The importance of public transport in urban setting and the impact of crime

Urban public transport is a city’s backbone – an essential element for both its development and its connectivity. It facilitates day-to-day travel for individuals throughout the urban environment. In London, 2.35 billion bus journeys take place every year (Gov.uk, 2014); there are more than 3 billion underground journeys in Tokyo and more than 1.6 billion in New York (UITP, 2014b). In Cali, in Colombia, 70% of the population use the public transport system (Jaramillo, Lizárraga, & Grindlay, 2012).

Despite this, crime on public transport and the fear of crime associated with it can have a negative effect on how the service is used, and thus on the development of the city in the broadest sense of the term. Crime implies risk to the physical safety of both passengers and staff, as well as financial losses. Some studies have shown that the consequences of theft on public transport are very serious given that they affect poor people more than others. People from poor environments tend to carry cash, since they do not necessarily have bank accounts, making them easy targets for potential thieves (Paes-Machado & Levenstein, 2004).

Perceptions or anticipation of this type of crime by the users and staff of public transport can provoke fear of crime, discouraging people from using public transport or making travel unpleasant or even stressful. In Mexico in 2009, for example, fear of crime discouraged 25% of individuals surveyed from taking a taxi, and 17% from using other forms of public transport (ICESI, 2010).

When people do not have any alternative means of travelling within a city, which is often the case for families with low socioeconomic status (Jaramillo et al., 2012), this lack of access to transport can result in marginalization. Access to public transport has a significant impact on social development, particularly for the most deprived since it provides access to jobs, education, health services and leisure activities (UK Department for Transport, 2013). For example, in a study carried out in England, 38% of jobseekers said that a lack of private or quality public transport was a hindrance to employment. In addition, one person in four was obliged to restrict his or her job search because the cost of a ticket to travel to the interview was too high (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003).

This issue is particularly visible in the case of women. The harassment they are exposed to makes them less confident about travelling freely in public places. A recent study highlighted a vicious circle whereby women find themselves excluded from the job market because of problems of access to safe means of transport, which in turn prevents them from ever being in a strong position to demand safe public transport, and effectively increases their social exclusion (FIA Foundation, 2016). Read more on women’s safety in chapter 2.

Furthermore, crime on ground public transport can have an even wider impact on the social construction of a city, and particularly on the stereotypes that lead to social exclusion. A study in Brazil showed that crime on buses increased racist and elitist attitudes. When drivers try to protect themselves against potential aggression, they sometimes chose to exclude certain clients, and black people and the poor were frequently targets of these arbitrary choices. Such choices were even sometimes supported by other passengers (Paes-Machado & Levenstein, 2004).

Consequently, crime and fear of crime on urban public transport are doubly important. On the one hand, they affect millions of city-dwellers who travel daily, risking their physical safety and lowering their quality of life. On the other, they have a much wider influence on the development of the city in general, and social inclusion in particular. This makes it essential to develop policies to prevent crime and fear of crime on urban public transport.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the risk factors specific to public transport, as well as the influence of the organization of a city on such crime and associated fear of crime. It then discusses measures to prevent crime and fear of crime.
Trends in crime and fear of crime on public transport around the world

This section focuses on trends in crime and fear of crime on urban public transport around the world. It compares data from different cities and countries to determine whether or not there are any constants: the same rates of theft, fraud or personal injury found across the world? Are crime levels on public transport higher or lower than those in the city as a whole? Are some personnel more often targeted than others? Are women more likely to feel unsafe using public transport than men?

Finding clear information on these situations is a complex process, given the difficulties associated with obtaining global data on this subject. In effect they are among the least studied in criminology (Martin, 2011). It is, however, possible to look at trends and differences in rates of crime and fear of crime around the world.

Public transport is a microcosm in itself which takes many forms, and has particular characteristics. It involves enclosed, moving spaces, transporting large numbers of individuals, or others in isolation. It has its own infrastructure and personnel with specific functions. The specific characteristics of public transport make it possible to examine common issues in terms of crime and fear of crime globally.

Levels of crime and fear on public transport also vary considerably from one city to another. This is because transport systems are strongly influenced by their urban environment, and reflect the dynamics of local crime.

Thus, transport is a distinct aspect of a city, but one that must be studied in the context of urban dynamics. In other words, it is a system within a system.

Crime and fear of crime on public transport are the result of interactions between both these dimensions, and preventing them means examining them together.

Measurement challenges

Measuring crime and fear of crime in urban public transport is generally problematic, making international comparisons complicated. Data are often of poor quality or incomplete. There are many reasons for this, but they can be grouped into seven categories.

First of all, there is a lack of definition of infractions linked to transport. In particular, the area in which crime takes place is not clearly defined: should it refer only to infractions in vehicles or also those that occur at stops, or on the route leading to and from stops (Martin, 2011)? This problem is all the greater with regard to fear of crime, given that this concept does not have a universally accepted definition.

Second, the data collection methodology is not standardized: there are different sources, collection processes are weak, and measures of crime and fear of crime are heterogeneous (Racineux & Mermoud, 2003).

Third, there is often no body responsible for collecting such data. Police forces are not obliged to record infractions which take place on public transport unless they are reported, and transport companies usually have no obligation to publish data on incidents that occur within their area (Newton, 2004).

Fourth, it is estimated that between 70% and 97% of incidents are not reported (see in particular Levine and Wachs, 1986a in Newton, 2004; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1999; Martin, 2011; Vilalta, 2011). Transport companies tend to be more aware of serious crimes since victims require treatment, but in the case of theft, victims do not always realize something is missing until they have left the transport system (Fussy et al., 2012).

Fifth, a particularity of crime while on public transport is it that takes place in motion, it is not static. In other words, it is difficult to report a geographically precise location for an infraction in a moving vehicle, as with traditional data-recording methods (Newton, 2004).

Sixth, lack of transparency can also have a negative impact on knowledge of the extent of crime on public transport. Since security is a sensitive subject, some institutions may not be willing to share such information (Racineux & Mermoud, 2003).

Finally, it is apparent when reviewing safety audits on public transport, that public authorities often fail to collect disaggregated data concerning the different groups of users, such as men, women, the elderly and...
indigenous populations, for example. This in turn makes it difficult to develop policies that are adapted to the needs of these different groups.

Transport crime trends around the world

This section looks at trends in crime and fear of crime in relation to specific public transport systems in cities around the world.

Offences against property are much more common than those against people (see Figure 4.2 and 4.3). This is significant given, as discussed above, that theft is rarely reported compared with serious and violent crime (Fussy et al., 2012).

Generally speaking, the type of crime varies between day and night. During daytime and rush hours, theft appears to be the most common, while crimes of violence are more likely to occur at night.

Globally, certain types of employees in the transport sector are more likely to be victimized than others. For example, bus and taxi drivers are more likely to be victimized than underground train drivers.

In France, one study found that 94% of attacks concerned personnel in surface vehicles (buses and trams), versus only 5.1% on underground metro trains (UTP, 2009). The International Labour Organization (ILO) also stresses that driving a bus is "an occupation with high risks" and that, in comparison with other professional groups, absenteeism and disability rates

Box 4.2 Promising initiatives for measuring crime

Given these various challenges, a number of tools and initiatives have been implemented to improve the data collection process.

Among the tools implemented are victimization surveys and women’s exploratory walks.

The Chamber of Commerce in Bogotá, Colombia, uses a victimization and perception survey twice a year. This survey integrates the measurement of crime in transport into a broader survey of urban crime, making it possible to compare public spaces and measure their levels of crime and fear of crime. The victimization survey responds to the difficulties outlined above regarding the lack of bodies responsible for collecting such data, to unreported crime levels, and lack of transparency – the problem of unwillingness to disclose crime data.

The women’s exploratory walks also makes it possible to obtain information about crime on public transport. Groups of people are invited to travel around a specific area in order to identify the places which make them feel unsafe and to propose solutions (ICPC, 2014). The French rail company, SNCF, as well as the operator AMT in Montreal, Canada, have used this method (see, for example, SNCF, 2014). The exploratory walks makes it possible to establish a link between crime and fear of crime on public transport and their urban context. This tool can also be used in relation to routes between a given stop and the final destination in the city.

Certain countries, cities or transport companies have also implemented more wide-ranging initiatives as a means of improving the quality of the data and their analysis.

In the US, the Transportation Research Board, which acts as a consultant for various government bodies, has developed guidelines for collecting, analysing and reporting on transit crime data. This project had a dual objective: proposing an operational definition of crime in transport and developing a unified method for collecting data relating to transport (Chisholm, 2001).²

In France, in 2008, a decree³ made it possible to create the Observatoire National de la Délinquance dans les Transports (National Observatory on Delinquency in Transport) within the Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy. It is responsible for collecting data from transport operators, analysing them in relation to their context, and conducting studies on current issues such as violence against women on public transport, victimization and fear of crime, and social mediation. In addition, this research helps to strengthen public policies to reduce crime and to support transport providers (Ministère chargé des transports, 2016).

Finally, in Belgium, criminologists have been recruited by transport companies to study crime in their networks (EVA-Académie européenne pour un transport respectueux de l’environnement gGmbH, 2012).
are higher (Essenberg, 2003, p. 11). Finally, taxi drivers are particularly exposed to the risk of homicide. For example, in the US the risk of being a victim of homicide among taxi drivers is four times higher than for law enforcement officers (Schwer, Mejza, & Grun-Réhomme, 2010), and it is the legitimate profession that is the most at risk in Canada (Perreault, 2013).

In terms of victimization of men and women, certain trends can also be identified. Generally speaking, men are more often victims of crime on public transport than women (Morgan and Smith, 2006 in Smith, 2008), but for women fear of crime is higher (see, for example, Guilloux, 2012 & Smith, 2008). However, this can be explained by the protective measures that women impose on themselves: a recent study showed that all women adopt “specific transport practices that range from vigilance to avoidance” (Guilloux, 2015, p. 6).

Women are more often victims of certain types of crime, such as sexual assault, for example (TTC et al., 1989 in Smith, 2008 & Smith, 2008) and muggings (Smith et al., 1986b in Smith, 2008). A recent international study on the safety of women on public transport also highlighted that women and girls face high levels of harassment (both physical and verbal) almost everywhere when they use transport systems, and are particularly vulnerable when walking to or from stops (FIA Foundation, 2016). The report also shows that the level of security decreases when vehicles are overcrowded.

Although there are very few national studies of crime on public transport, and even fewer at the international level, it appears that rates are for the most part decreasing, in line with the international decrease in crime in general (Transit Cooperative Research Program, 2009 in Newton, 2014). For example, in New York, USA, the crime rate on the subway has decreased by 87% since the 1990s, even though use of the system has almost doubled (NYPD, 2014). This tendency can also be seen in London, England, where transport crime roughly halved between 2004 and 2014 (Mayor of London & Transport for London, 2014).

A variable phenomenon

Crime and fear of crime on public transport also vary considerably in terms of their distribution across a city and often in relation to specific areas of a city.

a) Crime

Crime on public transport needs to be seen, compared to the city, as areas which have higher or lower rates of crime. For example, in Bogotá, Colombia, 33% of all urban crime occurs on public transport (Dirección de Seguridad Ciudadana y Empresarial, Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá, 2015); in Ecuador, 20.68% of thefts (Instituto nacional de estadístic y censos, 2011); and in Montreal 1.7% of criminal offences (SPVM, 2008).
Certain types of crime also affect some countries more than others. In 2016, Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela, for example, were particularly at risk of kidnappings (Control Risks, 2016). This is also reflected in public transport, particularly taxis, where what is known as “express kidnapping” or a “millionaire tour” [paseo millonario] happen. The passenger is forced by accomplices who get into the taxi to withdraw cash from cash machines (Cawley, 2014). Such events are very rare in Europe in general (Control Risks, 2016). The same is true for terrorist attacks on transport systems. Such attacks have generally been more common in countries in which there is political instability, or armed conflict (Jenkins & Gerston, 2001).

Rates also vary from one city to another with regard to the segment of travel where most crime occurs on public transport – whether on the journey to the stop, at the stop itself, or on the vehicle. In Los Angeles, USA, for example, one study shows that 67% of offences occur at bus stops (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1999); this figure is 6.5% in Bogotá (Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá, 2009).

It would also seem that no one means of transport is safer than others, but this does depend on the city. For example, in Washington, DC, USA, commuter trains have the highest crime rate, and much higher than buses (Metro, n.d.), whereas in London this trend is reversed (URBS Team, n.d.).
b) Fear of crime

Fear of crime also varies significantly between cities, ranging from as low as 5% in Auckland, New Zealand (Ministry of Transport, 2012) to 68% in Mexico City (Instituto Mexicano para la Competitividad, 2015), and 74% in Bogotá (Dirección de Seguridad Ciudadana y Empresarial, Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá, 2015).

Again, fear of crime varies depending on travel segment. In London, England, transit stops are seen as the least safe, with 25% of individuals feeling insecure, followed by 21% for the route leading to the stop. The safest place seems to be within the vehicle, with only 17% feeling insecure (Future thinking, 2015). On the contrary, in Bogotá, the least safe place is the route leading to the stop, with 95% feeling insecure, compared with 79% at the stop, and 68% on the bus (Cámara de Comercio de Bogotá, 2015).

Generally, fear of crime is higher at night, but again with major variations. For example, in Calgary, only 20% of users report feeling unsafe at night (Calgary Transit, 2016) whereas in Kathmandu, 55% of women and 45% of men feel unsafe (CANN & CEN, 2012).

In conclusion, data on crime and fear of crime on public transport show that it relates to two factors: the transport network itself, and the urban environment in which it is situated.

Risk factors for crime and fear of crime on public transport: A system within the city

Crime and fear of crime in urban public transport are related to a number of risk factors that are common to all systems around the world. On the one hand, these risk factors are linked to how the city is organized. As discussed above, transport systems are an integral part of a city and they are affected by its organization and characteristics. On the other hand, since public transport is a microcosm of urban life, it has its own risk factors. This section looks at the influence of a city’s organization on levels of insecurity in public transport.

The influence of the city on security in public transport

As shown above, crime and fear of crime on urban public transport cannot be understood in isolation from their social and environmental context. This section analyses the influence of a city’s organization on the transport systems that cross it, as well as the continuity of crime between the different areas. This analysis makes it possible to grasp the importance of implementing integral prevention strategies articulated around the city and its public transport.

a) The influence of environmental design

Criminologists have long been able to show that crime is not the result of chance. On the contrary, certain situations make it easier to commit crimes. The environment can have an influence on an individual’s decision as to whether or not to commit a crime, by making it more or less easy. Dark areas, the presence of hiding places and a possible escape route are all elements that decrease the likelihood of being caught,
Four aspects of the principles of CPTED set out in Box 4.3 can be applied in the case of public transport.

First, the sense of belonging among people in neighbourhoods is often cited as an important element in crime prevention. For example, in Toulouse, France, unemployed residents in a neighbourhood were entrusted with the maintenance of transport stops. Since they were well known in the district, this discouraged others from committing crimes, making those stops the best kept on the entire network (EFUS, 1996).

Second, the design of an area should facilitate natural surveillance. This applies, for example, to the areas around transit stops: when there is insufficient lighting, this can make crime more attractive by creating opportunity.

Third, crime on public transport is also influenced by the city’s land-use planning. The position of transit stops, and thus the buildings and activities around them, has a significant influence on crime. For example, it has been shown that the presence of bars and shops selling alcohol, pawn shops, empty buildings and adult book shops and cinemas near transit stops, all tend to increase crime levels in an area (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1999). Other studies show that commercial areas (Ceccato, Uittenbogaard & Bamzar, 2013), mixed use of surrounding areas (Uittenbogaard, 2014), areas with few inhabitants (Ceccato et al., 2013) and the presence of infrastructure such as motorways (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2002 in Uittenbogaard, 2014) also have a negative influence. Meanwhile, heavy road traffic around transit stops has been correlated with lower crime rates (Loukaitou-Sideris, Liggett, Iseki, & Thurlow, 2001).

Fourth, in the case of bus drivers, the organization of the area they drive through, and the opportunities that it offers to potential offenders affects the level of danger they are exposed to. For example, if rest breaks are scheduled in isolated areas, drivers are at risk of violence, but far from assistance. Similarly, certain areas make vehicles more vulnerable to crime and vandalism, such as tunnels or multi-storey buildings, where people can hide and throw objects at them, or bus stations situated by trees and bushes, providing hiding places for potential offenders (Lincoln & Huntingdon, 2013). The safety of the passengers and personnel thus depends in part on the areas buses travel through, and consequently the choice of their itinerary in the city.

Finally, vandalism is similarly influenced by opportunity created by the urban layout. In Montreal, Canada, for example, it has been found that isolated areas which are far from residential areas, or surrounded by trees, encourage the theft of metal from trains (AMT, 2014).

b) The influence of the social context on crime in public transport

The social milieu also has an influence on the commission of criminal acts, and public transport is no exception. Several studies have shown that crime is correlated with that of the districts surrounding transit stops: crime at transit stops is generally higher when the crime rate in the areas in which the stops are situated is high (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2001). This is valid for both transit stops and the vehicles themselves, since crime on public transport vehicles is higher on routes that go through zones with high crime rates (Newton, 2008). In France, for example, research show that violence against staff is more common in disadvantaged districts (UTP, 2014); and that there is more fraud on buses in districts with high levels of violence (Le Parisien, 2011). In Montreal, one study has shown that taxi drivers are more exposed to aggression when they work in disadvantaged areas (Commission sur le transport et les travaux publics, 2014a).

Second, some studies show that offences are more common on public transport when the surrounding districts have lower socioeconomic levels (see, for example, Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2002), particularly a high unemployment rate (Cozens, Neale, Whitaker, & Hillier, 2003). For example in Bogotá, the probability of a homicide near a bus stop (TransMilenio) is five times greater in a poor district than in other districts (Schäfer, 2015).

Box 4.3 Crime prevention through environmental design

Newman developed the concept of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) to help explain how an area can defend itself against crime (1972 in Tilley, 2005), using four approaches:

- Natural territorial reinforcement: organizing the built-up area, which encourages a sense of belonging among residents and a desire to defend the area, and discourages potential criminals from coming in.
- Designing the area in such a way as to make natural surveillance possible.
- Maintenance: keeping the area clean and in good condition.
- Natural access control: a safe surrounding environment.
Other studies show that a characteristic of the profile of offenders includes coming from an area with a low socioeconomic status. A study of the profile of bus aggressors in Brazil found that they shared the following traits: coming from underprivileged districts, and a failure to complete primary school (Paes-Machado & Levenstein, 2004).

In certain cases, criminal activities go beyond the public transport context. In Honduras and El Salvador, for example, taxis and buses are forced to pay $25 and $34 million dollars annually in extortion by members of street gangs (Dudley & Lohmuller, 2015).

Crime on public transport can be understood in relation to its physical and social environment. Thus, crime prevention on public transport cannot be envisaged in isolation, but must be integrated into a broader crime prevention strategy within the city.

Risk factors particular to public transport spaces

Urban public transport is also a subsystem of the city, a microcosm with its own crime issues, some associated with all types of transport (underground, taxi, train, bus) and others specific to one type.

a) Situational factors specific to transport areas

Public transport is influenced by a number of specific situational factors that have an impact on safety. How underground stations, bus stops, stations and carriages are designed and maintained, for example, affects the likelihood that crime will take place there.

Other characteristics also influence the level of security, such as the internal design of vehicles and the fact that there is movement. It also attracts certain types of crime, such as fraud and, terrorism.

Public transport and its specific built environment

CPTED principles also apply to the built environment around public transport, affecting in particular the potential for surveillance, and the regular maintenance of areas to prevent deterioration.

The level of surveillance of the public transport infrastructure influences crime and fear of crime, through formal or informal controls (Ceccato et al., 2013; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1999).

Formal control includes the presence of security guards, police or surveillance cameras in vehicles or at stations. Informal controls refer to the presence of people which discourages potential offenders, and helps to increase a sense of security, although this can vary significantly over the course of the day. The same sites can be busy during rush hours but deserted at night. Informal controls also may be provided by the presence of shopkeepers or passers-by.

Surveillance also depends on the infrastructure of the transit stop, such as blind corners or hiding places, or limited visibility. For example, a study of the Los Angeles subway showed that the higher stations had less visibility and crime was more likely, and that crimes against person were more common where station lacked surveillance eg. on platforms and staircases (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2002).

Finally, the influence of lighting seems to play a role in variations in the crime rate (Ceccato et al., 2013). A study in the UK found that poorly lit places increased fear of crime (Crime Concern, 2004).

One of the most innovative examples is the Washington, DC subway, where crime does not appear to vary in relation to the districts it passes through (LaVigne, 1997 in Ceccato et al., 2013). The infrastructure of the subway was designed with the help of police chiefs, who tried to ensure that the stations had excellent visibility. Evaluations show that crime rates are lower there than in most other underground railways around the world (LaVigne, 1996 in Piza, Crime Mapping & Dr. Kennedy, 2003), as well as other sites in the same city (de Greiff et al., 2015).

The maintenance of transport spaces areas also has an influence on crime and fear of crime. The “broken windows theory” of J.Q. Wilson and G. Kelling, developed in 1982, effectively argues that spaces that are allowed to deteriorate through vandalism, and left in that state, will provoke a rise in criminality such as thefts and assaults (Roché, 2000). In public transport, this also appears to be the case, especially in relation to incivilities such as litter, drunkenness and graffiti (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1999).

The characteristics specific to public transport

The design of public transport vehicles influences the crimes that occur within the system, including movement.

Each transport vehicle has its own particular design, and distinct problems. For example, the design of buses often places the driver at risk, preventing their escape from potential offenders (Cahute, 2012). Their vulnerability is increased by their proximity to passengers, and when they handle money (Essenberg, 2003; Kompier and DiMartino, 1995; Moore, 2010; Morgan and Smith 2006, in Lincoln & Huntingdon, 2013).
Since public transport involves movement, victims and offenders do not necessarily get on at the same stop, or go to the same destination. This complicates the assessment of victim profiles in relation to their context.

Similarly, public transport can be both the site of an offence and a means of escape. Police intervention on buses can be difficult or dangerous given the limited space, and the risk of collateral damage (Paes-Machado & Levenstein, 2004). In addition, crime on buses may result in loss of control of the vehicle, affecting all passengers.

Finally, certain types of crime are intrinsically linked to public transport, including, for example, fraud and terrorism.

Transport users who do not buy a ticket are committing fraud, and this is often a function of the design of stations. On the underground system, for example, doors next to turnstiles may be left open allowing people to enter without paying. On the TransMilenio bus system in Bogotá, glass doors separate passengers waiting on the platform before they can get on a bus. Some people manage to open these doors from the outside, and enter the bus without paying. Elsewhere, passengers may take advantage of doors at the back of a bus and get on illegally.

The specificities of public transport systems also make them a target for terrorist attacks: they bring together a large number of individuals, and pass through key parts of a city (Hess, 2006). It is often too costly in terms of both time and money to establish systematic controls at all points of entry and, attacks can potentially cause a huge amount of damage and high levels of panic, both of which are essential elements for terrorist attacks (Nascu, 2009).

b) Urban public transport systems as a social environment

Although public transport is influenced by the social environment that surrounds it, it also represents its own social environment. It brings together individuals who are socially and demographically different (Cozens, et al., 2003), resulting in a level of heterogeneity that is found in few others parts of a city. In addition, at rush hour, public transport may have one of the highest densities of population in the city, which itself raises specific problems. In the case of underground trains, for example, the limited space tends to induce anxiety in passengers (Lopez, 1996). On the contrary, at off-peak times people waiting for public transport may feel isolated waiting at a bus stop, or travelling in an empty carriage without witnesses. This makes them vulnerable eg. to violent crime, especially at night.

The role of public transport staff combines checking but with low level enforcement powers (Bruser & Kalinowski, 2008). Taxi drivers are especially vulnerable, since they have cash, work alone and in close proximity to passengers who have easy escape routes – all significant risk factors (Commission sur le transport et les travaux publics, 2014).

In conclusion, the risk factors for crime on public transport are as much urban factors as they are factors specific to its own environment. Although the trends regarding crime and fear of crime differ across cities and countries around the world, the risk factors are very similar.

Preventing crime in urban public transport systems

Integrating prevention in the city: The importance of partnerships

As outlined earlier in this chapter, crime on urban public transport systems cannot be understood without analysing its social and environmental context: the city. The same is true for prevention, a transport organization cannot prevent crime and fear of crime alone, multi-sector partnerships are required. The value of such partnerships lies in the fact that they allow a range of institutions and sectors to establish common objectives – in the present case, safety on public transport – through coordinated action.
a) Participatory design and adoption of prevention measures

It is important to include the key stakeholders from the beginning in developing prevention strategies. Transport users need to be identified and represented in any initiatives implemented. This helps to give prevention programmes legitimacy and take account of the experience and views of users. Among other things it contributes to the co-construction of safety among the main actors.

It is also important that different communities of interest are included in the safety audit process which forms the basis for designing the prevention strategy. The real-life experiences of communities and groups can be very different. For example, it is important to take into account the views and experience of women in order to ensure that interventions will help to prevent crimes against them. This can be achieved through the use of women’s exploratory walks described above, making it possible to identify the factors that make places unsafe for them, which may not be the case for men. One study found that the nature of fear varies: men tend to be more fearful of large groups, and women of isolated individuals and sexual aggression (Smith, 2008).

b) Partnerships for implementing prevention initiatives

Given that crime on public transport can occur at different times, and in different points on a journey, each of these concerns has specific implications in terms of prevention.

Offences can occur on the routes to and from a public transport stop and particularly at night in isolated areas. Transport companies do not necessarily have control over public walkways, and need to work closely with other key sectors. One way of ensuring such collaboration is to implement local security contracts. This approach is particularly widespread in France. It aims to “create partnerships between representatives of the State, the local groups concerned and transport companies, in the fight against insecurity” (UTP, 2014).

In other words, such contracts bring together all the key players in the area. Contracts generally include the following elements: deciding on the target area, undertaking a local safety diagnosis, and implementing a plan of action, a method (aims, tools, etc.) and monitoring the outcomes (Alvarez, Bezzozi, & Sanfaçon, 2006). The contribution by Marco Calaresu discusses local security contracts in more detail.

Initiatives to prevent crime and fear of crime at stations and transport stops also require collaboration between key players. For example, the presence of police may be necessary, as well as putting in place a common safety plan with the transport company (Malyska & Rudolph, 2012).

Partnerships also make it possible to integrate those who may cause insecurity into a prevention project. For example, graffiti by young people may be blamed for the deterioration of sites. In Jemeppe, Belgium, the responsibility for revitalizing a station was given to young graffiti artists. Meetings were held with transport users, drivers and police officers to reach a consensus on the creation of a graffiti mural. Following this initiative, vandalism at the station decreased dramatically (Michel & Albers, 2006).

In the same vein, it is common for stations and transit stops to attract those who are socially excluded: the homeless or drug addicts who may, in turn, be seen as contributing to fear of crime. This provides an excellent opportunity for collaboration between the transport company and community and social services, to provide support and reinsertion programmes.

The same holds true in regard to public transport vehicles. For example, the harassment of women is common. An important way to prevent it involves educating passengers, and the general population on the social unacceptability of sexual harassment. In Cairo in Egypt, as part of a UN Women-funded project, non-government organizations have enacted plays in underground trains to raise the awareness of travellers. The actors re-enact real sexual harassment incidents without informing the passengers that they are actors (UN Women, 2013).

Such educational campaigns can also be carried out in schools who are key partners. In Montreal, for example, the transport company launched a campaign in middle schools inviting the principals to raise the awareness of pupils on the importance of respecting safety standards, and transmitting the messages to their parents (AMT, 2010).

Many issues facing transport operators are common, and some transport companies choose to join forces to try to combat them. This is the case with the French railway company SNCF. It is a member of an inter-company club concerned with anti-social behaviour, composed of around 50 companies and public institutions. Their meetings allow them to share experiences, comment on action and work together to find solutions (SNCF, 2013).

In conclusion, preventing crime on urban public transport cannot be considered in isolation, but must integrate all the key players: transport users, transport operators, community stakeholders and local government among others. Crime on public transport, at least partially, reflects its urban surroundings,
which implies that it is necessary to think of prevention as a continuation of crime prevention in the city as a whole.

Norms, standards and crime prevention strategies in public transport systems around the world

This section looks at international norms and standards which help to guide crime prevention on public transport, as well as national or local prevention strategies and their characteristics.

a) Norms and standards

At the global level, a non-governmental organization, the International Association of Public Transport (UITP), promotes sustainable urban public transport in urban areas around the world. The organization has a Security Commission which studies, assesses and promotes innovative approaches for improving security in public transport (UITP, 2014a). For example, at its 14th meeting, the Commission considered the theft of metals and relevant good practices, and made recommendations for preventing such thefts (UIC, 2012).

Specific sector organizations, such as the International Union of Railways, include promoting safety as a priority. This organization focuses on sharing knowledge between its members, including good practices, security policies and data (Colliard, Bonneau, Pires, & Papillault, 2014).

There are no specific international crime prevention standards for public transport (Soehnchen, 2016). The UITP is opposed to any obligatory regulations or standardization since the diversity of threats, environments, organization and local infrastructures all make it necessary to take into consideration a wide range of solutions (UITP-EuroTeam, 2011). Nevertheless, the organization encourages the exchange of good practices between stakeholders (Soehnchen, 2016).

At the regional level, in Europe in particular, companies have made efforts to standardize approaches to crime prevention in public transport. The Secured Urban Transport – European Demonstration project is one of the most important of the past few years. It lasted 42 months (from March 2011 to September 2014) and brought together 41 partners from 13 countries. Its aim was to provide tools to improve security (ranging from minor infractions to major terrorist threats) on public transport, adapted to the transport systems of medium – and large-sized European cities. The project was developed on the basis of best practices and was composed of modular solutions that were validated via demonstrations in four major cities (Berlin, Madrid, Milan and Paris) and six medium-sized cities (Bergen, Bilbao, Brussels, Bucharest, Izmir and Lisbon).

The project made it possible to develop a glossary, *Public Transport Security Terminology & Definitions*, to standardize the use of security terms in transport systems in Europe. This provides users with definitions of terms such as “best practices”, “CPTED” and “terrorism”. Its coverage of prevention is, however, rather limited.

Another initiative that aims to coordinate the responses of operators throughout Europe is the COUNTERACT project, which focuses on terrorism. This project reviewed existing policies, methodologies, procedures and technology to identify best practices and develop guidelines for operators (UITP, 2006).

b) National and local strategies

A number of countries have national crime prevention legislation or strategies relating to public transport. France, for example, has passed several laws on this subject, most of them included in the Transport Code, under “Safety and Security on Public Transport” (Legifrance, n.d.). There is also a crime prevention policy that includes a section on public transport. In addition, a permanent mission evaluates crime prevention policy, and makes recommendations to improve public policies on public transport. In particular, it recommends assessment of problems, encouraging the creation of local observatories, local safety audits and surveys on fear of crime; successful practices such as mediation; and highlights partnerships between key players involved in prevention, including users of public transport (Chabrol, Mecheri, Ingall-Montagnier, Deschamps, & Laffargue, 2013).

In the US, the American Public Transportation Association promotes innovative approaches, and information sharing to strengthen safety on public transport by (APTA, n.d.). In particular, the association has developed CPTED standards for transit facilities.

Some regional governments and cities have adopted prevention policies for public transport. These may be integrated into more wide-ranging crime prevention policies, or be specific to one or more modes of transport. In France, the Northern Departmental Plan for the Prevention of delinquency 2013–2017 focuses on crime prevention on public transport as an integral part of crime as a whole. The city of Stuttgart in Germany has a specific plan covering security on commuter trains (Schairer, Schön, & Schwarz, 2010).
In England, the Community Safety Plan for Transport and Travelling in London was developed as part of the mayor’s strategy to improve transport safety and security. The plan is part of a broader objective to improve safety and security in the city, but focuses mainly on the transport networks. It uses a problem-solving approach, identifying the causes of crime and fear of crime as well as ways to prevent them. This requires an annual safety audit to analyse the issues affecting Londoners, to identify strategic priorities, any improvements in perceptions of safety, and enables resources to be channeled effectively. The Plan also assesses outcomes using indicators modelled on the Compstat system initially developed in New York (Transport for London, 2009).

The Plan highlights the importance of partnerships. The 1998 Crime and Disorder Act made the development of community safety plans obligatory, requiring collaboration between local authorities and key partners to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour. Close collaboration between the transport authorities and the London Borough Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships enables safety planning to cover an entire journey, from door to door (Transport for London, 2009).

The contribution concerning Bogotá City Hall at the end of this chapter also describes the development of a public transport crime prevention policy for the city.

Crime prevention approaches and fear of crime urban public transport

a) Types of crime prevention

A review of the literature shows that a number of different types of crime prevention approaches can be used for public transport. These are summarized in Figure 4.11 which is discussed below. The following sections discuss some of these approaches, and examples, in greater detail.

Crime prevention on public transport essentially involves two broad approaches: reducing the opportunities to commit a crime – an aspect of situational prevention – and social prevention which may include awareness raising to change behaviours, and reducing socioeconomic inequalities.

**Situational prevention** on public transport can include a number of different techniques:
- CPTED decrease the opportunities to commit crime eg. by reducing hiding places and escape routes, and improving lighting.
- Video surveillance – a CPTED tool, discussed separately because of its widespread use.
- Organizational methods such as keeping areas clean and preventing deterioration or regulations banning the consumption of alcohol in the public transport network to decrease aggressive behaviour.

![Figure 4.11 Categories of approaches to crime prevention on urban public transport](source: Authors)
- Ensuring the presence of witnesses, either formal controls (police, security agents) or informal controls (passers-by, shopkeepers, transport users) to provide surveillance (guardians).
- Training staff to intervene before a situation deteriorates, for example, by using alternative conflict management. These may also be implemented by specialized mediators.
- Public awareness campaigns to inform transport users eg. how to protect themselves against risks when travelling, for example, by keeping valuable possessions out of sight to prevent theft.

**Social prevention** approaches include campaigns to raise awareness encouraging transport users to adopt civic and respectful behaviour.

Social prevention also targets some of the risk factors for crime such as difficult socioeconomic conditions. Transport companies can facilitate access to jobs and provide support to vulnerable populations who tend to congregate in stations. More indirectly, social prevention interventions which prevent recidivism may help to reduce the incidence of offending on public transport.

**b) Situational interventions**

**CPTED interventions**

CPTED interventions in public transport networks often focus on improving visibility, through the design of infrastructure or improving lighting. This may also entail the use of more robust materials which are resistant to vandalism, or the use of physical protection barriers to prevent aggression, such as protective windows for bus or taxi drivers.

As transport networks are part of their urban environment, CPTED interventions must be envisaged in an integral and continuous manner between the two areas. A Safe Women project implemented in Australia involved re-designing public spaces to help prevent sexual aggression. This included improvements to a pedestrian walkway along the main access routes to the transport system, ensuring they were well lit and equipped with safety equipment, as well as improving lighting in the city centre and residential areas (UN Women, n.d.). This example underlines the need for transport operators to work in partnerships with the city to develop integrated strategies.

CPTED interventions can also be used at transit stops, in terms of town planning. As discussed above, some commercial activities and types of urban planning can increase crime rates around transit stops. This makes it important for a city to take this into consideration when planning routes and stops.

**c) Social prevention**

**Campaigns to raise awareness**

Educational campaigns to raise awareness include those which provide information or aim to modify behaviours, in particular, preventing harassment against women or uncivil behaviour, promoting safety rules, or preventing terrorism.

Campaigns to prevent the harassment of women may stigmatize harassment by raising the awareness of transport users and personnel about inappropriate such behaviours, and may often form part of wider city campaigns.

**Social mediation**

Social mediation is used to prevent crime and fear of crime on public transport, often by staff on buses or trains, at stations, or in areas surrounding them. Mediators intervene when conflicts start to escalate, provide a reassuring presence and discourage uncivil behaviour. Social mediation can be seen as situational prevention, since it anticipates problems and reduces opportunities for offending.

The recruitment of mediators may have dual benefits for the city and public transport. In France, for example, the PROMEVIL association recruits mediators from among the unemployed, helping to reduce fear of crime in public transport, and providing jobs (PROMEVIL, n.d.).

A recent evaluation by the French Ministry for the Environment, Energy and the Sea, found that mediation has a visible positive impact including deterring crime, reducing the incidence of fraud, and fear of crime among transport users (Ministère de l’Environnement, de l’Énergie et de la Mer, 2016).

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*Figure 4.12 “We don't want this kind of contact” campaign*

Source: Red Mujer (2008)
Campaigns may take the form of posters, as in Argentina with the “We do not want your support” campaign, which showed a man inappropriately pressing himself up against a woman (Red Mujer, 2008). They may also involve role playing as in the project in Cairo discussed earlier.

They may also provide information on ways to react, addressing victims, perpetrators and witnesses. A recent campaign in France formed part of the National Plan to Fight Sexist Harassment and Sexual Violence on Public Transport. It focused specifically on informing victims of their rights, perpetrators with the legal consequences and seriousness of their acts, and witnesses of the kinds of action they could take in support of victims (Ministère de la Famille, de l’enfance et des droits des femmes, 2015).

In addition, these campaigns generally encourage people to report cases of abuse to a specific telephone number. The “Rub against me and I’ll expose you” campaign in Boston which encouraged reporting, led to an 85% increase in arrests in one year (Guha, 2009).

Some campaigns aim to prevent incivilities, such as annoying or anti-social behaviour, or throwing litter.

Video surveillance may take the form of posters, as in Argentina with the “We do not want your support” campaign, which showed a man inappropriately pressing himself up against a woman (Red Mujer, 2008). They may also involve role playing as in the project in Cairo discussed earlier.

Video surveillance has three preventive functions. It allows authorities to react quickly. The PräViteS initiative in Germany installs surveillance cameras in buses, and the control room receives the image in real time when an incident occurs. The police receive precise information concerning the location of the incident, allowing them to intervene rapidly. In some cases, intervention may prevent more serious injury (EVA-Académie européenne pour un transport respectueux de l’environnement gGmbH, 2012).

Video surveillance may also discourage a potential offender from committing a crime. In this case, the cameras are clearly visible, stressing the probability of being caught.

Thirdly, cameras may help to decrease fear of crime among both passengers and transport staff.

While video surveillance has become widely used on public transport, its effectiveness in terms of prevention is not supported by evaluation. A meta-analysis carried out in 2008 on 44 studies from various countries showed, for example, that the presence of security cameras did not have a significant impact on reducing crime in public transport (Farrington, 2008). A number of studies have also shown that potential offenders are not affected by the presence of cameras (see Rossi & Golab, 2013).

Other studies have found limited effects. For example, in Île-de-France, there was a reduction in crime on one bus route, but not on the underground, RER, commuter trains, public and private buses (Institut d’aménagement et d’urbanisme de la région d’Île-de-France, 2004). David Bradford, Executive Director of the Northwestern University Centre for Public Safety in the US, suggest recent research has shown that cameras have positive effects when they are part of a more global strategy (Rossi & Golab, 2013).

Certain other studies suggest that cameras make it possible to decrease fear of crime – with in some cases a positive effect and in others a negative effect. In Île-de-France, for example, when fear of crime among personnel decreased, they felt less exposed and “more able to prevent violence in cases of conflict and aggressions, make contact with the clientele, and seemed to make it a significant element in the continuity of service” (Institut d’aménagement et d’urbanisme de la région d’Île-de-France, 2004).

Conversely, James Moore, Director of the University of South Carolina Transportation Engineering Program, suggests that security cameras can create a false sense of security, allowing transport users to believe they will be able to receive assistance quickly, making them less attentive and thus easier targets (Rossi & Golab, 2013).

As a result, and despite the attention that video surveillance cameras have received, some organizations are moving away from their use. This is the case for the “Comité de Suivi et d’Évaluation de la Politique de Prévention et de Sécurité dans les Transports en Commun Francilien”, in Île-de-France, which recognizes that their impact is limited and questions the use of resources which could be better employed on alternative prevention initiatives (Lafont & Kalfon, 2015, p. 55).
As in the case of campaigns about harassment of women, they can take the form of posters or theatre productions. In Ile-de-France for example, the “Stay civil all down the line” campaign employs posters comparing inappropriate behaviour with animal behaviour, thus ridiculing it (RATP, 2011).

In Brussels, Belgium, a troop of clowns in the underground recreate common day-to-day problems: aggressiveness, indifference, littering and vandalism, among others. The comic scenes are performed in carriages, on platforms or at the stations (Franca, Mathieu, & Dorzee, 2006).

Campaigns also encourage transport users to respect safety rules, either in the transport network itself, or other areas of the city. The Montreal example cited above used schools to raise the awareness of pupils and of their parents to train safety (AMT, 2010).

Campaigns have also been used to ask public transport users to report suspicious acts which might be linked to terrorism. The “If you see something, say something” campaign in the US uses posters and public announcements on television and radio, providing a telephone number to report suspicious activity to the government.

All these issues go beyond the context of public transport and relate to the wider urban environment. Harassment of women is a significant problem in all societies, and eradicating it implies changing attitudes about men and women. The same is true for incivilities, reflecting a breakdown of established codes of conduct, and a lack of respect between groups and for the city as a whole. And terrorist attacks wherever they occur can have a devastating impact. Overall, campaigns which raise awareness on public transport can have an impact that goes beyond that network, but to be effective, they must form part of an integrated, multi-sector intervention with the city.

**Facilitating access to jobs**

As suggested earlier, public transport systems can play a broader role in facilitating access to jobs, such as through the employment of social mediators. In Toulouse, France, the project described above known as “Prevention in our neighbourhoods”, sees employment at stations as a valuable way of helping the reintegration of people living in disadvantaged communities. The transport company has contracted an employment agency to hire local residents. In turn, the state subsidizes the company for its role in supporting reintegration. There are dual benefits: employing local residents as maintenance technicians on the underground discourages vandalism and crime because other residents know the employees. Secondly, the “prevention in our neighbourhood” project staff develop relationships with residents and with the employees on the underground, increasing their ability to provide support. As indicated above, evaluation of this project found that those stations were the best maintained in the network (“you don’t damage your own possessions”) (EFUS, 1993).

**Conclusion**

Crime prevention on urban public transport must take into account one fundamental factor: that while it has its own physical and social characteristics, it is part of the the city as a whole and is influenced by the characteristics of that city. This chapter has discussed the risk factors specific to public transport, and shown how they are also linked to their urban context. In order to be effective, therefore, public transport prevention programmes must be implemented in an integrated way with those of the city.

An effective prevention strategy needs to include five elements: an in-depth safety audit, partnerships with all interested parties, an integrated approach, multiple approaches interventions, and monitoring and evaluation.

Undertaking a safety audit is a crucial stage but often neglected. Crime and fear of crime on public transport is heterogenous, affecting different groups in different ways (women, men, young people, etc.) and in different parts of the transport network. Interventions need to be adapted to the experiences and concerns of these different communities and contexts. The safety audit requires disaggregated and reliable data to track the distribution of crime and fear of crime along the transport network, and the experiences of
those groups. This enables the risk factors specific to different areas and groups to be identified, and enables appropriate intervention programmes to be developed.

Considering the continuity between the city and the transport network, the planning of safety audits and all crime prevention initiatives requires the input and participation of all interested parties, including local communities, and through the essential creation of partnerships.

An integrated strategy must take into account the socioeconomic context of different neighbourhoods, including land-use planning, and the influence surrounding areas have on crime at transport stops and in carriages or buses. It must also take into consideration situational factors which affect levels of crime or insecurity on public transport, while prevention initiatives in other parts of the city or in schools, can help to reinforce that strategy.

Crime prevention interventions must use multiple approaches considering the diversity of risk factors of crime. They must consider situational measures as well as social measures to get to the root cause of the problem.

Finally, as with any prevention strategy, it is important to monitor and evaluate interventions put in place on a regular basis, to assess their effectiveness and to adapt to changing circumstances.
The train station has for a long time been described as a “city within the city”, with its own character, and many functions going beyond its core business: it provides services, shops, transportation, toilets, food and restaurants, banks, post offices, information, special assistance, healthcare and even arts and entertainment, in some cases. And, in terms of human relationships, it is a theatre where the most diverse stories take place: comedies, dramas, romances, tragedies, crimes. Homeless people, or people in distress in a broad sense, are regular customers here, attracted by big stations for all the services they provide. In fact, they respond to several needs: a place to stay, nice architecture, cleanliness, safety, light, warmth or air conditioning (depending on the weather), food, money (both legal and illegal), human relationships, routine, help, solidarity. For those who have lost their home, job, and family, a better place is hard to find. Yet, the railway station is not the right place where marginalized people should stay: everyone has the right to spend some time at the station; however, living there, sleeping there – being stuck there – is another story. The acknowledgement of this simple statement, that homeless people deserve better living conditions, by all the stakeholders involved in this issue, is the starting point of the Help Center program in Italian railway stations.

The goal of this program is to provide within the station a proximity social service for homeless people, to help them find answers to their needs outside. These are not shelters, nor drop-in centers: these are places where homeless and deprived people can be assisted and guided to social services available in the city. Professional social operators, who receive special training, support homeless people in their process of re-inclusion, the result of which depends on two factors: resilience, which is the capability of people to regain strength for a new start, and the network of local social services, where users are sent to.

In terms of organization, the 16 Help Centers now open are based on the cooperation between (1) Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane, the railway company that provides the space in the train station area for free (over 11,000 square meters altogether), (2) a third sector organization, providing the service; and (3) local authorities, providing financial, or institutional support.

For Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane this program is one branch of a larger CSR action, aimed at regenerating part of the immense real estate for social and environmental scope.

The Help Centers are gathered in a network called ONDS (National Observatory on poverty in Italian railway stations), supported by Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane, the National Association of Italian Cities, and the Social Cooperative Europe Consulting Onlus, in charge of the operations. Since the creation of the Help Centers, Europe Consulting Onlus has developed advanced IT instruments to keep records of all the interventions and to create personal files for all the people who have benefited from the program, which resulted in a very complex web-based platform called Anthology®, winner of the 2012 Sodalitas Social Award. Data-protection legislation and protocols strictly regulate the recording of data, and all the users are duly informed of all these aspects.

Beyond the everyday use of this information, Anthology has two primary functions. First, it keeps a record of the development of social interventions for each user assisted, and allows all the operators to be aware of what has been done, so that no time is wasted in tracking back actions, or in doing anything twice, or wrong.

The second function is to provide, in real time, a picture of homelessness in railway areas, with a very high level of accuracy. Age, sex, physical and mental conditions, addictions, but also needs, expectations, housing conditions, job skills, education, can be investigated by Anthology query system, building up a detailed demographic description.

So strong is the potential of this system, that the City of Rome and the City of Naples, the first and the third largest cities in Italy, have adopted it to manage the social services network dedicated to marginalized people and, in the case of the Capital, also for the central Immigration Office.
The ONDS model inspired the creation of Gare Européenne et Solidarité, a network of major railway companies at the EU level, gathered around the Charter for the development of social initiatives in stations: studies, common projects, exchange of best practices around social issues have now been integrated in the CSR policies of the signatory members.

This shows, to go back to our initial purpose, how the train station – as much as the city as a whole – can provide opportunities for improving the quality of life of its population. In this respect, we think that Help Centers have achieved substantial results in terms of integrating security and solidarity.

First of all, they have brought together the station stakeholders to set up common strategies to face single cases or phenomena. The Help Centers play the role of "station social referent", around which companies, public institutions, third sector organizations, police, local authorities gather to cooperate, each within their own field of action, vocation and institutional responsibility.

This multi-stakeholder cooperation has gone beyond the homelessness issue, proving to be very effective to face recent immigration waves too. Thanks to the ONDS, with the mediation of the Help Center, Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane, the Municipality and the Prefecture found a solution to shelter Somali and Eritrean refugees, prevented from moving north following the closing of Austrian borders, and therefore stuck at the Tiburtina station in Rome in June 2015. An emergency camp was laid in a parking area by the station, in accordance with the City of Rome and the Red Cross, and an entire building has been put at the Municipality’s disposal for sheltering migrants.

Even more acute was the emergency in Milan, where 87,000 people, Syrians and Eritreans for the most part, have found shelter in the Milano Centrale station since 2013. In this very case, Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane has set up with the Help Center and the City of Milan a special plan to facilitate assistance to those who could not be sheltered elsewhere, granting access to the station facilities as well as identifying and securing specific waiting areas, with the support of NGO’s.

These actions were made possible by the long cooperation and the networking carried on by the Help Centers.

From a sociological perspective, Help Centers have provided scientific evidence that marginalized people are not per se a threat to the train station’s safety. Data collected with Anthology, on the contrary, show thousands of poor people who have no intention at all to harm passengers or infrastructures. Their problematic presence or behavior needs to be addressed with social instruments, the only ones which can be effective on the long term. Such evidence substantiates the important investments Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane makes to support this program, especially in terms of areas dedicated to social activities.

Moreover, Help Centers are actual social strongholds in the station, which contribute to create positive human interaction among the thousands of people who go there every day. We have noticed, in the last 4-5 years, a growing tension between social services users and between users and citizens. In fact, we must report an increasing intolerance especially towards migrants. Citizens are still confronted with the aftermath of the crisis, and see large masses of immigrants as parasites who are likely to consume the few resources left. Help Centers, with their everyday proximity work, can smooth these tensions and prevent them from developing into open conflicts.

Is homelessness a crime?

There is a narrative which tends to associate homelessness and criminality. Take the original title of Ettore Scola’s movie Down and dirty: in Italian it reads Brutti, sporchi e cattivi – ugly, dirty and evil, as if evil was the top of a climax, the inevitable consequence of being ugly and dirty. These are the most common visible signs of homeless people, at least in their classic phenotype. Yet, another movie title may help us reverse this stereotype: The Gentleman Thief reminds us that very often we should be wary of those who don’t look down and dirty at all. To sum up, the sense of insecurity caused by the homeless is rarely objective. On the contrary, it rather comes from our sense of rejection for a condition we unconsciously view as our worst nightmare. In fact, it is not the homeless person we are afraid of after all: it is homelessness.

In almost 15 years of social work in Italian railway stations, we have seen that the large majority of marginalized people living or spending time there are harmless. Due to their condition, though, they live constantly on the edge of society, which means that they have the same chance to fall onto one side or the other. The ideal yellow line separating the safety area – where we behave legally – from the dangerous one, where we don’t, is very thin for those who have nothing left to lose. Some of them can be criminal ipso jure, even if they do not commit any crime: immigrants who have not been able to renew their stay permit because they have lost their job, for example, have unwillingly jumped over the yellow line and found themselves on the illegal side. Those who
have lost their home – for a number of reasons that are often very far from any criminal intention – may end up squatting in a train, again on the wrong side.

The difference between these people and a pickpocket or a drug-dealer is self-evident. And it is around this difference that the Help Centers’ program has been set up in Italian railway stations, to put solidarity and security side by side, targeting social issues and crime respectively.

In this way, this work highlights that addressing a topic like Security and solidarity in railway stations urges us to expand our vision over the city, instead of focusing on the station only, or on the users of public transportation, namely trains.

Such an exercise is necessary to understand the origin of the sense of insecurity that pervades stations, and – from another standpoint – hits people when they enter or even think of it.

As stated elsewhere in this report, the rapid expansion of urban areas has led to an increase in segregation and inequality, especially in developing countries. In turn, these two factors explain the increase in crime, and in particular violent crime. However, cities are not only sources of problems; they also provide opportunities for improving the quality of life of their growing populations. In this case, the city plays a fundamental role in the prevention of crime.

The same concept applies to train stations, both as scenes of inequality and discrimination, and as sources of opportunity to prevent crime. If we acknowledge that the station is part of the city, where its specific task – welcoming trains and their passengers – is ceaselessly contaminated by other urban functions, we may easily understand that the higher the insecurity rate is in the city (or in the neighborhood), the higher it will be in the station. In parallel, the more the city promotes the quality of life, the more the station will benefit from the positive environment that surrounds it.
Context and past history

The dynamics of population concentration and flow are one of the main challenges facing crime prevention in the city of Bogotá. The TransMilenio, the city’s articulated bus system, transports around 2.19 million people every day. Among them, it is estimated that 8%, or 175,000 people, do not pay for their ticket. This gives the system an average of eight passengers per 1 m², creating a concentration of people that complicates governability and crime prevention in a context where citizens encounter queuing, pushing and shoving, theft, delays and abuse on a daily basis.

Mayor Enrique Peñalosa’s administration thus came up against a TransMilenio considered unsafe by 86% of the city’s inhabitants. This, given the system’s role as the nerve centre of the daily development of the city, was the motivation behind the formulation, implementation and evaluation of an integrated crime prevention strategy for the network. This strategy is part of a framework composed of the three pillars for security outlined in the “Development Plan 2016–2019: crime prevention, crime control and improving feelings of security”.

The stakeholders

Despite the diversity of the stakeholders involved in maintaining security and good service provision in the TransMilenio, the Mayor’s Office in Bogotá is the driving force behind the strategy, starting with the creation of the city’s new Secretariat for Security. This is reflected in its role of leading, orienting and coordinating the formulation of policies by means of carrying out activities associated with preventing crime, infractions and unrest and that ensure the coexistence and security of the people. Future perspectives for crime prevention on the TransMilenio in Bogotá include giving people back their sense of belonging, on the basis of joint civil responsibility and city culture, as a means of attaining the following objectives:

- respect for life, through a practical, safe and modern service;
- respect for people’s time, with a transport system that satisfies the minimum quality standards in terms of itineraries and journey times;
- respect for diversity among citizens, in a system in which citizens from different socioeconomic conditions come together without discrimination of any kind.

In strategic terms, the TransMilenio crime prevention strategy led by the district Secretariat for Security is a first step towards the creation of a Master Plan for Security on Public Transport. This tool will include crime prevention strategies for the TransMilenio as well as for other means of transportation, such as taxis and bicycles. It will also be geared towards reinforcing the scenarios of inter-institutional articulation, increasing operating, intelligence and infrastructure capacities and generating evaluation processes for the public policy.

To give impetus to a project of this size, a mapping and articulation process was initiated with strategic stakeholders, such as the TransMilenio management, including its operating teams; private operators in the system; the Metropolitan Police of Bogotá and its specialist units; the Defender Office of Public Space of Bogotá; the Secretariat for Culture; and finally associations of users or organized civil society. Each of the aforementioned key players has a determining role in the good running of the system and in ensuring security rates improve. In particular, the relationship with associations of users and the organization of initiatives and supportive citizen action from a civil security perspective must develop on the basis of joint civil responsibility and the elaboration of complete diagnoses that make it possible to implement situational and social crime prevention measures.

Strategy

With regard to social crime prevention, the strategy in Bogotá focuses on promoting civic behaviour within the system, which initially means reducing the number of people who do not pay for their tickets. In addition to being a financial problem that prejudices the system, not paying for tickets can be seen as fraud against the public interest and sends a message that there is a lack of authority and control over the city. It
is for this reason that the city is looking to generate a smart payment system that aims to decrease fraud and that contains, among other things, a smart verification system, legal proceedings against those who fraud, information and communication campaigns, management with relevant actors through the application of new measures such as police inspectors, user loyalty card systems and organizational and training reinforcement programmes for bus controllers and drivers.

Other social measures for preventing crime consist in progressive accompaniment, which will be given by the district authorities to the police schemes that operate in the system through management plans and social mediators. These human measures for preventing crime have become a real necessity in mass public transport systems around the world, as is the case with the TransMilenio in Bogotá, which transports millions of people every day.

As a result, and in agreement with the technical analyses carried out by the National Police’s Department of Citizen Security, the accumulation of users combined with the infrastructure under which the system functions is one of the central risk factors in terms of cohabitation and urban security. After all, most of the personal injuries and fights that occur within the system arise from situations of intolerance and the inability of citizens to resolve interpersonal conflicts in a proactive manner. In this regard, teams specializing in social mediation, alternative dispute resolution, crisis management and first aid are an alternative means of preventing crime and also a way of consolidating a strengthened institutional presence.

Additionally, whenever their endeavours are not restricted exclusively to the transit stops on the network but also cover the management of localized security in the areas around the stops, these social measures represent an articulation between social and situational prevention measures. In addition to fraud and itinerant sales, theft, mainly of mobile phones, is the most frequent incident within the system and is the main crime that has an impact on perceptions of security in the network.

In this sense, situational interventions aimed at altering the structure of opportunity for criminals that focus on theft from people have become a priority for the district administration. Here, the measures range from technical means, with the commissioning of CCTV cameras with facial recognition technology, accompanied by improvements to the intercommunication structure and response times, to urban planning and design that favour local security, such as rehabilitation of public spaces in the areas around the most critical transit stops in the network.

Conclusions

In conclusion, combining the situational crime prevention measures described above is conceived of as a large-scale intervention project that uses mixed methods within the public transport system. This will generate social, economic and appropriation dynamics as much in public spaces as in the system itself, which in turn bring about a decrease in problems of insecurity.

Finally, it is important to mention the willingness of the city’s administration responsible for the new Secretariat for Security to create an evidence-based security policy for the transport system. This means maintaining transparency in the management of security data for the system, developing strategic alliances with third parties to reinforce institutional capacities for the management of the system such as those of, for example, the Chamber of Commerce of Bogotá and the ICPC, and finally establishing internal and external evaluation criteria for the strategies implemented.
Endnotes

1 Urban public transport is understood in this study as including undergrounds, buses, commuter trains and taxis.

2 These guidelines are nevertheless not limited to public transport.

3 Le Larousse: "Executive decision, regulatory or individual, taken by one or more authorities in the administrative hierarchy (the minister, the prefect, the mayor)" (Larousse, n.d.).

4 Strictly speaking, the data discussed here are not entirely comparable between countries – they are not collected in the same way, and the comparison years vary – but they provide a general view.

5 The following sections focus in particular on the factors that influence crime on public transport, although many of them also have an influence on fear of crime.


8 Director of ONDS and president of Europe Consulting Onlus.

9 ONDS referent person for “Gare Européenne et Solidarité” project.

10 ONDS Researcher.

11 Advisor, Secretary for Public Security, City of Bogota.

12 TransMilenio figures, 2014.

13 Victimization Survey, Bogotá Chamber of Commerce 2015.
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Preventing crime on urban public transport


AMT. (2010). Campagne de sensibilisation: respect et sécurité à bord du train, comme sur les quais. AMT.


CHAPTER 4 PREVENTING CRIME ON URBAN PUBLIC TRANSPORT


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