Combining Photovoice and Videovoice for Participatory Research: Visual Storytelling With LGBTQ+ Refugees and Migrants

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This article critically reflects on the implementation of combining photovoice and videovoice as research methods to explore the perspectives of marginalized groups in precarious situations. Specifically, we apply it to understanding the experiences of LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants in their host country of Brazil. Photovoice and videovoice allow us to move beyond words, and in utilizing a medium free from the burdens of language or literacy, LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants can present their world to the global community on their own terms, allowing for greater agency and highlighting various social identities. In the age of Instagram, LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants are already familiar with the universal reach of photos and videos, so instead of asking participants to take specific photos, we give them the tools and space to tell their stories of migration through social media trends they are already familiar with and interested in creating. We will also present the lessons learned and challenges we faced while experimenting with these methodologies.

1. Introduction

This article critically reflects on the implementation of combining photovoice and videovoice as research methods to explore the perspectives of marginalized groups in precarious situations. Specifically, we apply it to understanding the experiences of LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants in their host country of Brazil. Findings from a previous project in Brazil demonstrated that LGBTQ+ Venezuelans felt 'frozen' in Brazil when the refugee determination process was paused during COVID-19 (Cowper-Smith et al., 2021). The methods we used (surveys and interviews) were limited in capturing the unique nuances of queer migrant existence and experiences, so we turned to use photo and video methods, both to empower our research participants to feel ownership of their story, feel more 'visible,' and explore the nuances of queer migration in a creative and participatory way.

Specifically, our rationale for using participatory methods was to fill a knowledge gap in the representation of global south-to-global-south movements in queer migration studies to make space for queer south-south migration as well as to situate queer refugees in the context of the forced migration humanitarian landscape. Migration studies have historically taken the average migrant to be a cisgender heterosexual man migrating for economic purposes (Mole, 2018). While the scholarship has evolved to

include gender and sexuality in migration studies (Cantú, 2009; Carrillo, 2004; Cowper-Smith et al., 2021; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2017; Luibhéid, 2002; Manalansan, 2006; Palmary, 2021; Su, 2023; Su & Valiquette, 2022; Valiquette et al., 2021), queer migration literature is still primarily focused on those leaving "oppressive" countries in the "global south" for free and "sexually liberated" countries in the "global north" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). This Western-centric and colonial perspective is built on a history of large-scale and largely involuntary migrations from the global south to colonial powers in the global north, such as the transatlantic slave trade. Despite this history, evidence shows more migration occurs between countries within the global south than from the global south to the global north (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Carella, 2020). For example, 80 percent of African migrants do not leave the continent, and some migration corridors are exclusively neighbouring countries (Crawley, 2024). In the case of queer migration, the literature vastly underrepresents the stories, lives, and struggles of queer migrants in situations of queer south-south migration. Therefore, innovative and participatory methods such as photovoice and videovoice help to disrupt this binary within the literature by not only focusing on south-north migration but also providing spaces for south-south migration stories and voices.

Moreover, the literature on forced displacement often overlooks LGBTQ+ people because the humanitarian system often does not include them in the categories of those considered "vulnerable," such as pregnant women or the elderly. As such, their voices often disappear or are underrepresented in the literature on the topic. The very visible methods of photovoice and videovoice help to complicate that narrative.

Lastly, crises and disasters, such as COVID-19, disproportionately affect vulnerable populations uniquely (Curato & Ong, 2015; Wisner et al., 2004). For example, our previous research found that fake news stories blaming LGBTQ+ people for the spread of COVID-19 forced some LGBTQ+ refugees to hide their LGBTQ+ identity (Cowper-Smith et al., 2021). As such, there is an urgent need for work focused on giving space and voice for LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants to share their stories and show the impact of the pandemic on them.

Given these knowledge gaps, we felt the pull towards participatory methods because it has gained academic praise for the ability to facilitate the co-production of knowledge in a collaborative manner that encourages 'exchange' vs. 'extraction' (Marzi, 2021). Specifically, regarding refugee-focused research, participatory approaches help overcome the power imbalance between researcher and participant (Robertson & Simonsen, 2013). Photovoice and videovoice allow us to move beyond words, allowing LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants to present their world and their various overlapping social identities to the global community on their own terms.

This article analyzes the use and combination of photovoice and videovoice methods as tools for the co-production of knowledge with LGBTQ+ refugee and migrant populations and its impacts, benefits and limitations.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Photovoice and videovoice

Photovoice, a participatory method rooted in feminist perspectives (C. Wang & Burris, 1997), has emerged to address power imbalances between researchers and participants. Initially applied in health research by Wang and Burris (1997), photovoice has gained popularity over the past decade as a research tool for studying vulnerable populations (Adinia & Kirana, 2019; Miled, 2020; O'Hara & Higgins, 2017). This method empowers co-researchers by amplifying their voices and capturing the intricate nuances of their lived experiences. By encouraging critical thinking about the factors shaping their daily lives and fostering self-awareness, photovoice is a powerful tool for underrepresented and marginalized groups (Chio & Fandt, 2007; C. C. Wang & Pies, 2008). With youth, photovoice has gained traction as a means to provoke introspection regarding their needs and incite change by informing policymakers about the perceived needs of their community. Involving diverse individuals in profound contemplation of their daily lives and experiences underscores the significance of their voices and perspectives while reshaping the prevailing narrative that portrays marginalized individuals as solely vulnerable. Instead, photovoice cultivates a sense of ownership, pride, agency, and responsibility, recognizing participants' inherent power and assets as they navigate their roles and inner voices (Mitchell et al., 2017; Sutton-Brown, 2014; C. C. Wang, 2006).

The videovoice method used in this project is a fairly new methodology that builds off previous work on photovoice, participatory media, and participatory video (Camila Sarria-Sanz & Verhoeven, 2023; Chavez et al., 2004). Like photovoice, videovoice aims to empower marginalized communities and individuals by giving them a platform to produce and share their experiences and perspectives (Latz & Mulvihill, 2017). By using video cameras or phones, participants capture and document their lives, surroundings, and stories through a visual narrative that moves beyond static images, allowing for a more comprehensive representation of the lived experiences of research participants (Catalani et al., 2011). Videovoice captures sounds, audio narration, and interviews, which can enhance the depth of the research, enabling participants to reflect critically, analyze, and dialogue about their experiences (Catalani et al., 2011).

Recently, a growing body of migration studies research has emerged in which photovoice was used as a participatory method with refugees and asylum seekers (Adinia & Kirana, 2019; Lögdberg et al., 2020; Miled, 2020; Pearce et al., 2016; Sethi, 2016; Tippens et al., 2021). Videovoice has been employed in various research studies to empower communities, assess community needs, and promote social change (Blumenstock et al., 2015;

Giamos et al., 2017; Li & Ho, 2019). Despite photovoice gaining popularity as a research approach with refugee populations, few studies exist where it is used with LGBTQ+ refugees, especially in the global south. We chose to employ a combination of the two methods, which has rarely been done.

The participants in our project come from various social and economic backgrounds from different migration contexts with diverse social identities. Therefore, it is essential to consider intersectionality in our research approach and how issues of class, gender, disability, socioeconomic, educational background, citizenship, sexuality or age affect perspectives (Nasser- Eddin & Abu- Assab, 2020; O'Neill, 2018). The literature on intersectionality in relation to participatory methods dispels the misconception that the lived experiences of marginalization and discrimination can be easily captured (Carbado et al., 2013; Lenette, 2022). An intersectional lens allows for exploring multiple and shifting identities instead of focusing on one aspect and excluding other narratives (Lenette, 2022; Nasser- Eddin & Abu- Assab, 2020). A combination of photovoice and videovoice is more conducive to an intersectional approach, providing the opportunity to capture multiple aspects of the participants' lives and being better able to provide social documentation of the everyday realities of LGBTQ+ refugees.

Participatory methods such as photovoice and videovoice also value participants' agency in ways that make sense to them (Lenette et al., 2020) and create opportunities to challenge power dynamics (O'Reilly, 2020) and develop agency. Agency refers to people's opportunities and capabilities to exercise power, negotiate relationships, and actively contribute to knowledge production (Allen, 2008). Refugees and migrants, particularly women and LGBTQ+ people, can often be portrayed as non-agentic, lifeless statistics (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016; Jahan, 2011; Kanal & Rottmann, 2021). Photovoice and videovoice involve more control for participants than other methodological approaches, limiting the misrepresentation of their ideas (Lenette, 2019). We employed video and photos to address agency issues in participatory research by allowing participants to take greater control of how they share their stories and portray themselves to the public. There have been few studies focusing on agency in relation to giving participants the option to do photography and/or video and how that can address power dynamics.

Our previous research in Brazil shows that many refugees and migrants have access to cell phones, and most are already creating personal content, including photos and videos, on social media. We felt that having participants use only one creative approach would be limiting. Given the busy lives of our research participants and the many demands on their time, the participants could only spend a small amount of time on this project. Therefore, we chose an approach that focused more on generating simple content that is typically shared on social media versus in-depth, well-edited videos, more commonly seen with digital story-telling approaches.

3. The Context of the Project

3.1. Aims, collaborations and recruitment process

The project aimed to capture the everyday life of LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants living in Brazil to help fill the knowledge gap in queer south-south migration. Our objective was to empower refugees and migrants to share their stories so that others could learn directly from them – what their every day is like what inspires them, the challenges they face, their journey to belong in their host communities and, in effect, any story they choose to share.

Our initial approach involved contacting LGBTQ+ organizations in Sao Paulo to recruit research participants. However, gaining access to these groups proved challenging, mainly because of the organizations' lack of capacity and bureaucratic obstacles in getting approvals and fitting into strategic plans and timelines. Our persistence in connecting with these organizations eventually linked us with gatekeepers within the organizations who expressed personal interest in our project. Of course, it is important to consider the power dynamics of a gatekeeper - we felt comfortable with these individuals because they had a good reputation in the humanitarian community, and they were associated with a well-established and recognized grassroots organization - which seemed less problematic than larger groups that carry potential negative impressions. Through their support, we were able to establish connections with individuals. Notably, we collaborated with an LGBTQ+ refugee activist from Mozambique who has actively supported LGBTQ+ refugees in their resettlement process within the city. This individual became a collaborator in our research initiative and offered their assistance, facilitating direct connections with refugees in their network. Our local collaborator was a pivotal bridge, helping us gain trust and credibility in engaging and recruiting the initially challenging-to-reach LGBTQ+ refugee community in Sao Paulo. His presence and endorsement provided a vital link that facilitated our access to a diverse range of refugee participants. He was the one that helped us recruit all of the participants.

When advertising the project and workshops to potential participants, we emphasized that it was intentionally designed with safety, skill-building, community-building and fair compensation in mind.

3.1.1. Safety

Safety was at the top of our minds in all aspects of project design, from the location to the photovoice and videovoice-making process. The location was easily accessible by public transport and places that were well-known LGBTQ±friendly spaces within the Sao Paulo queer community. As such, participants were not sent to inaccessible or completely new areas to participate in our project. Our discussions with our LGBTQ+ organization partners confirmed that the two locations, Livraria Simples (a queer bookstore) and Espaço8 Casa Cultural (A cultural center), were good and safe choices. Regarding psychological safety, the facilitator spent a lot of time in the first workshop establishing a safe space for everyone to share

and participate by clearly explaining the project, answering questions, and facilitating ice-breaker activities. The workshops were run by researchers who identified as part of the queer community. We also discussed safety concerns with the participants during the training phase of the workshop. We discussed how to make social media stories and profiles private and asked any participants if they would be uncomfortable posting their stories online or could face negative backlash. All participants shared that they were comfortable, they knew their online audiences, and they had already curated their social media accounts for people who would accept this sort of content. We also spent a lot of time going over the informed consent process. We also reiterated that if they had questions after the first workshop or would like to withdraw at any time during the project or after, they could let us know, and their content and all of their data would be destroyed. We also ensured that they knew that they would still be given an honorarium even if they withdrew their consent and participation later.

3.1.2. Skill-building and community-building

One of our main attractions to participatory methods was their ability to facilitate the co-production of knowledge in a collaborative manner that encourages 'exchange' vs. 'extraction' (Marzi, 2021). Regarding refugee-focused research, we felt it was essential to have a more egalitarian approach to help overcome the power imbalance between researcher and participant (Robertson & Simonsen, 2013) and focus the exchange on skill-building and community-building among participants. In terms of skill-building, we were focused on improving participants' digital skills through simple tutorials on how to use specific social media editing tools, such as apps for editing short videos or simply how to add music or captions within existing platforms like Instagram. Since each participant walked in with different levels of social media literacy, our focus was more on capacity building based on their knowledge and on asking the more skilled participants to assist those with less experience. This contributed to a great deal of community-building among the participants. More details of this will be provided later in this paper. Lastly, as suggested by the LGBTQ+ organizations we consulted, to recognize their participation in the workshop and as a formal recognition of their skill-building, we presented each participant with a signed, physical certificate of completion at the end of the second workshop.

3.2. Workshop setting and compensation

In total, we ran three workshops with 20 participants over a series of seven months. Most participants were from Venezuela, but we also had attendees from Colombia, Mozambique, Haiti, Bolivia, Peru, Guinea-Bissau, and Tunisia. Each workshop was hosted in an LGBTQ±friendly space, including Livraria Simples (a queer bookstore) and Espaço8 Casa Cultural (A cultural center). We worked closely with our local research assistant and contacts at LGBTQ+ organizations in São Paulo to plan the workshop, specifically regarding location, timing and compensation.

We hosted the workshops in central locations that were easy to access through public transit. We were made aware that if the workshop location was not easily accessible, attendance would be low. We were asked if specific transportation support was given, such as compensation for bus tickets, and we decided against specific compensation for bus fare and instead offered a reasonable honorarium that would account for transportation costs. This approach helped us avoid logistical issues that come with reimbursement, like carrying around correct change, having proof of purchase for the bus fare or accusations of unfairness if someone decides to come from farther away and would thus be reimbursed more than someone who walks to the workshop instead. In terms of timing, given that refugees and migrants often work in the service sector or have informal jobs, such as gig work, we decided that holding the workshops in the evening would make it more accessible for more people.

In terms of compensation, after extensive deliberation with our local research assistant and our contacts at LGBTQ+ organizations in Sao Paulo, we decided it was best to offer them what would be similar to 2 weeks of part-time work because we are asking participants to produce content over two weeks, ideally at least five pieces of content. We used the minimum wage at the time, which was approximately 60 Brazilian reis a day for full-time work, which would mean 30 Brazilian reis would be the equivalent of a day of part-time work. Thus, 30 Brazilian reais (R$) for ten business days of work is R$300 (USD 60). They were paid R$150 after the first workshop and R$150 after the second workshop. The workshops were recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Through our discussions with our local partners, the compensation combined with the skill-building and community-building would be fair for participants to participate in both workshops. While we were optimistic, we were uncertain that everyone who came to the first workshop would return for the second. However, we did have a 100% retention rate. We believe a significant motivator was compensation because we were paying them a fair wage for their participation, and we were respectful of their time and conscious that some people may be skipping work to attend our workshops. We understand that São Paulo is an expensive city to live in, so paying them a fair wage was necessary. We also gave them a lot of flexibility because while we asked them to take photos and/or videos over two weeks, they were only required to produce at least five pieces of content. Participants could have taken them all in one day or over several days, but from our calculations, the required work days would be much less than two weeks part-time. This consideration was also done on purpose to allow for the funds to cover transportation to the workshops, meals, and any costs associated with the data needed to access the internet to use social media apps. When we reflect on the role of compensation, we are confident in our choice to pay refugee and migrant participants a fair wage for their time. Compensation demonstrates respect and egalitarianism, which is important for participatory research.

3.3. Platform choice and sharing the content

We decided to use Instagram as the platform for sharing content. We wanted to pick a social media application that respondents were already familiar with using, which was photo- and video-based and allowed them to edit their photos and videos with filters, text, and stickers. Therefore, Instagram would give them a more comprehensive range of options to express themselves, so they were not only limited to photos and videos and captions alone, but they could put fun filters, trending stickers, music, and their own captions within the content. We also picked Instagram because it is user-friendly and requires little instructions on how to use its features. Instagram was also ideal as it allowed us to curate and save the content the users produced so we could access it later. During the initial workshop, we confirmed with participants that they were comfortable using Instagram, and all participants indicated that it was the ideal platform.

The ability to overcome the challenge of language barriers was another reason we had decided to choose photovoice and videovoice and to use a social media platform to share the content. Instagram was selected as the sharing platform because its built-in tools and features allow language translation. These tools make posts accessible to everyone viewing, irrespective of language barriers. Photovoice and videovoice and their combination are powerful tools to convey emotions, even without the need for spoken words. Mobility, belonging and struggle are all important emotions that participants may be feeling and wanting to express. In surveys and interviews, these powerful emotions that are the basis of a great deal of migration research are limited to mainly written descriptions and interpretations by the researcher. Through photovoice and videovoice, these emotions can be expressed by refugees and migrants themselves in their framing - without the interference of a researcher - allowing for greater power and agency for the participant. Once the participants are comfortable using the editing tools, they determine what content they choose to capture and how they present it.

When the workshops were all done, and we curated all of the content created, we made a video compilation of some of the content in more of an explainer-style video to share at conferences. At the time of writing this article, the compilation of the video has been shared at conferences in London, Toronto, and Twente. It is also published on YouTube for the public to watch.

4. Procedure

4.1. Workshop One

Workshop one was an introduction to the project for the participants. The facilitator gave participants a consent form to ensure their understanding of the project and voluntary participation. An overview of the project was presented, including information about the financial support they would receive during the two-week workshop. The concepts of photovoice and

videovoice were discussed, emphasizing the use of Instagram as a medium for sharing their content. All participants had Instagram accounts (this was not a prerequisite for participating). The importance and power of sharing content online were highlighted. We discussed with participants 1) the queer influencers that they enjoyed, 2) why they enjoyed or followed those accounts, and 3) why the content those influencers created was so engaging. This discussion was to introduce and get participants to start thinking about the content they already see and may want to replicate or contribute to. Next, we discussed effective social media storytelling techniques and why the stories of queer migrants were important to share.

We spent time brainstorming with the participants about what aspects of their lives they would like to share, from simple content, such as what they do in the morning, to more complex content, such as how to communicate their hopes and dreams as refugees and migrants living in Brazil. We emphasized that the creative control was in the hands of the participants but encouraged them to highlight whatever social realities and identities they felt comfortable sharing.

We then provided a brief training session on taking quality photographs and videos. We showcased examples of photos and videos from well-known Brazilian influencers or quality content from previous workshops. We gave examples of well-framed images and demonstrated the use of good lighting. The discussion then shifted to video creation, with significant time dedicated to exploring video formats on Instagram. Participants were then introduced to Capcut, a simple and free video editing application typically used to create content for Instagram and TikTok. To demonstrate how to film compelling videos using your phone and how to edit them quickly, we would record six short videos and guide the participants on how to edit them using Capcut. We stressed that using Capcut or any other app was unnecessary for the project. It was framed as a useful tool that could be helpful to be trained on for this project or future endeavours. Some of the participants were already familiar with the application. The facilitator addressed any additional questions from the participants to ensure clarity and understanding. We then created a WhatsApp group as a community hub to share our content and provide support, then set our next meeting date two weeks from the first workshop.

4.1. Second Workshop

The second workshop comprised three distinct components to further the study's objective: 1) participants sharing their content with the group, 2) group interview, and 3) group discussion of themes.

First, the session commenced with the sharing and exhibition of the participants' generated content with the entire group. Using an iPad, the videos and photographs produced by each participant were shared, enabling a collective appreciation and acknowledgment of their hard work from their peers. While the content was shared, the participants offered feedback and praise and asked one another questions.

Figure 1. Participants receiving training and reviewing consent forms during workshop one.

The second workshop then progressed to a group interview segment, where participants were prompted to reflect upon their content and experience. They were encouraged to articulate their perspectives about the significance of sharing their personal lives and experiences through digital media. Participants were then engaged in a discussion encompassing themes such as their perceptions of life in Brazil, the significance of developing and sharing content related to LGBTQ+ lives on social media platforms, and what they want the public, particularly policy-makers, to know about their lived realities in Brazil. This qualitative approach facilitated the exploration of participants' motivations, beliefs, and rationales regarding their photo and video contributions. It also collected valuable data about photovoice and videovoice as a methodology with queer migrants and refugees.

5. Findings

5.1. Impacts

5.1.1. Final Content Outcomes

All participants completed the project. We had a 100% retention rate between the first and second workshops. Every participant captured at least one photo and created one video, with most producing 4-10 pieces of content.

5.1.2. Impact on the Lives of Participants

The impacts of this project were diverse. We heard directly from participants that they were grateful for the project because it encouraged them to create content that showcased their lives to a broader audience

Figure 2. Participants taking a group photo after sharing their pictures and videos during workshop two.

and allowed them to tell the story of who they wanted to be. The project encouraged participants to develop their life narratives and post about whatever they wanted. Participants appreciated that the project both pushed them to be creative in how they showcased their lives and allowed them to post simple things that highlighted the sometimes mundane existence of their lives. The photos and videos they posted included content that highlighted their triumphs, struggles, and day-to-day life. Overwhelmingly, participants mentioned that the project allowed them to feel freedom and happiness because we encouraged them to be their authentic selves.

5.1.3. Impact on Community Building

Another impact of the project is related to community building. Sharing personal stories offered a compelling experience of inclusion and community building through the process of relating and learning from others. In big urban centres like São Paulo, it can be difficult for LGBTQ+ migrants to meet other LGBTQ+ migrants, often leading to feelings of loneliness. The participants were grateful for the opportunity to connect with other LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants during the workshops. They expressed gratitude for the ability to form lifelong friendships with other queer people who share the same realities and challenges living in Brazil. Many said they wanted to keep in touch after the workshops were completed.

Moreover, participants highlighted the impact of the online communities generated by the content they shared. Participants expressed how grateful they were to see other refugees and migrants sharing their experiences online because they had craved this content but never had a point of reference as to where to find it. Some participants also shared that they were really proud of their work when they received their certificates of completion.

An unexpected outcome was that people became friends and continued to interact, meet, and build stronger bonds both inside and outside the workshops. We created WhatsApp groups for workshop participants, and these chats were quite lively during the workshops and after the project's conclusion, with people discussing the project and organizing social gatherings and sharing community events. While we had imagined that a positive outcome of the project could be friendships and connections outside the workshop, we were unsure if it would come to fruition. Indeed, multiple participants told us that they had become friends and had hung out with each other outside of the workshops and planned to continue doing so.

During the second workshop's discussion process, friendship and community building were often the project's most positive outcomes for participants. People cited that especially the videos they shared in the Whatsapp groups and during the second workshop allowed them to connect better, understand, and even develop stronger bonds with other workshop participants as the videos brought to life the lived realities of migrants and refugees and allowed a more personal connection with the content creators.

5.1.4. Impact on Skill Building

The workshops also allowed migrants to exchange their photo and video skills with fellow participants. All the participants owned cell phones, most of whom had Instagram accounts. Furthermore, several individuals in each group demonstrated proficiency in photo and video editing, with a few having even created and released short documentaries in the past. Given the abundance of skills and knowledge within each group, participants willingly offered to share their expertise with others. Notably, those with technical skills dedicated additional time to assist fellow refugees and migrants in becoming comfortable with video editing software and continued to provide support through the WhatsApp groups. Facilitating skill sharing not only empowered participants to showcase their capabilities but also fostered a sense of community and collaboration among group members.

5.1.5. Impact on Literature

One of the objectives of this project was to help break the binary of south-north migration and queer migration literature that is still primarily focused on LGBTQ+ people leaving "oppressive" countries in the "global south" for free and sexually liberated countries in the "global north" (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2016). We did that by providing spaces for south-south migration stories and voices, and it worked. Participants highlighted that it was scarce to see stories of other queer migrants from the global south, or even queer

Figure 3. Example of a video produced by Brian from Bolivia showcasing their job making wigs.

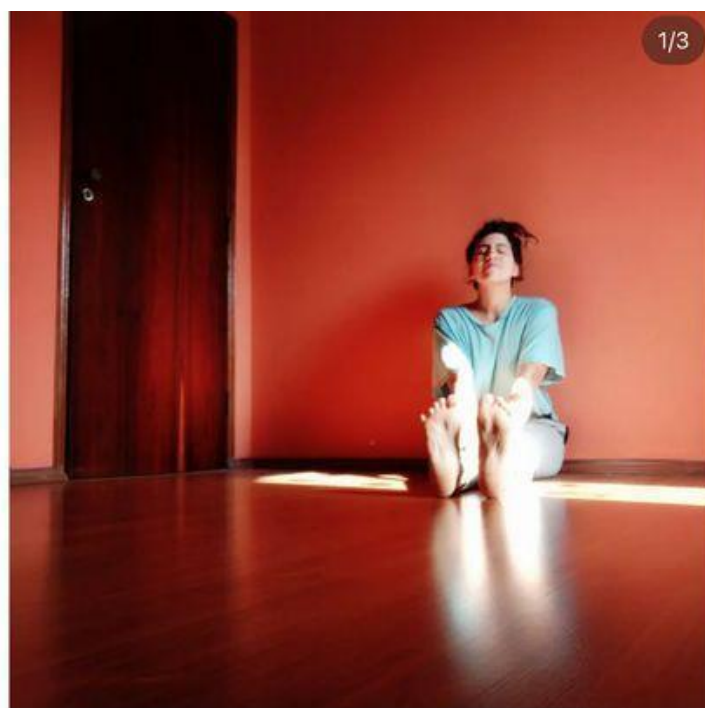Figure 4. Edited photo submitted by Chiki, a participant from Venezuela.

Figure 5. Submitted photo by Yza, a participant from Argentina.

people from their countries of origin online and that sharing their own stories helped them feel seen and position themselves within the global migration narrative that tends to invisibilize them. They also appreciated that we wanted them to share their struggles, aspirations, dreams, and everyday experiences because most of what they hear about migrants in the media is in relation to the economy, not their values as human beings. As such, by humanizing LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants by capturing their experiences through photovoice and videovoice, we are also contributing to diversifying migrant narratives.

5.1.6. Impact on Methodological Innovation

When considering the use of video, we considered it as a tool to represent people's diverse, intersectional identities better, as the video would better allow participants to capture the nuances and vast intricacies of their daily lives. We had previously heard from research participants that they felt frozen, so we did not want to limit people to freezing their identity into one picture. The use of video allowed participants to capture various aspects of their lives. In the finished projects, we saw people share various aspects of their lives and multiple social identities, highlighting everything from their work life, partying, education, religion, dating, gender expression, and advocacy work in a two-minute Instagram video.

When designing the project, we theorized that allowing for the creation of video would give the participants more agency to share more dynamic aspects of their lives and more avenues for them to tell their stories than solely using photographs. We discussed the use of video during the initial workshop, with overwhelming support from participants, as they would be able to share more

details about their lives than if solely using photographs. The use of video allowed the participants more agency to show us what they wanted in the form they wanted and gave them the choice of whichever creative method they wanted to employ in telling their story. At first, we were hesitant about providing such flexibility to participants, trying to balance both process and varying skill levels, but ultimately, handing more creative control over to the participants allowed for more agency, helped eliminate power imbalances, and led to greater excitement with participants.

Lastly, combining photovoice and videovoice is innovative as it accounts for people's varying comfort and experience with digital methods. The combination acts as a bridge between what people are comfortable with and have heard of - photovoice - and something new and slightly more challenging - videovoice. We felt that asking participants, especially those with precarious legal status and who are generally seen as vulnerable within society, to do videovoice only was not an excellent way to build rapport, and we needed to be more respectful of participants' varying comfort and skill levels. As such, we encourage the combination of both photovoice and videovoice as fitting for future projects that are looking for creative and participatory storytelling methodologies.

5.2. Limitations

The mapping and recruitment process proved to be challenging. It was difficult to get in touch with refugee-serving organizations that had connections to the LGBTQ+ community in São Paulo. Most organizations were slow to respond or unable to help us. Organizations were also unwilling to host us in their space or pass on contact information to potential participants. This forced us to change our approach and broaden our search. Initially, we had intended to primarily involve LGBTQ+ Venezuelans to participate in the project, but because of our lack of connections to that community and the difficulty we had in establishing new connections, we broadened the project to include LGBTQ+ migrants and refugees from any region to participate. This allowed us to recruit a significant number of participants but also created some unexpected challenges. The main challenge was language barriers when giving instruction during Workshop One or engaging in more inclusive discussions in Workshop Two. Given that we had people from different countries, several languages often needed to be spoken back to back to provide instructions during workshop one. Our local research assistant was fluent in English, Portuguese, Spanish, and a bit of French, which helped to cover the main languages that needed to be used. However, having to repeat instructions in four different languages was still a source of frustration and logistical delays. Some participants could not speak Portuguese or Spanish, while some only spoke French or English. This resulted in some participants being unable or too shy to participate in the group discussions during the second workshop. Consequently, we could not engage some participants to share their project experience meaningfully.

Another limitation of the project was the timelines, with a two-week window being a tight timeframe to run this project. Many participants wanted more time to create and edit content and felt rushed to generate five posts in two weeks. Additionally, having only two two-hour workshops also limited our ability to meet, train, and bond with the participants. Due to differences in video and photo editing skills, some participants needed more help from the facilitator through WhatsApp after the first workshop. This led to varying levels of agency in the creative process, depending on each participant's editing skills and reliance on assistance from the facilitator.

Finally, another limitation was that despite participants having access to phones, some reported lacking access to funds to use their data for the project. As a result, some participants experienced problems downloading photo and video editing apps and had to wait until they had access to reliable wifi. Additionally, some participants reported lacking space on their phones to store their photos and videos and had to create space to participate in the project.

5.3. Improvements

There are several areas where improvements can be made to enhance the video and photo voice workshops we conducted with LGBTQ+ refugees in São Paulo. One aspect is providing participants with even more creative freedom and encouraging them to set and achieve their goals. Rather than prescribing a specific number of content pieces, such as five, engaging in collaborative goal-setting with the participants would be more beneficial. Some participants created over ten pieces of content, while others chose to create one long, well-produced video. This goal-setting approach ensures inclusivity, encourages more agency, and recognizes that participants may have varying capacities and schedules. By allowing participants to determine the quantity and type of content they feel comfortable creating, we can better tailor the workshops to their individual needs and circumstances. We will also be able to better hone in on the type of content they are interested in creating and provide them with any support or resources they need to develop that content.

To further enhance the content production among participants, extending the duration of the workshops and increasing touchpoints with the participants would be advantageous. The two-week workshop timeframe may have been limiting in terms of allowing participants to explore and refine their skills fully. By allocating more time to the process, participants can engage in deeper learning, practice, and experimentation, improving photo and video creation abilities. Additionally, increasing the frequency of touchpoints, such as weekly or bi-weekly sessions, where we could check in and share progress, would provide ongoing support, feedback, and guidance to participants. This extended engagement would continue to build a sense of continuity and strengthen community building, something participants said was a highlight. A longer timeline with more touch points would also enable people to receive ongoing encouragement, which can contribute to a greater

motivation to produce content. By investing more time and establishing consistent interactions, participants can gain confidence, refine their skills, and ultimately create a larger body of meaningful and impactful content.

During the first workshop, we focused our limited time on skill-building related to photo-taking and video editing. We had a diverse group of participants in each workshop, with varying levels of photography and videography skills. In our first workshop, we experienced some frustration, with some participants wanting to skip over more rudimentary training and others stressing they wanted more time spent learning the basics. As a result, in the intake process for workshops moving forward, we asked them about their photography and video-making skill levels so as to better plan subsequent workshops.

Finally, it is essential to encourage and motivate participants to engage actively in training and skill-sharing with one another. Although skill sharing occurred naturally during the project, it was an unexpected outcome. During our first workshop, some participants jokingly dismissed the idea of learning basic skills like lighting and photo angles, considering them trivial. However, other participants expressed their desire and need for such instruction. Actively involving participants with existing skills in the process of skill sharing can be both empowering and beneficial. It can enhance skill development and provide valuable support for participants. It can also help eliminate or address possible power imbalances by involving the facilitator in the creative process. Moreover, it would make the experience even more rewarding for the photo and video experts present in the room.

6. Conclusion

The use of photovoice and videovoice proved to be powerful methodologies for exploring the experiences of LGBTQ+ refugees and migrants in Brazil. The outcome of these participatory methods was that it allowed research participants to reclaim their narratives, be seen by a broader audience, delve into the intricate nuances of queer migration, learn new skills, and build community with other queer refugees in São Paulo. By transcending language and literacy barriers, these visual mediums empowered individuals to present their world on their terms, fostering a sense of agency and amplifying their voices within the global community (Mitchell et al., 2017; Sutton-Brown, 2014; C. C. Wang, 2006).

These project outcomes contribute to the argument for increasing the use of digital participatory methods in migration research. The accessibility of photovoice and videovoice - physically, socially, culturally and linguistically - opens new possibilities for research, emphasizing the importance of co-creating knowledge and acknowledging participants' unique perspectives and expertise. This project's skill-building and community-building outcomes also contribute to the argument that research does not necessarily need to be extractive (Marzi, 2021). Instead, it can be re-oriented to centre and recognize the experiences and knowledge of participants.

Future endeavours can enhance these methodologies by leveraging the familiarity and reach of platforms like Instagram and enabling participants to craft their stories through a combination of photovoice and videovoice. As the field of participatory research continues to evolve, it is crucial to address the gaps and limitations and strive for ongoing enhancements in methodology to further empower and engage queer refugees in their journeys of self-expression and advocacy.

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