. Safety and Security in International Development

This dissertation was crafted in response to Fast's (2010) assertion that research on safety and security of international development workers was a "black hole." What research does exist has historically fallen into two perspectives relating to the cause of violence against international development workers. One group focuses on the degradation of the pure humanitarian mission of aid agencies, while the other argues that the contexts of international development are changing (Fast, 2010). Safety and security incidents reported in Section 4 indicate that contextual elements contributed more to the incidents of violence and harassment experienced by participants, based on the frequency of incidents that occurred in transit, when participants were unidentified with the *Corredor* organization and its work, in comparison with incidents occurring at a service placement site. Given that *Corredor* protocol requires that homestay families affirm the *Corredor* mission statement, prior to placing participants in a home, these incidents would appear to be more related with contextual concerns, as opposed to mission drift within the *Corredor* program.

Hartjes et al. (2009) provided a foundation for the types of threats study abroad students expected to encounter during their programs, asking participants to rank a series of concerns by likelihood of a type of incident occurring and the degree to which participants worried about the incident type. Summer *Corredor* participants are similar to study abroad participants in terms of age and educational background; however, this study differed significantly from their findings. Overall, my findings contradicted those of Hartjes et al. (2009). They found that participants considered contaminated food and water as the most likely threat to their safety and security. It tied for second most worrying (Hartjes et al., 2009). In this study, the concept was mentioned exactly one time, and only tangentially. In an interview for Section 2, Shaelynn alluded to having gotten sick shortly after her arrival and recovered. Having experienced gastrointestinal illness, she determined the experience to be less concerning than other safety and security threats. Hartjes et al. (2009) reported psychological distress as the second most common concern. Outside of questions in the survey that asked about mental health, only one participant connected mental health with safety and security. Locki's statement suggested her anxiety caused her to notice hazards, but was not, in itself, a threat to her safety or security. In contrast, my participants reported greater concerns for motor vehicle accidents and mass transit accidents with much greater frequency.

Section 4 found support for Kennedy and Flaherty's (2015) article on rape and sexual assault as safety and security threats in international travel. Two of the four women interviewed as part of the study on returned *Corredor* participants reported sexual assault. While Section 2 and Section 3 did not uncover incidents of sexual assault,

participants did report cat calls, sexually charged propositions, and overt matchmaking activities, all of which left participants acutely uncomfortable. *Corredor* employs two strategies to mitigate the risk of sexual violence. During their first year of service, participants are not allowed to consume alcohol or to date. While these policies seem overly restrictive, Kennedy and Flaherty (2015) linked nightlife, which typically consists of bars and dance halls, with increased risk of sexual violence. Abigail, a *Corredor* leader, shared with the new *Corredor* participants that she had repeatedly used the no dating policy to excuse herself from uncomfortable and unwanted advances and matchmaking activities during her first year. Both policies, although appearing intrusive, work to give participants the opportunity to better understand the host country's culture, before engaging in activities that may put them at increased risk of sexual violence.

Bathke and Kim (2016) found that only about 8% of students studying abroad experienced mental health issues while abroad, despite approximately 25% of college students reported prior mental health concerns. One participant in Sections 2 and 3 reported a preexisting mental health condition, consistent with Bathke and Kim (2016), she reported improvements in mental health while in the host country. This study also found support for a lack of connection between mental health and safety and security abroad, as none of the participants reported mental health concerns relating to safety and security.

5.3.2. Gender Equity

The findings of this dissertation support the work of Dunckel Graglia (2013), which argued that women-only modes or sections of public transportation are

insufficient to create the culture change required to improve gender equity. Alyssa's reflection on gendered public transportation, seen below, could stand as a summary of Dunckel Graglia's (2013) article.

> It's basically like there are two kinds of people: young, able-bodied men and everyone else… It's very tangible that this [young, able-bodied men] is the default person, and this [everyone else] is the other, because there are much more cars [on the subway] for that [default person] and much more space on the buses than there is for the designated women, children, disabled, elderly section… I think the protection and policing can often be muddled… There are usually police standing at the sign that says only women, children, disabled, elderly beyond this point… It's part of this larger, like, 'women need to be protected' narrative.

As Alyssa highlighted, the concept of public transportation segregated by gender serves to strengthen the assumption that women need protection, specifically from "young, able-bodied men." Dunckel Graglia (2013) argued that gendered public transportation, without community education, only reinforces the assumption of women's weakness. Instead of lifting the burden of restricted mobility, it serves to minimize the strength and capabilities of women, reinforcing and increasing gender inequality.

Hudson et al. (2012) asserted that any form of gender inequality can be interpreted as a form of violence committed against women. The patrilineal/patrilocal syndrome they proposed involved the creation of several different variables relating the subjugation of women, including one titled "Physical security of women" (Hudson et al.,

2012). They rated countries along a five-point, ordinal scale, from zero, defined as "women physically secure" to four, defined as "women lack physical security" (Hudson et al., 2012). On this scale, the United States is rated a two, "women have medium levels of physical security," while the host country is rated a three, "women have low levels of physical security" (Hudson et al., 2012). This study gives increased credence to the work of Hudson et al. (2012) by affirming that women who travel between countries notice and experience the contextual differences in their physical security, even when those women have not been trained to recognize the specific elements that created those rankings.

5.3.3. Education

The results of Section 2 revealed that Knowles's (2015) principles of andragogy have not been adequately disseminated within the international development community. The lack of awareness of the principles of andragogy is seen in *Corredor* leadership team members. Although the leadership team was responsible for training new *Corredor* participants, some leadership team members were insistent that providing new participants with safety and security information should be sufficient to produce both knowledge acquisition and behavior change. This perspective is incompatible with Knowles' (2015) assertion that adult learners differ in their interest and ability to learn and that adult educators should adapt their teaching strategies in response to their learners.

Further, the discussion of reflexivity in leadership, found in Section 2, suggested that reflexivity is not necessarily a natural posture of leaders. This finding relates to the

Kolb (1984) learning cycle, which presents four stages of learning, including concrete learning, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. *Corredor* leaders displayed differing degrees of reflexivity, or willingness to learn from past experiences, based on the length of their commitment to the program. Leaders with a short-term commitment, defined as two years or less, displayed less reflexivity than those with longer-term commitments, of more than two years. Long-term leadership within *Corredor* should consider adopting strategies to trigger and increase the reflexivity of short-term leaders. Strategies might include reflexive journaling or, specifically to address knowledge transfer concerns, writing letters to themselves at the beginning of summer, with the express purpose of sharing those letters with the following summer's leaders.

5.3.4. Research Methods and Methodologies

Section 3 was designed based on the photovoice method, developed by Wang (1999), and increasingly based on the principles of ethics used to moderate the photovoice process, described in Wang and Redwood-Jones (2001). Based on the *Corredor* structure, I made the decision to adapt the photovoice method to the conditions, resulting in one group of participants who submitted photos but were not involved in the discussion of them and a second group who did not take photos, but discussed and interpreted the photos submitted. I found that this division allowed for more frank discussions in the focus group than would have been possible if both groups were present, which resulted in richer data. The cost of this decision, however, was the

missed opportunity to model good conversations and a learning posture, in order to provide education and context to participants submitting photos.

As a researcher, I found that these participatory action research methods produced rich and thorough data; however, I found them cumbersome in their ability to make sense of large quantities of data. I found that constructivist grounded theory, as presented by Charmaz (2006) functioned well as an analytical tool for organizing and making sense of the data collected.

5.4. Recommendations

The work reported in this dissertation affects both the practice of training international development workers and the research that informs international development work. In response, I direct recommendations for this project toward researchers (recommendations for research) and toward practitioners (recommendations for practice).

5.4.1. Recommendations for Research

This study intended to illuminate the safety and security concerns of international development in a systematic way. The following suggestions for future research represent only a small minority of potential research directions.

Section 2 explored the safety and security concerns expressed by the leaders of an international development program. The data collected for this study suggested that there may be a perspective difference between leaders with a short-term leadership position and those in a long-term position. Long-term leadership perspectives appear to be associated with a willingness to learn from experience and willingness to consider

organizational learning, in an organization structured toward high turnover. Additionally, the long-term leadership perspective is increasingly attuned to the gender-based risks associated with work in the host city. Additional research should be done to explore international development leaders' willingness to learn and be self-reflective as a function of their past service and intentions for future service.

Additional research should explore international development training methods and their relationship with the principles of adult learning. While this study showed that participants do retain the knowledge imparted during training sessions, participants also reported difficulty remembering to put training into practice. Research must be done to identify and disseminate practices that reliably produce behavior change.

Section 3 explored the safety and security concerns of international development workers, using photovoice, a participatory action research technique that involved one group of participants submitting photos of safety and security concerns, which were reviewed by another group of participants, who participated in a series of four focus groups. Many of the images submitted were considered to be trivial by the participants in the focus group. The focus group participants all had significantly more experience with the host city than those who submitted the pictures. Research should explore the question of whether differing perspectives on safety and security are related to international experience, to where increased experience desensitizes the individual to safety and security concerns, or to personality factors, such that individuals with fewer safety and security concerns self-select into longer terms of service. Another potential

research direction would be a longitudinal study of international development, which would facilitate the tracking of how safety and security concerns change over time.

Section 3 also found a lack of reported safety and security concerns related to mental health. Research should explore the connection between mental health and safety and security. Additional research should focus on the salience of mental health concerns to international development workers. Another study opportunity would be a positivistic study on the elements of international development work that promote mental health.

Section 3 looked specifically at threats to safety and security as perceived by active participants in service. This study did not explore counterpoints to those threats, in the form of things that trigger an increased sense of safety or security in participants. This perspective is needed to provide a more balanced perspective of safety and security issues in international development.

Section 4 was a retrospective grounded theory study on the training former *Corredor* participants received and the safety and security incidents they experienced during their service. Participants reported safety and security incidents that occurred at their service placement sites, in their homestay family homes, and while navigating the city. They also reported that they retained the training they received from *Corredor*, but had difficulty applying those strategies to some of the incidents they encountered. This led to practical recommendations to provide safety and security response strategies for multiple forms of safety and security threats.

From the research perspective, work is needed to create safety and security training methods that facilitate learning while also managing participants' anxiety levels.

Effective training methods should empower participants to act to protect themselves; increase individual awareness of personal capabilities, resources, and limitations; and normalize safety and security threats to lower the barrier to reporting incidents. Once created, these methods should be assessed through evaluative research for cost, transferability, and effectiveness in the field.

5.4.2. Recommendations for Practice

Based on the results from Section 2, long-term leadership is needed to produce international development training programs that are reflective and learn from experience. While short-term leadership can be effective in training participants, long-term leadership enables leaders to learn from their experiences and to develop a deeper understanding of the host country context.

In Sections 2 and 3, I found that international development would benefit from increased dissemination of adult education concepts and practices. Specifically, adult educators must have an awareness of the types of concerns new international development workers are experiencing. This awareness is essential to providing empathetic and relevant training. Instructional designers who are aware of and acknowledge the unique threats that stand out to new participants will be able to develop targeted training modules that address the kinds of concerns most relevant to new arrivals.

Given the differences between the perspectives of the photovoice participants and the focus group participants, Section 3 also suggests that training methods and topics should change over the duration of an individual's participation with the organization.

This will allow program leaders to target participants' increased comfort and confidence in navigating the city, as well as their increased awareness of local concerns over time.

Leaders must also take care not to trivialize or belittle the not-yet-normalized structural changes in safety and security of [relatively] new arrivals. Doing so is both a mistake and a missed teaching/learning opportunity. Being too quick to dismiss another's concerns can inhibit relationship building and models dismissiveness toward future new arrivals. Dismissing a concern implies that local conditions are not worth learning about, while responding with acceptance, asking questions, and assisting in the learning process models openness and willingness to learn and adapt to the local context, while strengthening the relationship.

In Section 4, I found that sexual harassment and sexual assault targeting women were the most common concerns. It is imperative that international development organizations consider local contexts and provide women specific advice and instruction regarding safety concerns. Organizations must identify the types of gender-based concerns encountered most frequently by their participants and the locations or scenarios those concerns are most associated with and design effective techniques to prevent them. For example, verbal harassment may be drowned out by listening to music, where appropriate, such as prolonged bus or subway rides.

Further, steps can be taken to bridge the gap between knowledge and empowerment. One example is working through case studies with participants. This encourages participants in a controlled environment to think through and practice how to handle situations. Similarly, participants can be encouraged to invent their own cases by

asking themselves, “What if…?” and describing a scenario. This practice encourages familiarity with the participant’s surroundings—their bus or subway routes, the homestay family’s neighborhood, and their service placement sites. It encourages them to think through sources of assistance, perhaps a favorite coffee shop or corner store, where they can ask for help.

In these two alternatives, three elements are critical. First, participants are empowered by thinking through situations and creating plans. Second, participants increase their awareness of their own capabilities and resources, as well as become aware of their limitations. This increases their creativity and facilitates more productive responses. Third, thinking through the potential for these experiences normalizes them, lowering the barrier to reporting incidents and asking for help.

5.5. References

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

For all *Corredor* events, participants will be observed utilizing the following schedule:

Date:	Time:	Location:
Subject	Frequency Tally	Notes
Transportation		
Host families		
Service Placements		
Expressions of fear		
Expressions of uncertainty		
Expressions of discomfort		
Expressions of concern for personal safety		
Expressions of concern for the safety of others		

Other notes:

APPENDIX B

PHOTOVOICE ELICITATION INSTRUCTIONS

Thank you for participating in this photo elicitation study of risks in transit, in cooperation with *Corredor*. As a participant, we ask that you submit five photographs, each week, of risks or elements that challenge your safety or security while moving about the city.

Objective: Submit 5 photographs per participant per week identifying aspects of safety and security as you move about the city.

Submit photographs weekly, via WhatsApp.

Write a short description of each photograph:

- Date photograph was taken
- Approximate location of photograph
- Describe the photograph considering one or more of the following questions:
    - What is happening in this image?
    - Why did you select this image for submission?
    - What about this image suggested safety or security issues to you?

Safety and Security Concerns:

- Take ethical photographs. Avoid pictures where individuals are clearly identified. Would you want this picture taken of you without your consent?
- Photographs should never put you at increased risk.
- Take photographs as unobtrusively as possible to avoid drawing attention to you and your phone.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Pickpocketing and theft are among the most common risks participants face.

APPENDIX C

PHOTOVOICE FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

Thank you, again, for participating in this study. Today, we are going to discuss the photographs submitted this week during the photovoice project. The goal is to sort the photos into categories, identify a representative photo for each category, describe the category, and brainstorm some ways to address the themes identified.

Guided Discussion Questions

1. Is everyone ok with recording this discussion?

Coding Each Image

2. What do you see in this photograph?
3. What is really happening in this image?
4. What is the central theme this image?

Identifying Larger Themes

5. What are the overarching themes of today's photographs?
6. How well do they match with previous themes identified?
7. What are the new themes identified?
8. How do these themes relate to our lives?

Taking Action

9. Why does this situation or concern exist?
10. What can we do about it?
11. What other information or perspectives might be helpful in this discussion?

12. Based on our discussion, are any interventions needed? What should they look like?

APPENDIX D

TRUSTWORTHINESS MEASURES

Transferability–Thick Description. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) arguede that only the reader can assess the transferability of qualitative research for extension and applicability in their current situation. To better facilitate the assessment of applicability of qualitative findings to a new situation, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommended the utilization of thick, rich description of the setting and the problem. As a writer, I have described the organization and its unique circumstances as completely as possible, so that readers may compare and contrast their own situations with that of *Corredor*.

Credibility–Prolonged Engagement. I spent eight weeks in country, observing and interviewing participants for this study. In addition to my current experience with *Corredor*, I had extensive past experience and personal relationships with *Corredor*, the director, and the program coordinator. I participated in *Corredor*, under the director's leadership, on the 2009 summer team, and on year one from September 2010 to August 2011. The program coordinator was a teammate for both summer 2009 and our year one in 2010- 2011. I also served as co-facilitators with the program coordinator for the summer team in 2011. In addition, the director and his family served as my homestay family hosts for a week during Summer 2011. I have both received and given many of the training talks discussed in this focus group.

As part of my participation with *Corredor*, I completed three Spanish classes. Over the course of these three Spanish courses, I transitioned from negligible Spanish

ability to an intermediate-level Spanish speaker and reader. I have attempted to practice and maintain my Spanish language abilities whenever possible.

During my year one experience, one of my roommates experienced a sexual assault by a host country national. This experienced caused her significant mental and emotional trauma, which ultimately led to her evacuation. I experienced significant secondary trauma as a result of walking through her experience with her. About five months later, while working as a facilitator, I was also sexually assaulted by a host country national, on my way to work. The stress of two traumatic events within a year was significant for *Corredor*, and for me, personally. Given that my assault was a few weeks from the end of the year one program, it was decided that I would complete the program and repatriate.

As a result of my experience, I developed an interest in the safety and security of international development programs. As a survivor of sexual violence, my interest has most closely aligned with ensuring equity in safety and security training. My interest has also skewered toward programs targeting early career adults, ages 18-30.

In the intervening eight years since my experience with *Corredor*, some policies and procedures have changed. One major change is that I participated in the program while it was receiving support from a different umbrella organization. That organization merged with the current umbrella organization in 2013, which has resulted in updated policies and procedures (Director, personal communication, 19 March 2019).

Consistency and Neutrality–Researcher's Position. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that acknowledging one's own position in the study, reflecting on personal

biases, assumptions, and disposition. Above, I have presented a statement of my personal prolonged engagement with the subject of this study, *Corredor*, and with the participants. In addition, whenever assessments confirm personal biases or my experience may be perceived to interact with the participants in this study, I have attempted to define and clarify my position, in order to further expound on my perspective and how it impacts the relational aspects of the interaction.

Additional Trustworthiness Measures–Member Checks. Participants were given the opportunity to review and clarify their perspectives during each interview, in the event that a term or concept was unclear or could be interpreted in multiple ways.

Additional Trustworthiness Measures - Reflexive Journal. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) highlighted the reflexive journal as a core component of trustworthiness, because it allows the researcher to explore personal biases, thoughts, and feelings, to improve the study, as a whole. It also provided the researcher with an opportunity to regularly reflect on and consider the data collected. This reflection allowed the researcher to identify new directions, questions, or concerns related to either the data or data collection, and to leave a record of why changes and decisions were made. In this way, it served as and augmented the audit trail to improve trustworthiness.

Additional Trustworthiness Measures – Audit Trail. In order to provide access and a detailed record of the data gathered during these studies, all interviews, focus groups, reviewed archives, and participant observations were logged. The audit trail included a detailed list of all data gathered, including transcripts, field notes, and copies of documents and artifacts identified during the research process. Finally, it

included detailed notes and reflections of the processes utilized for data analysis, as well as how all decisions regarding the data are made. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argued that this increases reliability because it serves as a guide to the data. Specifically, it detailed how data was collected, any problems or challenges encountered the researcher, how those were resolved, how the data was analyzed and the decision-making processes utilized over the course of the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Additional Trustworthiness Measures – Peer Debriefing. Peer debriefing provided the researcher with an opportunity to discuss the study and its progress with one or more peers familiar with the study and its methodology. Discussing the case with a peer allowed for discussion of the data and the ways it may be interpreted.

APPENDIX E

PHOTOVOICE TRAINING CURRICULUM

Ice breaker & opening questions:

What are some things people warned you about, as you prepared for *Corredor*?

What are some of the things you felt nervous about before you arrived?

Introduction to the photovoice study:

We have all been warned about safety and security issues, by friends and family, people who care about us. Maybe we've even felt a bit scared about crowds or public transportation or getting sick. Despite this, no one has ever studied these risks from your perspective, as an international traveler and as someone who has come this country as an act of service, to learn about international development.

That's what we're going to do, this summer. Discover your perspectives on safety and security issues.

How many of you have a camera or cell phone capable of taking pictures with you?

Excellent. We're going to use your devices as an opportunity to do what's called a photovoice study, using pictures you take to give voice to something that can be hard to talk about.

The prompt:

As you move about the city, be mindful of the things that make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe. I'm asking you to take pictures of those things, or things that remind you of them and send them to me via WhatsApp.

When you send me pictures, I'll ask you to describe them, briefly. I'll ask you when and where the photos were taken and why you chose to submit that picture. This description is particularly important because you may want to find more creative ways to communicate certain topics.

For example, you may feel unsafe in a certain part of your nearest Metro station, because it is very crowded. You may want to take a more distant picture of the crowds than one in the middle of the crowds, to avoid drawing attention to yourself or your device.

Key Issues:

As you embark on this study, there are two major things I want to emphasize: safety and photography ethics.

Safety:

- Be aware of your surroundings while taking photos. If traveling with others, invite them to watch out for you.

- Safe photos are more useful than perfect photos. Please do not put yourself in dangerous situations to get photos.
- Having your camera or phone out may draw extra attention to yourself. Avoid taking pictures in crowds. Stow your phone in a safe place. Tether your phone for added security.
- Photographing illegal activity puts you at risk:
    - It may make you a target.
    - You may be considered an accomplice.
- If you feel unsafe, get somewhere safe and contact someone you trust.

Ethics:

- It is your responsibility to treat the people you're photographing with respect.
- Would you want this photo taken of you?
- Is there any reason your subject may not want their photo taken?
- When possible, avoid photos of clearly identifiable individuals, because these photos cannot be published.

What next:

I'm sure you're thinking about what will happen after you take your pictures. Once I have received all the images for the week, I will remove any identifying data from your submissions and aggregate the images and descriptions into a single file for review. On Wednesdays or Thursdays, I will be meeting with the facilitator team to discuss the images you've provided. We will be discussing your images to look for patterns in what we see and what we can learn from your photos. Any patterns identified may be addressed in subsequent team meetings.

We know that admitting feelings of fear or discomfort may also feel uncomfortable or embarrassing. Keep in mind that the goal of this project is not to discover something

new, but to document the kinds of concerns participants like you face. Our second goal is to brainstorm better ways to address those concerns.

Deadlines:

Please submit your photos before attending team meetings on Tuesdays.

Closing questions:

Does anyone have any questions about this project?

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