CHILDREN'S INDEPENDENT MOBILITY

A child-oriented perspective on walking, playing and socialising in Cali, Colombia.
Case Study: Vivo Mi Calle

Maria Clara Trujillo Pérez
MSc. Transport and City Planning
Supervisor: Dr. Daniel Oviedo Hernández

UCL   VIVO MI CALLE   despacio®

Cali, Colombia
Photo: Vivo Mi Calle

"An interview with a 10-year-old living in a new urban development (…)
Interviewer: Okay, and what did you play…?
Simon 1: We played walking… just walking around"   *(Horton et al., 2014)*

Independent Mobility

"Permission for children to move without adult supervision in their neighbourhood and city so they can explore and learn about the environment at their own rhythm, toward a progressive and wider freedom of action [play, socialise] and movement [access]"   *(Lopes et al. 2018, p.2)*

Research aims

To explore the role of independent mobility (IM) in promoting children's wellbeing and social participation in their neighbourhoods while walking, playing and socialising.

The discussion seeks to understand the neighbourhood qualities that shape IM and promote play and development, from children's point of view.
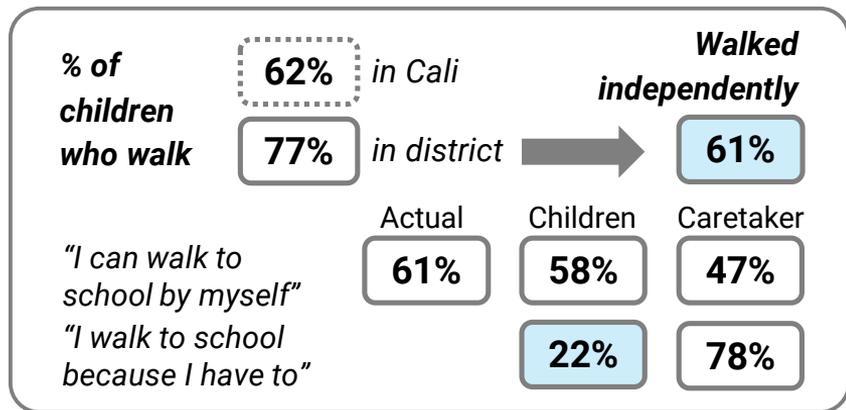
Methodology

The research examines the project **'Vivo Mi Calle' in Cali, Colombia** through a mixed method approach.

The analysis primarily centres on a secondary **study of 285 children and guardians' questionnaires, reinterpreted through 5 themes of discussion:**
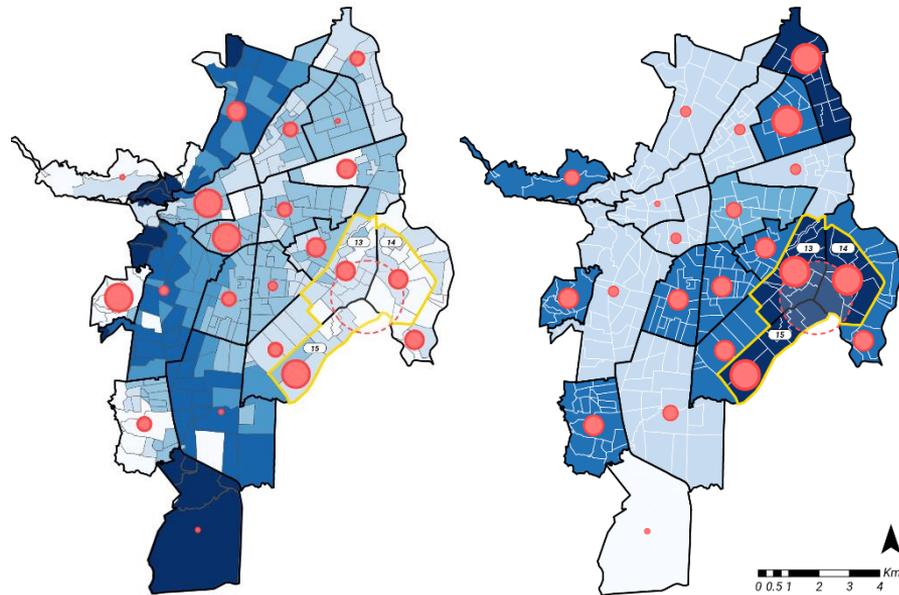
1. Licence to walk and play, 2. Walking perceptions, 3. Walking experiences, 4. Neighbourhood community and 5. Playability

Key findings and discussion

% of children who walk

62% *in Cali*

77% *in district* ➡ **Walked independently** 61%

Actual	Children	Caretaker
61%	58%	47%
	22%	78%

"I can walk to school by myself"
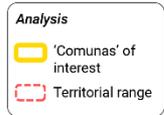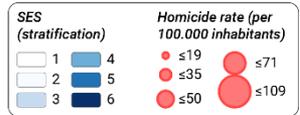
"I walk to school because I have to"

1 *Actual independent mobility, children's perceived licence and parental licence differed.*

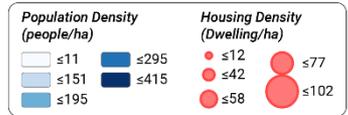<u>What initiatives in the built and social environment could translate into greater freedom?</u>

2 *While the built environment is inadequate, the social environment is the main barrier to IM & play.*

<u>How can the built environment contribute to the perception of security?</u>

SES range + Homicide rate

SES (stratification): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Homicide rate (per 100.000 inhabitants): ≤19, ≤35, ≤50, ≤71, ≤109

Analysis: 'Comunas' of interest, Territorial range

Population + Housing density

Population Density (people/ha): ≤11, ≤151, ≤195, ≤295, ≤415

Housing Density (Dwelling/ha): ≤12, ≤42, ≤58, ≤77, ≤102

0 0.5 1 2 3 4 Km

Discussion

70% *Of children are not allowed to play on the street*

Time outdoors on a weekday

No time	Up to 1 hr
50%	**20%**

Time outdoors on the weekend

No time	2+ hours
7%	**76%**

"I am offered drugs along the way"

Children	Caretaker
13%	**82%**

3 *Social safety mainly affects independent travel to 'non-essential' activities & enjoying the street.*

How can community ties contribute to freedom of play and sociability?

4 *When play and socialising are allowed, the built environment does little to promote interaction.*

How can the street and public space create more affordances and sense of belonging?

Recommendations

Rethink the meaning of mobility to children and youth

From a focus on physical activity to one on wellbeing

A child-oriented framework based on attachment and affordance

Place their voices at the heart of the research, policies and initiatives

Encourage independence and play

Promote the street as a meeting place

Safe walking routes to child-friendly destinations

Thank You!

Maria Clara Trujillo Pérez
MSc. Transport and City Planning
University College London
m.perez.19@alumni.ucl.ac.uk
@mariactrujillo

Recife, Brazil
Photo: Urban95