

**FEAR OF CRIME IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT - A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE
ATHENS REGION**

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Abstract

This article examines the fear of crime in Public Transportation in some major areas of Attica, a topic based on the latest regulations about the “Transit Police” in Greece. The main purpose of the research was to undertake an empirical approach, so as to study citizens’ fear of crime when using transportation in specific areas of Athens, through face-to-face interviews. In this context, previous victimization was examined while using several modes of transit, as well as the factors that reinforce feelings of unsafety.

Key words: fear of crime, safety/unsafety, public place, means of transport, Transit Police

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Introduction

Fear of crime in public places is a crucial phenomenon that delivers insecurity among citizens and leads to alterations in everyday life. Such an effect is noticeable in the use of the public transportation system, some means of which are selectively preferred less or totally avoided, due to the high possibility of victimization. Many factors play a vital role in people's decision-making process regarding which vehicle provides more or less safety during their travel. The examination and analysis of these parameters are amongst the main aspects that are examined in this survey.

For practical purposes, it is regarded as important to briefly present the definition of *public space*, which is conceptualized as a free-access space available for socialization (Ceccato & Nalla, 2020), such as roads, squares, parks, stations or generally, every space legally utilized and known as a common-use area (General Structural Regulation, Greek Law 2831/2000). The *means of transport* are considered public space, since they operate under the authority and control of the State and are designed to provide public services. Metro, Tram, Buses, Trolleys and Suburban railways are examples of the types² of transport that are commonly accessible, with fixed fares and routes (Smith & Clarke, 2000).

A key issue that must be outlined is the variable "*fear of crime*", which is associated with the sense of anxiety and danger that is formulated due to the assumptions one creates regarding victimization possibilities of oneself or a third person. This inability to have situations under control or the state of helplessness when supervision is absent, as happens in transport modes, creates feelings of insecurity and the perception of vulnerability. These can be essential reasons behind the restrictions and over-safety measures people take to avoid being targeted, while these, on the contrary, have a negative impact on their quality of life, due to lifestyle changes (Zarafonitou, 2023).

Several studies expound on the relevance of fear of crime and unsafety with public transport. A more in-depth analysis of the above statement leads to the realization that personal safety and security (Ceccato, 2015) are considerable parameters when it comes to using the means of transport

² Information on Means of transport in Athens. Available at: <https://www.athenstransport.com/info/> (accessed 29/05/2025)

or not. Neighborhood incivilities, for example, can discourage people from covering distances without taking the transport modes (Ferrell & Mathur, 2012). On the other hand, those who sense the danger even in public transport may avoid travelling by it, in case there is another private option available for them (Strandbygaard, 2020). This indicates that the surroundings, where the means of transit operate, also play a critical role, due to the fact that disturbing incidents can occur even when waiting to board the vehicle, especially if there is no one else around to notice (Cozens, Neale, Whitaker, Hiller, 2003). The same applies to the victim who is easily accessible, for instance, when surrounded by a crowd, which can intensify the sense of unsafety and fear of crime during travel on public transport (Loukaitou- Sideris, Liggett, Hiseki, 2002).

The current research observes the weak points associated with public transport and the fear of crime that people express while using it. For this purpose, public statements are evaluated and presented below regarding fear of crime when using the modes of transportation, the factors that trigger them and the proposed measures, including the Transit Policing, which may alleviate fear.

Objective and methodology

Qualitative research was conducted in order to extensively study the phenomenon in the city of Athens under the supervision and guidance of Professor Christina Zarafonitou³, in the context of the course “City and criminality, feeling of unsafety and punitiveness” in the Postgraduate program “Criminology” of Panteion University.

Regarding the participants, they were selected based on their availability at the time of the interview, without being aware prior to their participation, which means they were approached while waiting at bus stops. Only two individuals from the Menidi region were included as easily accessible respondents from the known social connections of the author. A total of 18 individuals (Table 1) were interviewed by the author, many of whom were women (n=11), aged between 19 and 64, while the share of men (n=7) ranged between 22 and 80 years of age.

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AREA	MALE	FEMALE
Piraeus	2 (age: 67, 29)	2 (age: 21, 19)
Omonoia	3 (age: 80, 78, 26)	3 (age: 56, 32, 22)
Chalandri	-	2 (age: 32, 60)
Kato Patisia	2 (age: 22, 65)	2 (age: 35, 64)
Menidi	-	2 (age: 23, 23)
TOTAL (N) = 18		

Table 1: Participants' demographic characteristics

The areas that were covered during the survey were specific regions in Athens that had, on the one hand, a better social reputation or, on the other hand, were appealing to the offenders due to the social and natural disorganization that facilitates their criminal acts. For instance, *Omonoia*, *Menidi* and *Kato Patisia* were introduced for this conduct as “notorious” cities for the intense heterogeneity of the population owing to the different communities and cultures dwelling together. Moreover, signs of intoxicated people roaming around, the “uncleanness” of the areas, and the “graffitized” infrastructure of the surroundings develop the impression of abandonment and lack of supervision. On the contrary, a better image has been shaped for *Piraeus* city, as well as for *Chalandri*, since they are deemed to be more upgraded, due to the lower degradation of the surroundings and the lower crime levels, and also are economically grown, in comparison to the three previously mentioned areas in this article.

A semi-structured and understandable guide for the interview was composed of 14 open-ended questions. The questions asked were categorized based on six main themes that are: 1) Feeling of safety and unsafety in public transport, 2) Misbehaviors occurred while using the means of transport, 3) The response to the criminal act as victims or witnesses, 4) The perceptions of citizens about the contemporary dimensions of criminality, 5) Preventative measures for crime control and victimization, and 6) Similar personal experience from abroad regarding crime in public means of transport.

With the objective of comprehending the aim of the research related to the issue of safety/unsafety people experience when commuting on a daily basis and using transportation, one must explore how safe citizens feel in public places, such as in public transport and how they

perceive these feelings. This query constitutes one of the main hypotheses that were formed during the inspection of the bibliography.

Another statement, the validity of which was studied in the survey, was the relevance of gender and age to feelings of safety or unsafety during night hours. Meaning to say, it was hypothesized that especially women and the elderly were more insecure and fearful at nighttime. What is more, it was expected that “heterogeneous cities” would be linked to higher levels of fear of crime and feelings of unsafety, because of the lack of strong social ties among their residents. Finally, it was significant to take a note of the attitude of citizens related to the new rule about the “Transit Police”. The announcement⁴ of this regulation and its details regarding the application were made in February of 2025. Basically, the “Transit Police that will focus on the unsafe cities of the Attica region is a special unit of guards who will surveil and prohibit criminal and anti-social behavior from happening inside buses and trains. This will be the main focus in order to address and effectively manage the issue of crime in public transport and ensure the safety of passengers.

Not to omit, all the necessary measures and steps were performed (Zarafonitou & Tsigkanou 2020), in order to achieve a valid and impartial outcome (A. Bayman, 2017), such as citizens who voluntarily accepted to participate in the interview process were fully informed about their anonymity and the scope of the research, while signing the relevant consent form with their initials. The only exception was the two interviewees from Menidi who granted permission to be interviewed through a phone call. In addition, it was clarified that there would be no recording of their responses, and any sensitive personal information given would not be publicized. All the interview details were noted down in a diary after the completion of each meeting, which took place in bus stops, while waiting to board.

⁴ Central Portal of Greek Municipalities (2025, February 11), *Formation of the Transit Police in Attica*. Available at: <https://kede.gr/dimiourgeitai-sygkoinoniaki-astynomia-stin-attiki/>

Research results

1) Feeling of safety and unsafety in public transport

The first part of the interview guide contains three questions that are related to the frequency of movement of citizens by public transport, the purpose of it and the safety/unsafety problem during the transfer. These are: "*Do you use public transport often? If yes, how much and which?*", "*For what reasons do you use it?*", and "*In which mode of transport do you feel more safety/ unsafety, and why?*". Before proceeding to this main topic, they were requested to give brief demographic information about where they reside and their age.

To begin with, the first question, 16 out of 18 people from all five areas stated that they "*frequently*" use public transport. Some of them use it "*on a daily basis*", while the remaining percentage expressed that the usage of it is "*rare*" or "*2 to 3 times a week*". The majority of people who had been interviewed highlighted that more often "Bus, Metro and Electric railway" are utilized. In Piraeus, the tram is also preferred, as indicated by two citizens. The only option that was barely used was the suburban train for travelling.

The main reasons people use public transport are "for work", "for university", "for external activities " and "for entertainment". Some people are completely dependent on the transport system, because they don't own a vehicle and have to use public transport for all their journeys ("...don't own any vehicle, so for whatever reason I have to take them", "for everything, since I don't own a car").

Regarding the feelings of safety while using transportation, many respondents (Table 2) reported that "none of them" are safe to travel, especially the electric railway, which was tagged as the most unsafe mode of transport "because of the bad maintenance and overcrowding". The opposite was reported for the metro as a safer transit way "because it has high speed and it is modern compared to the other methods". It is also noticeable that the metro "has frequent schedules". A unique answer captured the disadvantages of the suburban train, which is said to be the most unsafe "due to the high density of foreigners, repeated technical complications and lack of consistency in schedules". In general, about these modes, it was referred that "You don't know who boards", "there is nobody who can surveil", "plenty of things happen", "there is a lack of upbringing ", and

"there are a lot of people". These statements depict the main reasons why most people feel unsafe while using transportation in all five examined areas.

AREA	SAFE PUBLIC TRANSPORT	UNSAFE PUBLIC TRANSPORT
Piraeus	None / Metro	All/ esp. Electric Railway
Omonoia	None/ Metro	All/ esp. Bus and Electric Railway
Chalandri	None/ Metro	All/ esp. Electric Railway
Kato Patisia	None/ Metro	All
Menidi	Bus/ Metro	Metro/ Suburban train

Table 2: Safe and unsafe modes of transport

2) Misbehaviors/crimes occurred while using the means of transport

The second segment refers to four questions linked to the incidents of victimization they or a third person experienced, either while waiting for the vehicle or while taking the ride. Particularly, participants were asked: *“Have you or another person ever experienced any incident that caused fear and unsafety as you were travelling or waiting somewhere?”*, *“Are there specific spots that make you feel unsafety? (like stops, departure or terminal points). If yes, why?”*, *“Which time of the day do you most fear to travel by public transport?”*, and *“Does travelling alone or with company affect your feeling of fear and unsafety?”*.

Proceeding to this part, it was recorded that in the Piraeus area, all the interviewed citizens (4) had either been victims or had seen the victimization of other passengers, but two of them experienced both. Likewise, in Omonoia, only 1 out of 6 people stated that "No, never! I have never seen anything ever...", while the others said the opposite. In Chalandri, both women admitted that their experience was distressing, because in one of the two incidents, the woman "was accused" of theft wrongfully by the offender himself, and the other was "inappropriately touched". In the Kato Patisia region, no personal incidents were brought to light, but respondents stated that there were incidents of indirect victimization (as witnesses). Additionally, in Menidi area, the two female respondents described that they were not only victimized but also witnessed or learned about the victimization of others, so in both situations fear and unsafety were prominent.

To sum up, the leading crimes or misbehaviors (Table 3) which were committed on public transport or while waiting in several posts, according to the citizens' statements, were property crimes, sexual dignity offences, threats and misuse of personal data, like: "I was being photographed", "I have been touched", "fondled", "unjustly accused" and received "vulgar proposals". The numbers indicate that only the 3 out of 18 people questioned were unharmed, as they were not exposed to either direct or indirect victimization while using or waiting for public transport.

AREA	DIRECT VICTIMIZATION	INDIRECT VICTIMIZATION
Piraeus	photographed without consent, exhibitionist, theft	pickpocketing/ bag snatching, theft
Omonoia	theft, bad touching, vulgar proposals	theft, pickpocketing
Chalandri	bad touching, theft	-
Kato Patisia	-	Theft
Menidi	bad staring	not mentioned exactly

Table 3: Types of misbehavior/crime per area

Apart from the public transport, it was considered reasonable to study the perceived unsafety in some spots, such as stops, departure or final stations, as it is possible for unpleasant things to take place there as well. Analytically, everyone, except for two individuals- a man in Piraeus and a woman in Omonoia, admitted that "there is no safety anymore in any spot" and "everywhere you feel the same. Fear...". Moreover, some of them had noticed crime incidents happening, like threats to a third person waiting at a stop ("that person pulled the knife at someone"), even homicide ("I remember once someone had been murdered at this stop!"). In addition, others expressed that "bus stops" are cautious points, because the absence of supervision can turn them into dangerous places to be in" when they are empty", and especially "stops that are located in infamous areas...". So,

only 2 people out of 18 disagree and believe they don't feel fear anywhere, unlike the others ("You feel tense until you get home when you are at a disturbing place").

Regarding the timing, most of the participants, not only women, but also men, avoid the nightfall "because things are different...there are few people at night..." and particularly some of them don't feel safe "after 12 a.m.", "between 00:00-05:00 am" or "9:00-10:00 pm". In this part, two men answered differently as they said "I am not scared wherever I go" and "I don't feel fear...but I take my car". It was also mentioned that moving around alone at night is especially challenging for women ("I believe that for a lady it is dangerous and unsafe to move", said a male participant, and similarly, "it is really difficult for a woman to roam around").

In connection with the above declaration, another factor that was analyzed is the presence of a companion. Many men and women commented that "when you are alone, you feel more scared, while when you are with other people, you don't pay attention to the dangers". Also, it was stated that "always you are alert. You can't stay calm", or generally it depends on each individual how they experience it ("The fear is something that exists even if you are with many people. What I want to say is that it is up to each of us"). Furthermore, the necessity of a male companion was highlighted, as it affects the decision-making of the offender, who will think twice before approaching them ("When you are with a man, the offender will think before making a move" and "It is something else to be with my husband...."). On the contrary, one man marked that "I am not scared when alone, despite being of a certain age".

3) The response to the misbehavior/criminal act as victims or witnesses

In the third part, it is examined what the stand of the victim or non-victim citizen (witness) was when a deviant behavior took place and how the transport staff or co-passengers reacted. Specifically, the question was: "*What would you do if you were victimized, and what if someone else were the victim?*". At this point, it must be emphasized that this question was put only when the interviewee stated that they had never been victimized when commuting. If from the previous question it was revealed that they encountered a discomfoting situation, then the question was "*What did you do when you were victimized or when you saw someone being the victim?*". Next, they were asked: "*Generally, in situations when something occurs in public transport, is the staff*

helpful?". Similarly, another question was formed as: "*What stand do the co-passengers take when anti-social incidents happen*" in public transport?

Furthermore, it is interesting to review the reactions of the participants who were victims to the offensive attitude. Specifically, in some answers it was included that "I reacted, but he (the offender) left...", "I hit him with my elbow", "I raised my voice when I had to" and "I called the Cops". Besides, there are also people who "didn't know how to react...I felt disgusted", "I froze", "I didn't say anything" and "at that moment, I flustered".

Those who had never been in a situation of a victim or witness answered hypothetically that "I would call the security first", "It depends. I maybe would call the police, maybe nothing", "I would shout", "I would oppose, I would react", "I would be calm...I would keep a safe distance...".

When it comes to the reaction of the driver of the vehicle, how they reacted when they had to deal with the deviant behavior, a lot of them had shaped a negative image about the staff, characterizing them as "apathetic" and "not helpful". The disappointment was evident from the phrase: "Nobody cares. Nobody pays attention...especially the driver...". Also, similar statements that highlight the passivity of the driver were expressed, such as "He doesn't do anything...", "He is not concerned" or "He ignores".

However, approximately half of the people tried to justify the response of the staff by saying "He is afraid...He will be beaten", and a common statement was that "...it is possible he doesn't realize anything" or in some transport modes "...he can't see...", so "it depends what has happened...". By chance, one of the participants in the research had formerly served as a bus driver, from the perspective of whom, "Usually, he is the one who is blamed for everything".

Regarding the reaction from the co-passengers, the same answers were given by 14 people, like: "They ignore..." and "everyone minds their own business" not only on public transport, but also "they don't assist here on the road when something happens...". Three people supported that "some defend the right thing", but surely "few oppose" when awkward things take place, and those who take a stand "are misunderstood and told off" said a female citizen in Piraeus.

4) The perceptions of citizens about the contemporary dimensions of criminality

The next part included a couple of questions related to the criminality issue generally and the current condition. Precisely, they were asked: “*How do you view today's situation, when it comes to criminality in public transport or in "dangerous" cities, in comparison to the past?*”. Moreover, “*What caused this change, according to you?*”.

The perspective of residents from all the areas, which had been selected for the conduct of the research, about the change in crime rates generally or linked to public transport, is very similar, but with a different approach in each. In explanatory terms, it was supported that the situation of crime "has been changed", "criminality has risen now". However, it was also stated that "it has not changed. It is on the same levels" (Table 4).

AREA	CRIME RATE	CAUSE
Piraeus	Increased	juvenile delinquency, government failure, deterioration of public transport, economic crisis, migrants, poverty
Omonoia	Increased	absence of supervision, illegal migration, police and justice system failure, no law implementation, Roma community, poverty
Chalandri	Increased	poverty, no control and surveillance
Kato Patisia	Increased	organized crime/ drug dealing, specific communities, many foreigners, economic crisis, overpopulation in Athens, no manners/ education, trap music, drug addicts, gangs
Menidi	Increased	careless people, irresponsibility, no supervision, no migration limitation, no laws

Table 4: High crime rate perception and causes

To support the rise in criminality, they reinforced their arguments with reasoning. For instance, they complained that the short of monitoring and control, as well as social heterogeneity, the deviant nature of some minority groups, the "inactivity" of the justice system and the police force, the failure of the Government, the economic crisis, poverty and the growth in juvenile delinquency, the new music trends (like trap music), have led to the generation of new crime opportunities.

5) Preventive measures for crime control and victimization

Another pair of questions followed regarding the safety measures that could diminish the available opportunities the criminal takes advantage of, like: *“What kind of actions/measures, in your opinion, would aid in maintaining security in public transport?”* and *“How do you evaluate the new directive of “Transit Police” in transportation system?”*. This contains one of the most important subjects introduced in this research, namely the "Transit Police" regulation newly imposed on public services in the transit system.

According to four people, the installation of CCTV cameras is crucial too, so that "...they can help, because someone may not trust you", as long as "they are functional" and "...not broken...". Doubt has been addressed by a female participant, who expresses that " I am not sure if the cameras really help, because I doubt whether they are checked. Maybe they are installed for the drivers to check who disembarks and who not...".

Other practical solutions that would tackle the issue to some extent are "frequent...schedules..." of the public transport, "the tight checking of access done by individuals...", condemning at this point the checks done "by machinery" and, lastly, raising awareness "through seminars and leaflets" or even with ""special indications/ signs at stops with instructions regarding safety".

Furthermore, emphasis was given to the fact that "rules should be enforced properly", but also "followed as they must be", which will be achieved through "...education...". In this part, it was also added that "drivers should be trained...", a fact that will improve their social role, since it will develop their bond with passengers, whom they serve. In this way, they will be in the position "...to handle difficult situations".

Citizens then were asked to provide their line of thought in this matter, and more than half, which is 13 out of 18, agreed that there should be presence of the Transit Police "so that fear will prevent them from causing harm to others", not solely on public transport, but also they should "parole...routinely on roads...". They consider that their activity should not be limited exclusively to problematic areas, but also the inspection "needs to be continued in every transport type, broadly in areas, in stops, everywhere". Alternatively, "there should be someone responsible present...permanently", highlighting even the importance of ticket checking personnel. Especially,

it was mentioned that "they should pay attention to those individuals who make noise or when crime is committed, they need to intervene immediately"

Also, it is essential to mention every doubt, or even positive thinking about the "Transit Police", for the application of which thirteen participants were aware. Specifically, while many considered that "it has full potential when it comes to dealing with crime in public transport" and in general "it is a positive and a right measure", others are uncertain whether it will be effectively implemented and be able to achieve the objectives it was designed for. For that, "all it takes is not for them to just sit and drink coffee", but also "do their job correctly", to get qualitative results and improvement.

More pessimistic were the beliefs "I don't believe it will be successfully applied..." that expressed disappointment, and "they don't even come when you truly need them" or they will be like "pots, as usual", criticizing their inconsistency during their duty. Furthermore, this seems to be "a dream", said a woman, while discussing the new rule, and another person hinted that the root of the issue is something else, referring to the Roma community ("as long as they -Roma- don't beat them!"). A similar belief was expressed by a few citizens who were informed about this regulation during the interview ("It is the first time I am hearing about such a measure...If implemented...I believe it will help"), hoping for its essential contribution ("I hope it changes something").

6) Personal experience from abroad regarding crime in public means of transport

The last theme and the last question of the guide was about their personal experience in a foreign country, such as: *"Have you ever travelled abroad? If yes, did you experience fear of crime and unsafety in public transport?"*.

More than half of the respondents (11 out of 18) claimed that they have never been out of Greece. However, one of them revealed that "I have heard that there are stricter measures in public transport, adding to the statement that "automatically...this hardens the situation for a misbehavior to occur, since you have to pay for the fare or, in general, you just are cautious about your behavior and your movements ". In other words, "there is a mentality for surveillance....". Similarly, another participant declared that "I can imagine, and this is what I have heard, that in these issues they are more organized and alert".

Some reported that they have been abroad and mentioned the "lower sense of fear and unsafety, even on the roads". Besides, they described a more positive condition ("it is far better", "there, constantly are being inspected..."). In contrast to Greece, when it comes to supervision, "you will always notice someone, while waiting for the metro" and if something happens "the driver gets involved. He aids instantly...". Despite the positive depiction of the better transit circumstances overseas, some completed the statement that "at night you are scared there too", or someone may feel safer, but this doesn't exclude "the fact that nothing can happen there as well...", while only one answer included that "to me it was all the same".

Discussion - Conclusion

The data collected from the research and the analysis of it provides useful information about the fear of crime and the unsafety people feel during their ride with public transport. Through this analysis, some of the research questions are satisfactorily validated, and some others are entirely refuted.

Regarding the feelings of safety in the public transport system, respondents from the five areas declare high levels of feelings of unsafety while using the means of public transportation. In general, the fear of crime is not specifically linked to a specific type of transport but is commonly sensed in every vehicle. Very few consider the Metro as a safe mode of public transport, due to the contemporary operational system. So, the indicators "safe area" or "unsafe area" don't make a difference when it comes to feelings of unsafety in public transport. However, a different and more optimistic view is shaped for the circumstances overseas.

In the case of age and gender in relevance to the feelings of safety and unsafety, the research indicates that as women are expressing intense unsafety, so do men, especially at nightfall. This means that "night hours" are restrictive for both genders, and so is the use of the means of transport. Age bears a noted similarity to gender, which means that both old and young people view fear of crime, during commuting, as an issue.

As is widely known, the feeling of unsafety can have a negative impact on citizens regarding the management of their lifestyle. In other words, many of them in order to avoid any potential danger, have a tendency towards self-limitation (Zarafonitou, 2023). Empirical studies have concluded

that females, who are too afraid to lead a carefree life, can refrain from using frequently means of transport or follow specific routes. Also, they choose to wait at stops where the lighting is full and try to be near the driver. Apart from that, they ensure that they carry "weapons", like keys, for self-defense. Moreover, they are careful enough not to catch other people's eyes; that's why they avoid dressing provocatively, but modestly (Ceccato & Loukaitou, 2021).

Moreover, high levels of fear of crime and feelings of unsafety are connected to the regions with intense population disparity, since there is no sense of social solidarity. At this point, parameters like "social reaction" and "personal experience" need to be taken into account, so as to check the validity of the above statement. More clearly from the research comes out as a result that in every area that had been explored, there were residents who had experienced their own victimization or had at least heard about the victimization of other people. But when asked how the fellow citizens responded, their answers disclosed a lack of assistance from them and indifference. The same perspective was formed for the drivers/ the staff. All these claims confirm to a great degree that social consistency and solidarity have degraded, probably due to urban migration. To put it differently, "unknown" people relocate, either foreigners or indigenous people, which hardens the process of building strong ties and, as a result, the fear of the "unknown" sparks the feeling of unsafety (Zarafonitou, 2013).

It should not be forgotten that citizens also commented on the lack of preservation of the public transit modes and the prominent presence of drug addicts in specific areas, which intensifies the social and physical disorder, as mentioned previously. This was studied and proved in other surveys as well, that conditions in cities, like vandalism signs and lack of lighting at stops, also substance consumers or remote spots, increase the fear of crime (Ceccato, Loukaitou-Sideris, 2021). Even graffiti in public places can generate feelings of unsafety, and mostly those who object to this kind of markings consider such places to be unsafe (Zarafonitou, 2016; Zarafonitou & Kontopoulou, 2020).

Regarding the matter of the Transit Police, even though positivity was mirrored in the participants' responses, doubtful answers about the measure's effectiveness were also presented. This is hardly surprising, because according to their beliefs about crime prevention policies, more control and policing were demanded, despite their "disappointment" with the inability of the Police to meet the safety expectations and needs of citizens. This is also confirmed by a research (Zarafonitou,

2023) relying on the fact that the evaluation of the police's work is negative and is expressed by those citizens who feel more fearful and consider intensive policing a solution to the situation, and as a result, they cultivate a more punitive mindset (Zarafonitou, 2011). Despite their dissatisfaction with the police's work, it cannot be denied that the police's institutional role is beyond question.

Furthermore, an example of the successful implementation of a similar Transit Police rule ought to be given. For instance, "Operation Beam" can be considered a good practice to lower criminal incidents in public transport. This was applied for four weeks in 2002 in the UK, aiming at monitoring a bus lane by increasing the surveillance and maintenance of it. For such purposes, CCTV cameras were utilized and a group of police officers, fare checkers, security guards and traffic officers was formed to be present on buses, on foot or on their vehicles. The outcome of the operation was incredibly impressive, since the percentage of car lifting and assaults inside the bus was dropped. Simultaneously, the support of citizens and their faith in the authorities was rejuvenated. Despite these advantages, due to the short period of application of the program, the crime level was back to initial levels (Newton, Johnson and Bowers, 2004).

Another notable survey (Smith & Clarke, 2000) in three German cities in 1980 demonstrated that the presence of control officers in transit modes can reduce incidents of harassment and assault. Similarly, the CCTV installation in Glasgow (1994- 1996) was expected to reduce both crime and unsafety. Despite the citizens' approval for the usage of this equipment, it didn't make any difference when it came to minimizing the fear of crime. Although there were high arrest rates and the prevention of crime was possible, it cannot be ignored that the crime rate did not decrease. Moreover, it should be taken into account that the installation of the CCTV cannot prevent crime, since it tends to shift to other places that are not adequately guarded (Zarafonitou, 2003).

In addition, it is not irrelevant to connect the demand for intense surveillance with the tendency to punitiveness. More precisely, the element "fear of crime" can be strongly associated with the "public trust" in police authorities, as the increased levels of fear can weaken the faith in these authorities that are responsible for law and order, thereby leading to enhancing punitive attitudes (Zarafonitou, 2025). This has been observed in past research (Yavuz & Welch, 2010), especially the fact that this attitude is mostly adopted by women, who firmly favor preventative directives. However, this cannot be fully supported on the grounds that worldview also plays a vital role in forming harsh mentalities (Zarafonitou, 2023).

Mass media (Lambropoulou, 1994) is another concerning factor that needs to be analyzed, since it is the main source of information, which also updates citizens about the recent criminal incidents, and can construct partial perceptions. At this point, it is reasonable to mention that through Mass Media, it is easier to spread fear of crime, as every information shared is constantly critically commented with exaggeration and purposely repeated, which leads to generating crime waves (Zarafonitou, 2023). Consequently, the impression about the fact that criminality has risen may have been formed, due to the point of view people have established based on what and how the news is presented through the media (Zarafonitou, 2011).

Taking into consideration all the above, it is crystal clear that fear of crime and feelings of unsafety in public places, like public transport, can be developed in any environment that reflects danger and disorder, which may affect any individual, regardless of age and gender. Additionally, the factor of direct or indirect victimization holds significant value, as it generates a different perception of danger. More certainly, it has been registered that individuals with past victimization experience declare to feel more unsafe, especially when roaming around at night (Zarafonitou, 2009;2006).

Despite these negative effects of the environment on the criminals that facilitate their fraudulent intentions, it is important to pose obstacles prior to the act. This can be achieved through preventive policies (Zarafonitou, 2003), such as sufficient lighting on the roads, enhancement with surveillance cameras, which can be accomplished in combination with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) policy.

Specifically, Newman's theory referred to the better architectural design of facilities, in order to ensure extensive monitoring and supervision of both indoor and outdoor places. The emphasis was also given to the enforcement of the involvement of society by making the citizens realize the importance of their space, so that they can engage well in the fruitful application of environmental design (Rowland & Millington).

Moreover, measures like guarding public spaces, as the Transit Police pursues, and installing upgraded technological equipment for detection or even regular checking in public transport can discourage the offenders from offending. Adding to that, special policies to support vulnerable minorities and the restoration of the damaged image of the places will be beneficial. All the above

may contribute to minimizing fear of crime to some degree and may uplift the social bonding of citizens (Ceccato & Mahesh Nalla).

These suggested measures and policies may plant positive thoughts about their effectiveness, but what is not really acknowledged is the side effects that are veiled. One of the consequences of excessive paroling can be considered the displacement of crime in other areas that might be economically or socially weaker and where protective measures are not applied enough, so technological resources are not utilized. Aside from the crime relocation, the offender may reconsider the timing of the crime they intend to commit or even the type of criminal activity that poses fewer risks, such as the risk of identification. It is likely that they may shift their focus from one victim to another, if needed, so as to make sure their target will be a safe move (Barr & Pease).

Lastly, bombing with constant technical changes will promote a "barricaded" (Clarke, 1983) society, which will boost social exclusion and marginalization of the weak communities. To put it in other words, the risk of encroachment of human rights will lurk, which is unacceptable for the rational implementation of crime prevention policies. In any case, an approach that combines social and situational crime prevention measures is always a prerequisite for the success of such policies (Zarafonitou, 2013).

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