



Combatting Sexual Harassment in Public Transport Settings

“...on board this meeting...”

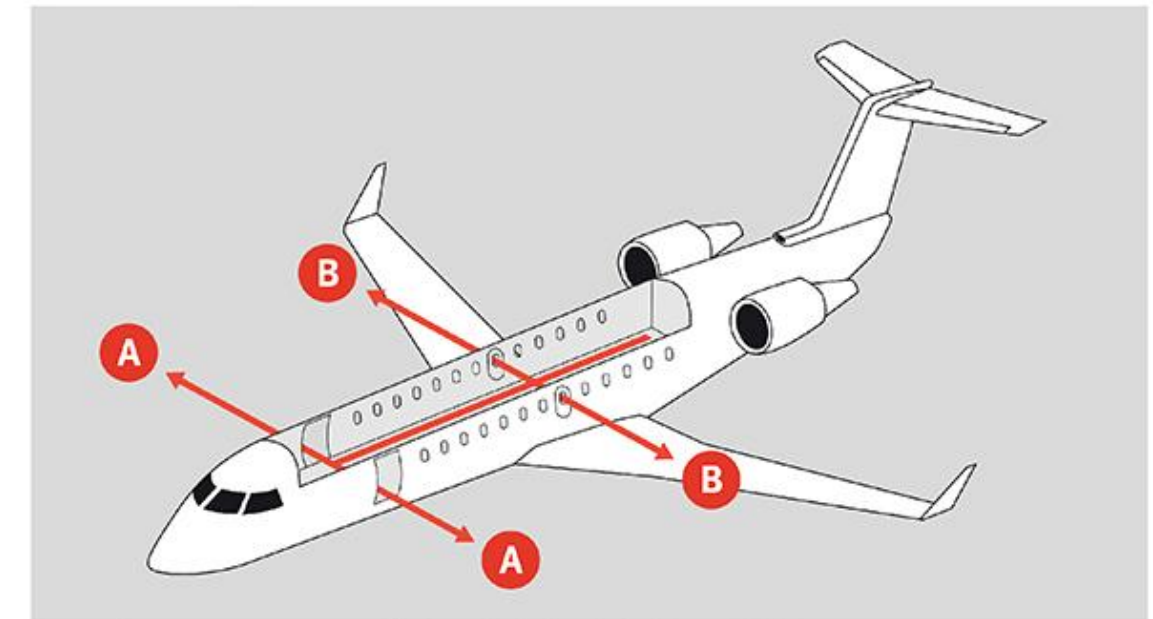
Please keep **microphone muted** when not speaking.

Your input is important.

Please be **brief and to the point**.

We are **recording this meeting**.

Recording will be uploaded to members area.

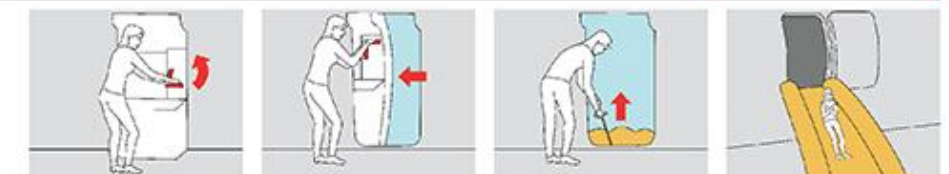


Please take a few moments now to locate your nearest exit / Prosimo vzemite si nekaj trenutkov, in poiščite vam najbližji izhod.

EVACUATION EVAKUACIJA



EXIT A IZHOD A



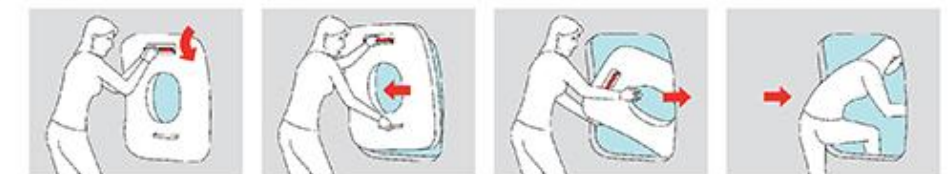
Doors can be opened by moving the handle upwards.
Vrata odprete s premikom ročaja navzgor.

Open the doors by pushing them aside.
Odprite vrata s potiskom v stran.

Pull the cord to inflate the inflatable slide.
S potegom na vrv aktivirajte napihljivo blazino.

Leave the plane by jumping on the inflatable slide.
Zapustite letalo s skokom na napihljivo blazino.

EXIT B IZHOD B



Doors can be opened by moving the handle downwards.
Vrata odprete s premikom ročaja navzdol.

Lift the doors and move them aside.
Dvignite vrata in jih umaknite v stran.

Throw the doors from the airplane.
Vrata izvrzite iz letala.

Exit the airplane.
Zapustite letalo.

WATER LANDING PRISTANEK NA VODI



Jump onto the inflatable slide.
Skočite na napihljivo blazino.

Lift the cover to reveal the handle.
Vzdignite prekrivalo.

Pull the handle to create a distance.
Oddaljite se s potegom na ročico.

Cut the rope to detach the raft.
Za odstranitev čolna prerežite vrv.

POLIS Members' Area

- Access now at members.polisnetwork.eu
- Dynamic **one-stop shop** for all POLIS members-only activities
- **Log in** by entering your email and receiving instructions to set your own password [at this link](#).
 - If you do not receive an email, reach out to **Carlotta** (cinserra@polisnetwork.eu) to receive your access details.

New features

- 01** Access all POLIS members-only activities, resources, and relevant updates in one easy to use platform
- 02** Engage directly with the POLIS team and all Working Groups in a dedicated space for each
- 03** Connect and exchange with fellow members across the network, finding them directly on the platform





Speed, Schools, Cycling & Walking – getting it done.

Berlin, 1 + 2 October 2026

14h00 Welcome & Introduction

Stuart Reid (WG Chair), Transport for London

14h10 What are we talking about? And why us?

Pedro Homem de Gouveia, POLIS

14h15 Where we are: state of Research & Action

Vania Ceccato, KTH Royal Institute of Technology

Carmela Canonico, UITP - International Association of Public Transport

Georgina Carey, Transport for London

14h50 What do YOU want to know? And what should WE do?

Structured discussion with all participants

15h20 Conclusions & next steps & End of Meeting (15h30)



Combating Sexual Harassment in Public Transport

Definition?

Sexual harassment in public transport settings is defined as unwelcome, unsolicited, and non-consensual conduct of a sexual nature that occurs in public transport vehicles, stations, stops, and their immediate vicinity.

Such behaviour can be verbal, non-verbal, or physical, and is often perpetrated by strangers.

Scope?

- Public transport vehicles, stations, stops
- their immediate vicinity, e.g., connecting paths?
- Passengers + staff
- Other behaviour, e.g., aggressions to staff

Structural nature

- Potential aggressor x potential victim x environment
- Design & management of infrastructure x operations
- Capacity = people x resources x processes

Framing our Responsibility

- Awareness important, but not enough
- Systematic action on infrastructure + operations
- Budget x responsibility
- Beyond words, actions – and beyond actions, processes



Combatting Sexual Harassment in Public Transport Settings

Vania Ceccato

Professor, Department of Urban Planning and
Environment, School of Architecture and the Built
Environment, KTH Royal Institute of Technology

15th June 2026

Relevant studies from our group (Open access)

Books

- Ceccato, V.; Sundling, V.; Gliori, G. (2025) **Transit Safety for a Sustainable City: People, Paths and Places in Railway Stations** (Springer, 2025)
- Ceccato, V.; Newton, A. (2024) **Systems thinking for sustainable crime prevention** (Routledge).
- Ceccato, V., Loukaitou-Sideris, A. (2020) **Transit Crime and Sexual Violence in Cities: International Evidence and Prevention**. Routledge

Articles

- Ceccato, V., & Hébras, J. (2026) **Investigating incivility on an inner-city bus**, Mobilities, DOI: 10.1080/17450101.2026.2618713
- Ceccato, V., Besenecker, U., Ariel, B., Eizadi, H., Höglund, M., & Näsman, P. (2025). **Assessing safety perceptions and lighting conditions in a metro station**. Journal of Experimental Criminology, 1-27.
- Ceccato, V., Ioannidis, I., & Felson, M. (2025). **Tunnels in the urban fabric: balancing connectivity and safety**. Urban Planning and Transport Research, 13(1).
- Ceccato, V., Ioannidis, I., & Felson, M. (2025). **Graffiti in pedestrian tunnels: A comparison of police records and crowdsourced data in Stockholm, Sweden**. Tunnelling and underground space technology incorporating trenchless technology research.
- Ceccato, V., & Ali, T. (2025). **Violence against transit workers in Stockholm's metro**. Case Studies on Transport Policy, 20, 101457.
- Harder, N. L., & Ceccato, V. (2025). **Mobility-related harassment: Assessing individual and situational factors**. Journal of Urban Mobility, 8, 100160.
- Abraham, J.; Ceccato, V.; Näsman, P. (2025) **From locals to outsiders: A comparative analysis of neighborhood safety perceptions**. Nordic Journal of Criminology, 27(1), 1-26.
- Abraham, J., Ceccato, V., & Näsman, P. (2025). **Men's fear in public places: A Stockholm case study**. Cities.
- Ceccato, V., Brantingham, P. (2024) **What is the role of architects and urban planners in crime prevention?** Security Journal, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41284-024-00442-4>. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41284-024-00442-4>
- Ceccato, V., Sundling, C., & Gliori, G. (2024) **Transit safety of women in rural-urban contexts**. Feminist Criminology, 19(4), 372-394. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15570851241254358>
- Ceccato, V., Sundling, C., & Gliori, G. (2024). **What makes a railway station safe and for whom?** The impact of transit environments on passengers' victimisation and safety perceptions. European Transport Research Review, 16(1), 21. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12544-024-00641-5>
- Sundling, C., Ceccato, V., & Gliori, G. (2024). **Disability, victimisation, and safety in train travel**. Transportation Research Interdisciplinary Perspectives, 25, 101131. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590198224001179>
- Ceccato, V., Gliori, G., & Sundling, C. (2024). **LGBTQI+ safety perceptions in transit environments**. Journal of Urban Mobility, 6, 100087. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.urbmob.2024.100087>

The Nirbhaya case (“fearless”)



The rape and fatal assault of a woman on a bus in India, widely referred to as the Nirbhaya case (“fearless”) in 2012.

This case galvanised public outrage, legislative reform, and global awareness of the risks women face in transit environments.

Rare but everywhere
(UN Women, 2025)



- How research defines sexual harassment
- Research findings so far
- How research can help those planning and managing public transport

Sexual violence/sexual harassment



Non verbal

- Staring / Ogling
- Taking pictures
- Indecent gestures

Verbal

- Commenting
- Catcalls
- Sexual invites



Physical

- Touching / Groping
- Stalking
- Sexual assault (including rape)





1 IN 2 WOMEN

experienced sexual assault at
least once in their life time

- Highly underreported
- The presence of bystanders often do not result in intervention

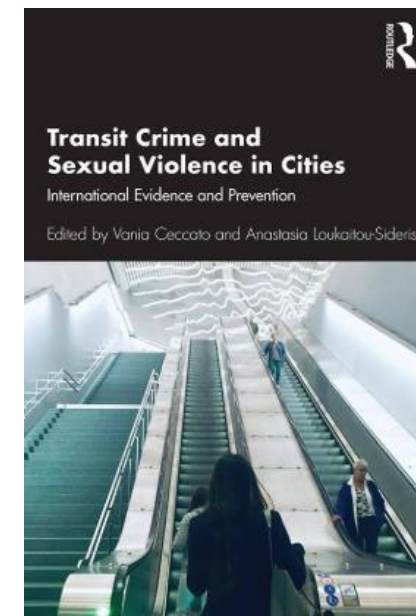
How many and who are harassed?



45% harassed in public transport

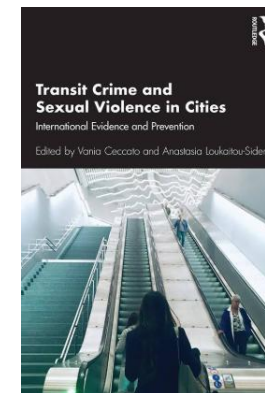
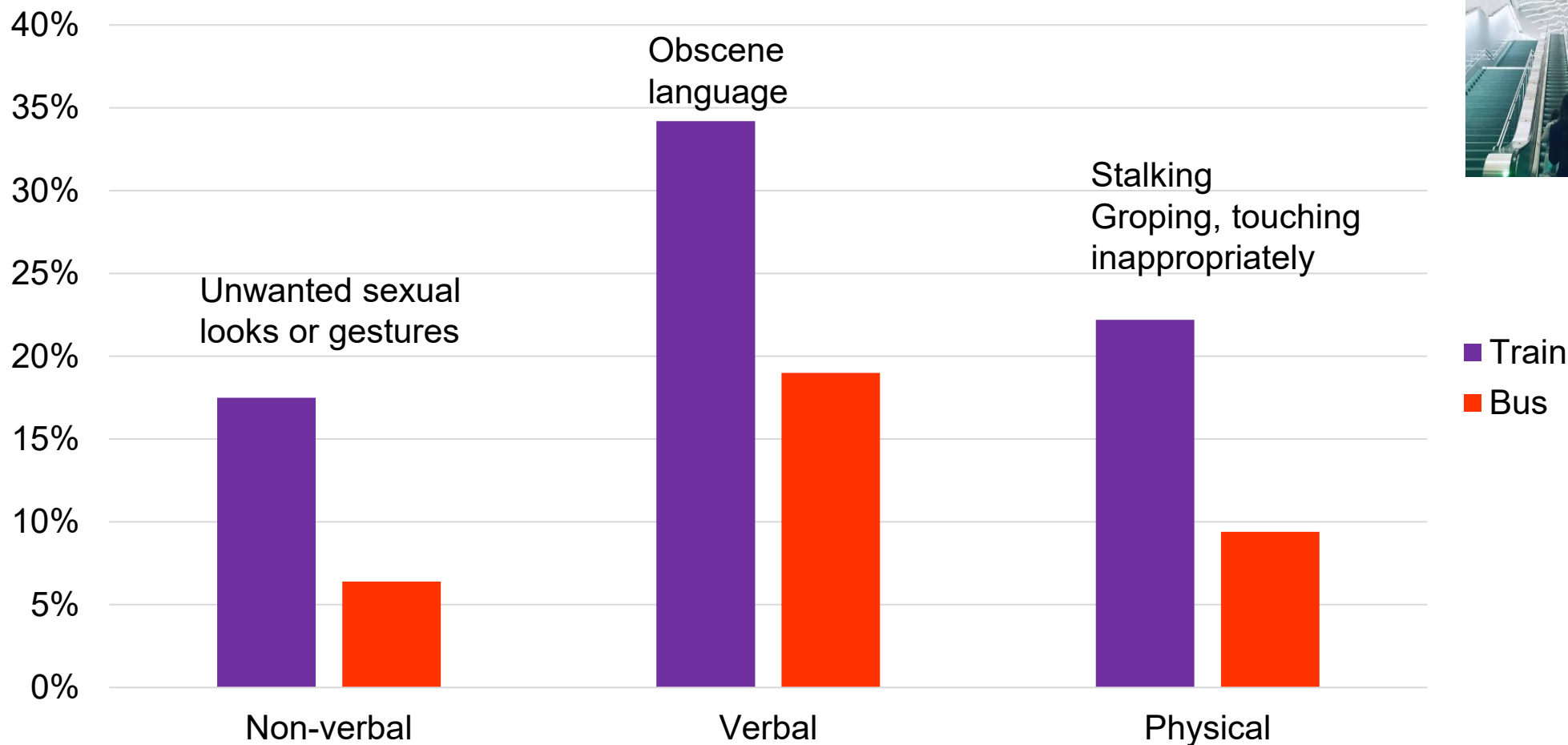
- 88% during trip
- 60% on the station
- 55% on the way to/from the station

- 65% Women
- 30% Men

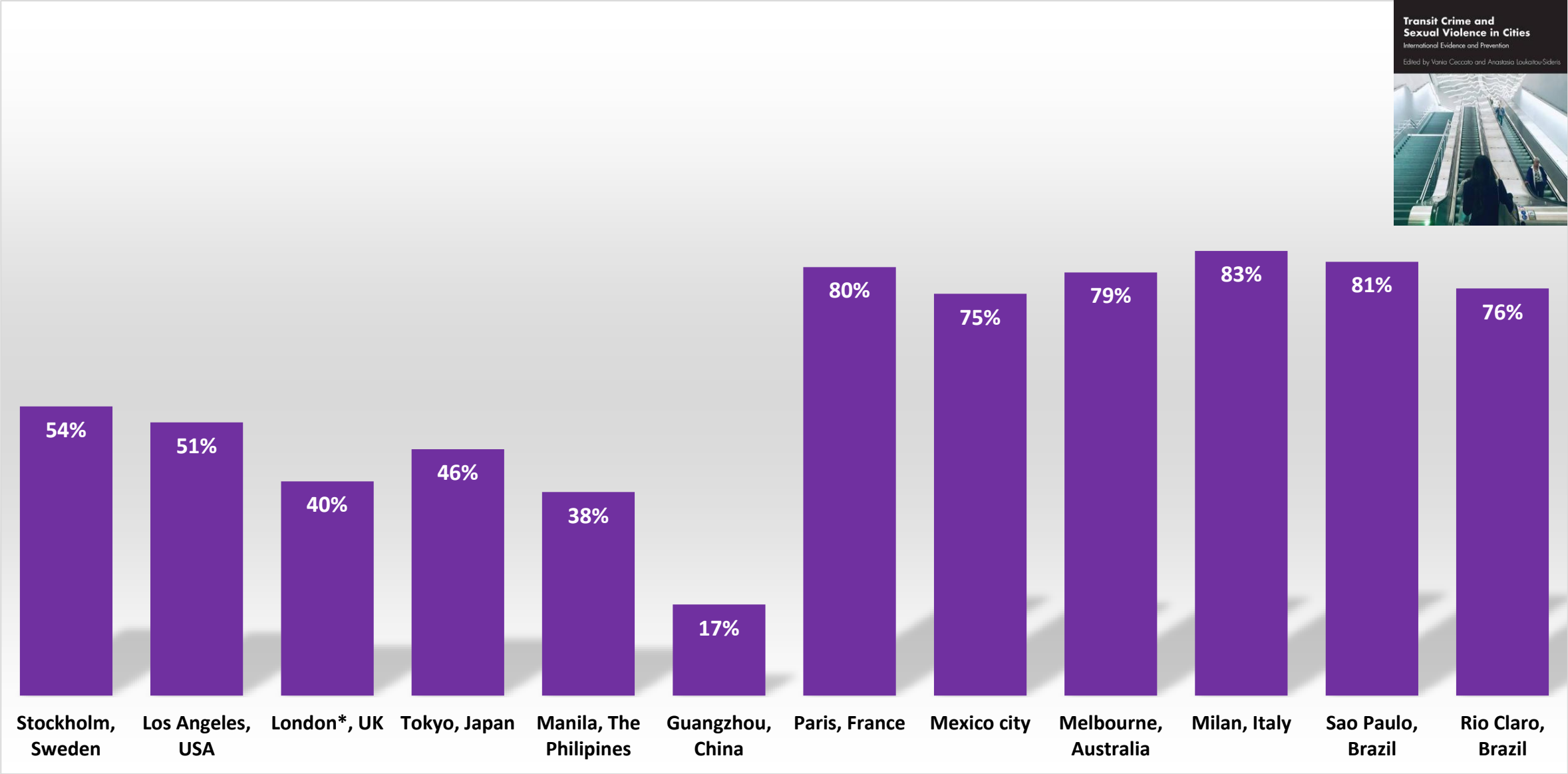
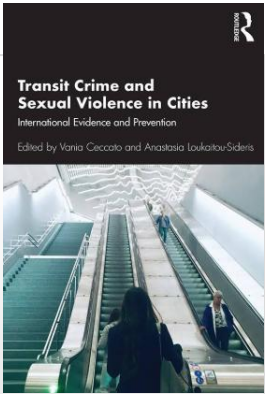


Ceccato & Loukaitou-Sideris (2020)

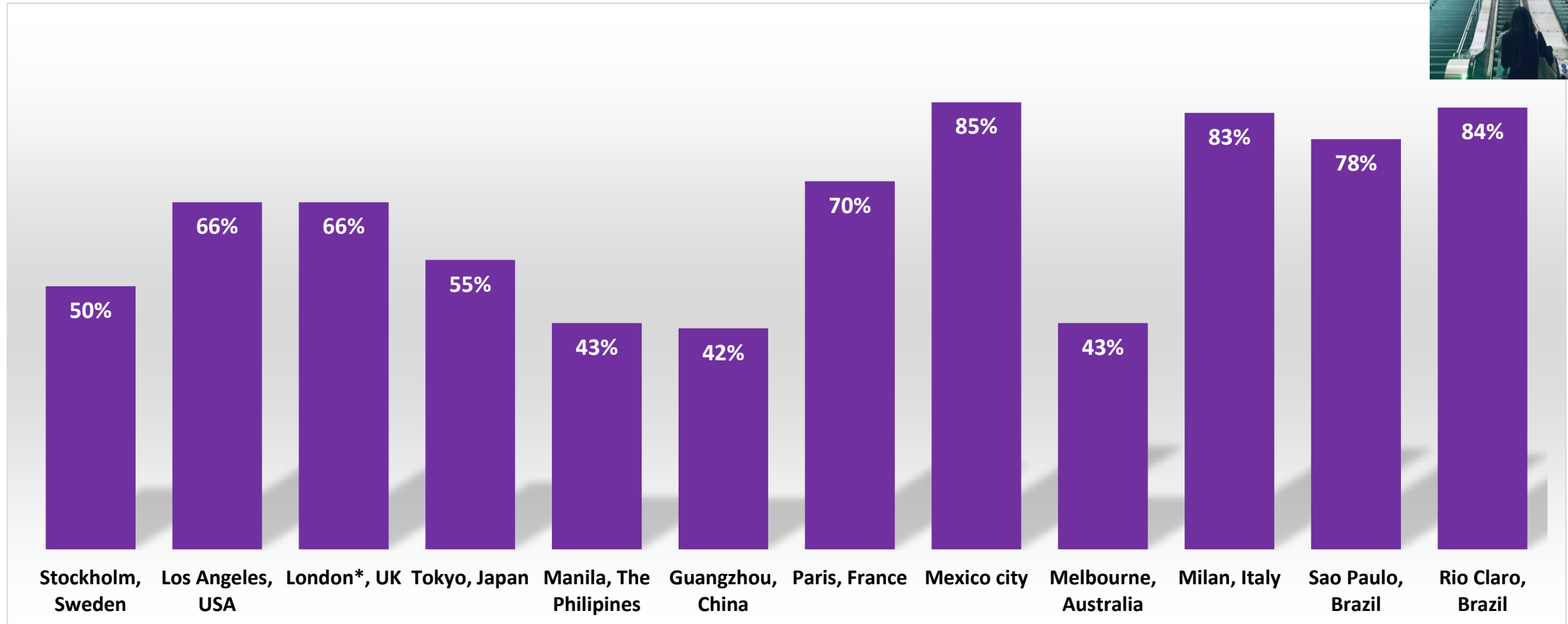
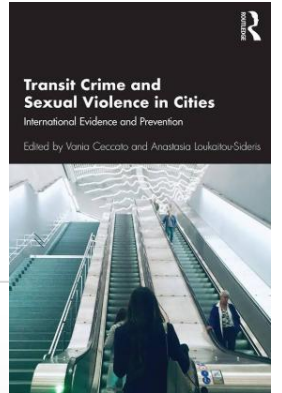
The nature of sexual violence



Have you been sexually harrassed in public transportation?



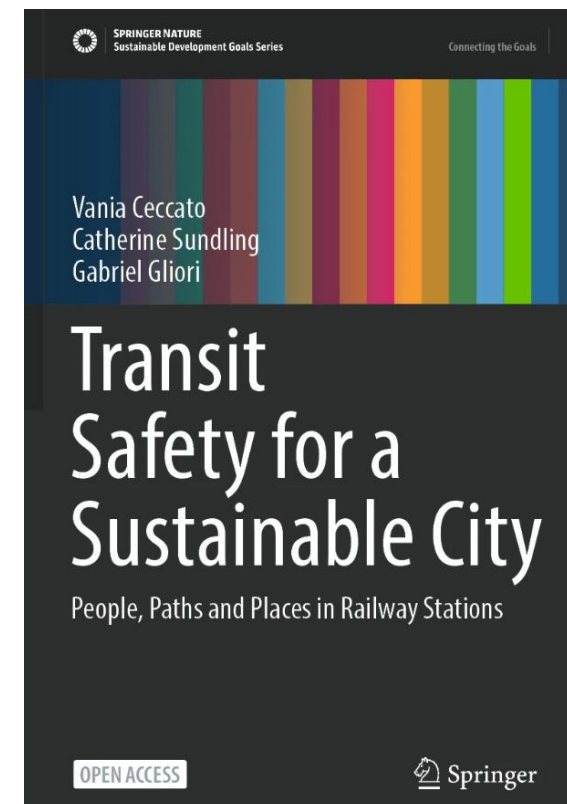
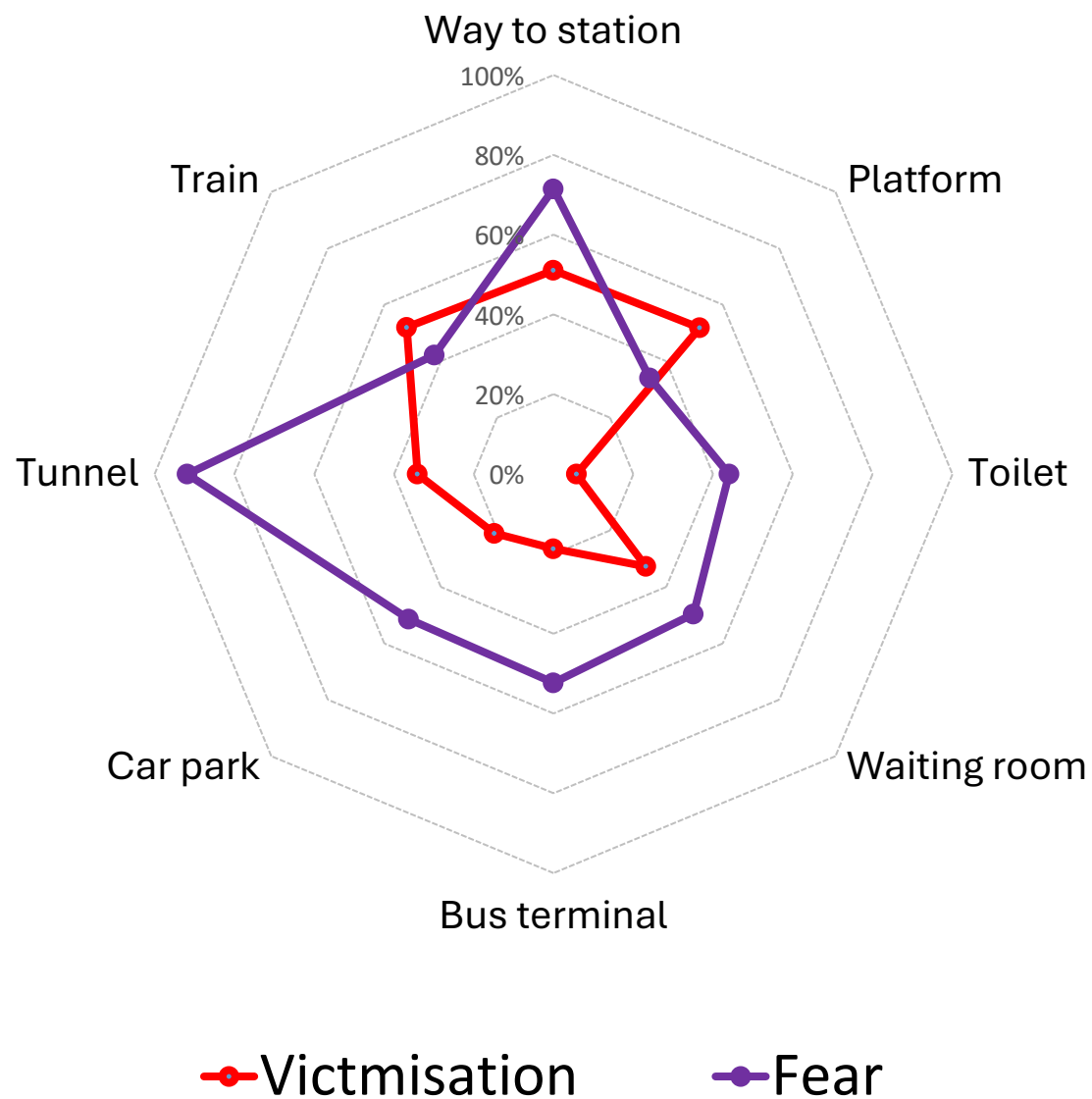
Do you avoid bus/train? Certain times?



The complexity of transit nodes

			Platform
			Entrances/exits
			Lounge/Hall
			Travel information/RTI
			Underpasses/pedestrian tunnels

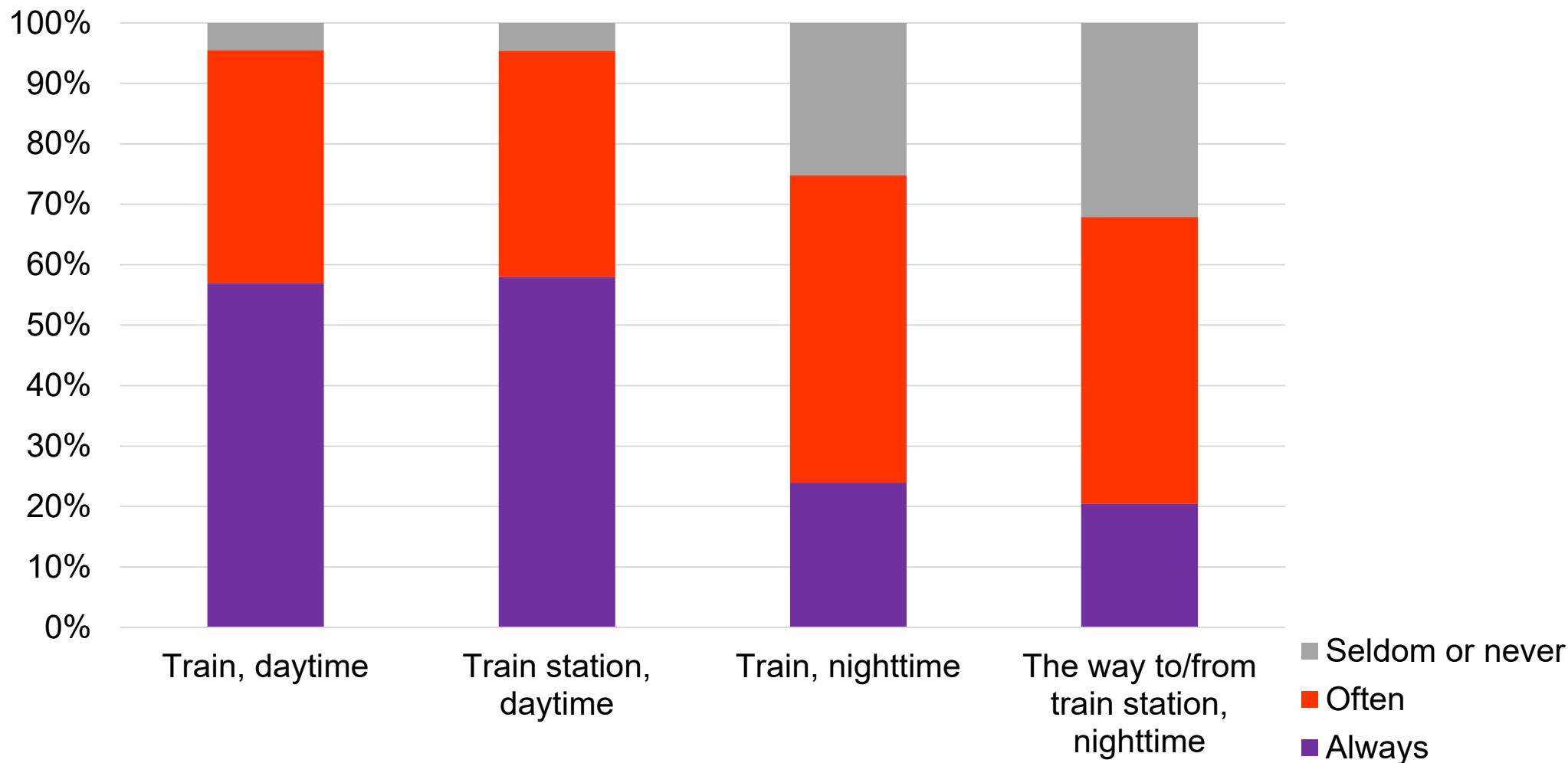
Victimisation & poor safety during the trip



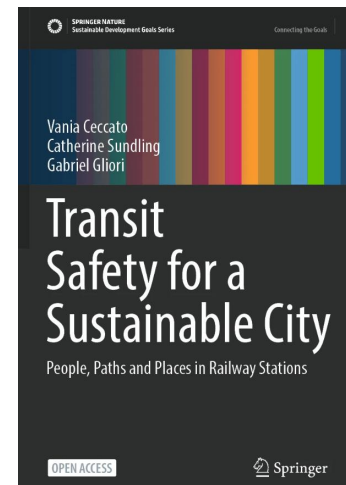
<https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-97427-4>

Perceived safety

Day-night patterns of perceived safety



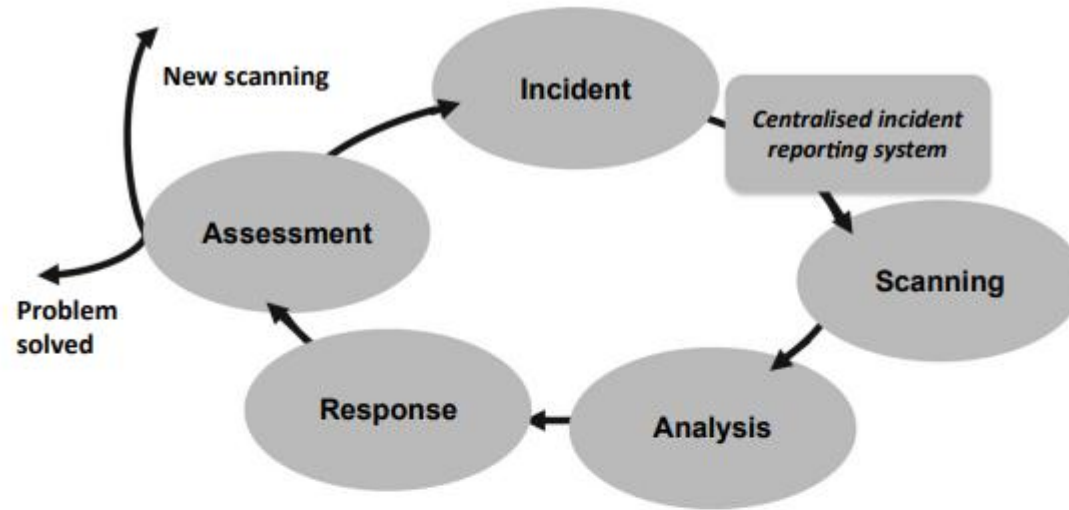
Women's transit safety tree



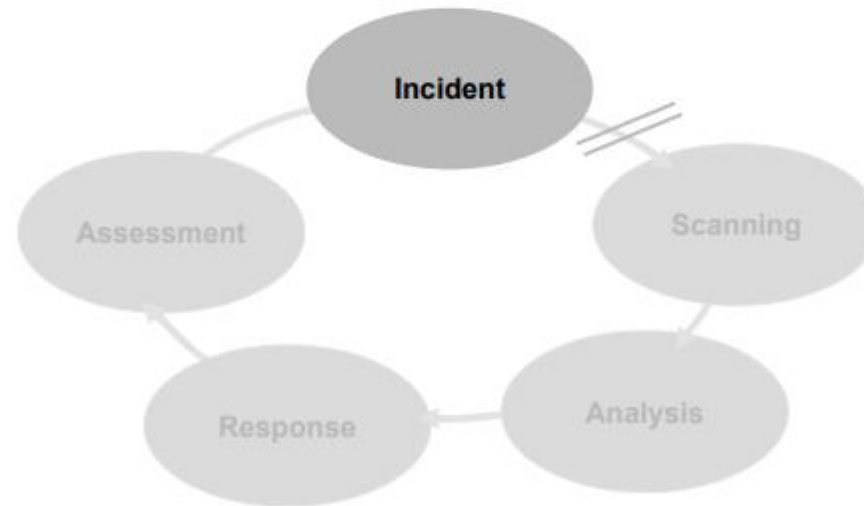
Women's transit safety tree: A multilevel systems-based approach to tackle crime and safety problems.

Source: Ceccato et al. (2025)

Barriers against evidence-based planning



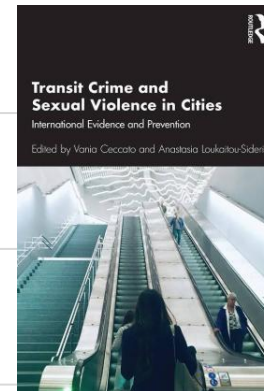
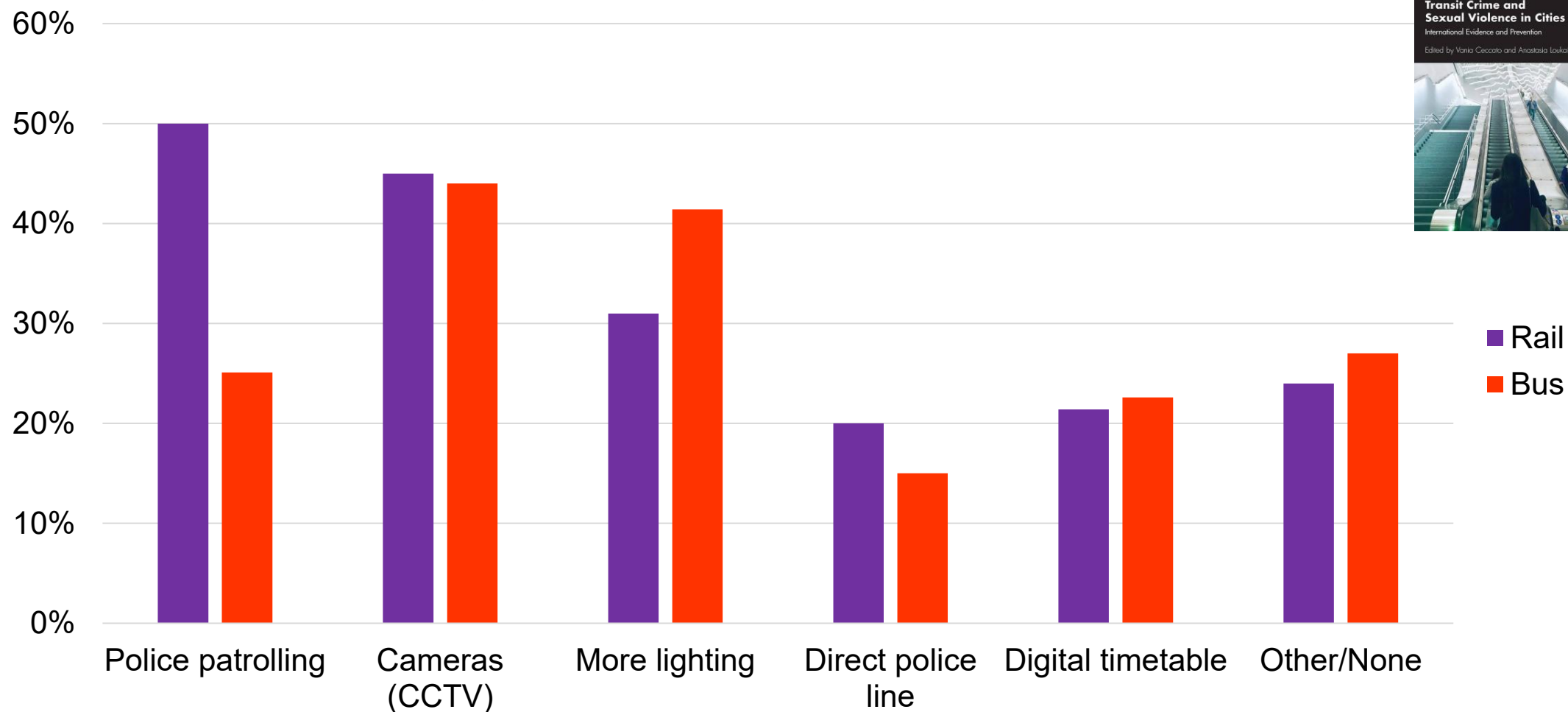
(a) How it should work



(b) How it works

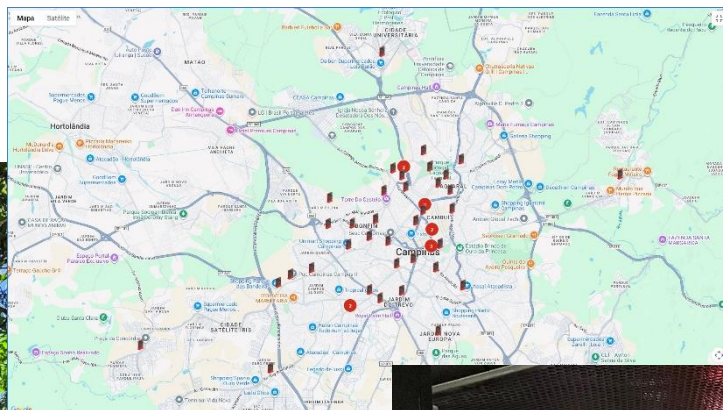
Suggestions for improvement of safety

Findings from the sexual harassment project





Guarded Bus Stops (GBSs)



Thank you!

Security for Women and Girls on public transport networks

Carmela Canonico, UITP

15/06/2026

- Gender-based violence is a global pandemic that affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetime.
- In 2023 UITP established a working group to understand the problem within the sector.
- A survey (19 questions) was launched in 2024 amongst the members of the committees over the span of 4 months



UITP paper on GBV

- **Survey highlights (2024)**
- **Challenges**
- **Recommendations**



ADVANCING
PUBLIC
TRANSPORT



Survey Highlights

- **18 cities – 20 companies**, totalling 10 separate countries
- Insight based on survey follow-up via phone
- 35% (7) of companies do not have internal training on inappropriate sexual behaviour
- **69% of our respondents believe that incidents** related to gender-based violence and sexual harassment **go under-reported**
- Most of the offences occurred within the vehicle (average 75%) with an average of 23% occurring at the station/stop





Challenges

- **Inconsistent reporting procedures**
- **No trends identifiable** when looking at offences, due to the limited data available and difference in recording incidents and relevant details
- **Limited Passenger Reporting:** more reporting means more confidence in victims to come forward
- **Stakeholder Cooperation** sometimes is complicated (red tape)
- **Organisations internal training and culture**

Recommendations



Glossary

Establish a common vocabulary
To have common understanding



Strengthen data

capture, reporting and
exchange



Education

Passenger awareness
campaign and staff training



Target enforcement

activities should provide a
visible deterrent



CCTV

Set of minimum tech
requirements for cameras



Environmental design

appropriate for women's
needs

What can organisations do?



Check your bias

Please detail distribution by time of day (%)						
Before morning peak	Morning peak (rush hour)	After morning peak	Afternoon peak (rush hour)	After afternoon peak	After 22:00	Night service
20	20	40	0	20	0	0
0	22	45	22	7	3	0
6	18	16	30	16	12	0
0	0	50	0	0	50	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	30	15	20	10	10	5
1	13	29	36	12	6	3

Seven companies reported on the distribution of offences by time. **After morning rush hour** and during afternoon rush hour were reported to have the peak number of offences for most of the companies. With one company showing 50% of their offences are occurring after 22:00.

Learn from others

SNCF 24/7 hotline

A single number to call/text to report sexist and sexual violence



Wiener Linien/City of Vienna, safety for women

<https://www.wienerlinien.at/sicherheit#tabs-0-3-sicherheit-f-r-frauen>

The STIB-MIVB says NO to sexism and sexual harassment



STIB/MIVB Online dedicated page

<https://www.stib-mivb.be/the-stib-mivb-says-no-to-sexism-and-sexual-harassment>



Women's Night Safety Charter Toolkit

July 2019

City of London/TfL, "Good night out" toolkit [WNSToolkit_FINAL](#)



Safety for women on public transport

Safety for women and the right response to incidents are an integral part of the training of our security service. But other people who are present in an assault against women in public spaces also play an important role: Look, help - but without endangering yourself!

You can help without endangering yourself:
Use our safety equipment!

Here you can find out more about the City of Vienna's campaign on the topic of women's safety: >> Halt! To me! Look. Act. Help. <<



Accountability

- **Provide feedback to the victims** – always, even when (unfortunately) justice cannot be pursued
- **VaWG is a men's problem – make it a men's responsibility** (Kenya pilot: <https://www.bbc.com/news/education-43466365>)
- **Establish a culture of trust for victims** – believe, support and pursue justice for them
- **Educational and awareness campaigns** – societies need a cultural shift, cities and PT can be a driver of change



Thank you!





Distract with a question



Remember, the best way to avoid a sexual assault is to stay alert and aware of your surroundings. If you feel uncomfortable, ask the driver a question.

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Ending Violence Against Women & Girls (EVAWG) Programme



Upskirting

TAKING PHOTOS UNDER SOMEONE'S CLOTHES IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND IS NOT TOLERATED

It's not just about the car, it's about the driver. Know what you're going to before you get in.

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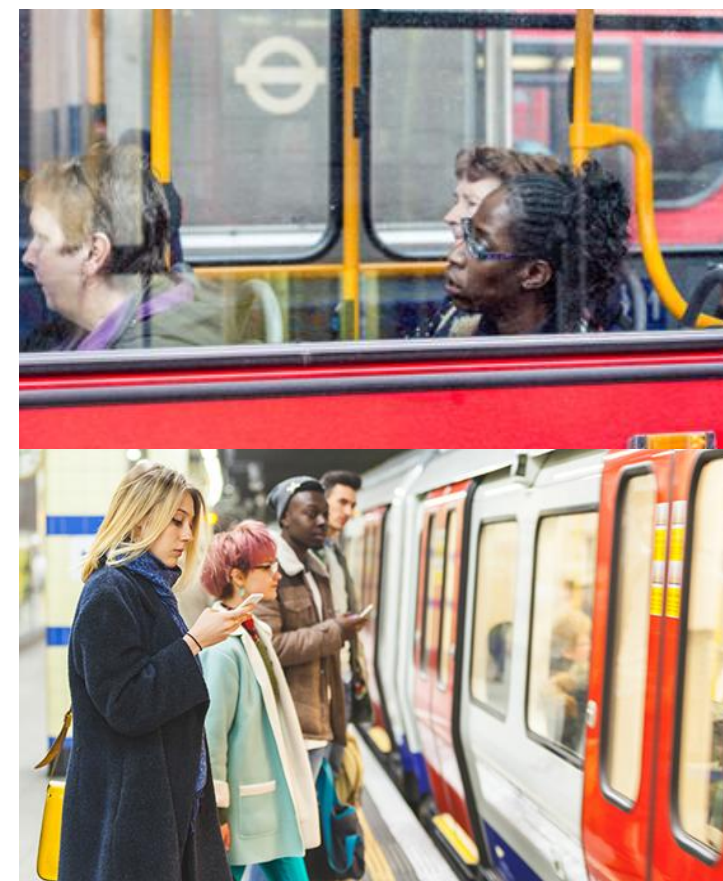
Core Safety and Security Measures

- Thousands of transport staff who are trained and equipped to support customers
- £100m investment in dedicated policing for transport network each year
- 500 TfL enforcement officers
- Designing out crime and infrastructure improvements
- Extensive CCTV network and Body Worn Video
- Data Disclosure Team to support police investigations
- Data and analysis to inform interventions
- Crime prevention and safety messaging
- Help points and passenger alarms



Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAWG) Programme

- Programme launched May 2021
- Over 40 short, medium- and long-term actions, organised under eight themes.
- Builds on strong partnership working with BTP and MPS
- Informed by internal/external reviews, stakeholder input, research
- Fully aligned with UK Government Strategy with activities linked to prevention, pursuit of perpetrators and victim support
- Grounded in the principle that women should not have to change their behaviour to feel safe
- More focus needed on walking and cycling to achieve Mayoral active travel target.



Key Insights



It starts early

Women and girls start to experience harassment early in life in London. From a young age women and girls reported formative experiences of harassment on public transport. These experiences shape the reality and perceptions of safety for women on your network.



It's not just about physical harm

As well as physical behaviours, there are widespread reports of being stared at, photos taken, inappropriate sexual and homophobic comments from as young as 13 years, but continuing well into adulthood.



No one is held to account, and the system that's in place to keep women safe is inadequate

After an experience, there is a lack of effective recourse or victim support. There is widespread belief that this is accepted and normalised, and that the system does not adequately protect women from perpetrators, or that perpetrators will face justice. There is mistrust in the Met Police, and it seems very difficult to criminalise, or for incidents to be taken seriously.



Women's transport choices are shaped by their needs to manage their safety. They often avoid travelling on public transport because of safety fears for the total journey

This results in many PT journeys (including active travel at the beginning / end of journey) **not** being taken (car and Uber favoured for many journeys). Meanwhile, solely active travel after dark is not considered. With a lack of confidence in the system, many women and girls have to make their own choices on how to stay safe and adopt their own coping strategies. Especially after dark and at the many stations, streets or modes that are quiet, unstaffed or unlit.

Not tackling violence towards women and girls has an impact on TfL's revenue, and will impact the its ability to reach the Mayoral Target for the number of trips taken by public transport by 2040

A lack of feeling safe can lead to women choosing not to travel on PT at all, with 2 in 5 already having chosen not to do so

While most women who avoid journeys do so infrequently, of those who are, 23% do so weekly

Frequency of journeys not taken on PT due to feeling unsafe – all who said they have missed journeys due to safety

40%

of women have ever not made a journey using PT due to feeling unsafe

... *putting this into the context of women in London, this equates to 1.5 million women*

Higher amongst:

Under 55 years (46%) vs 55+ (26%)

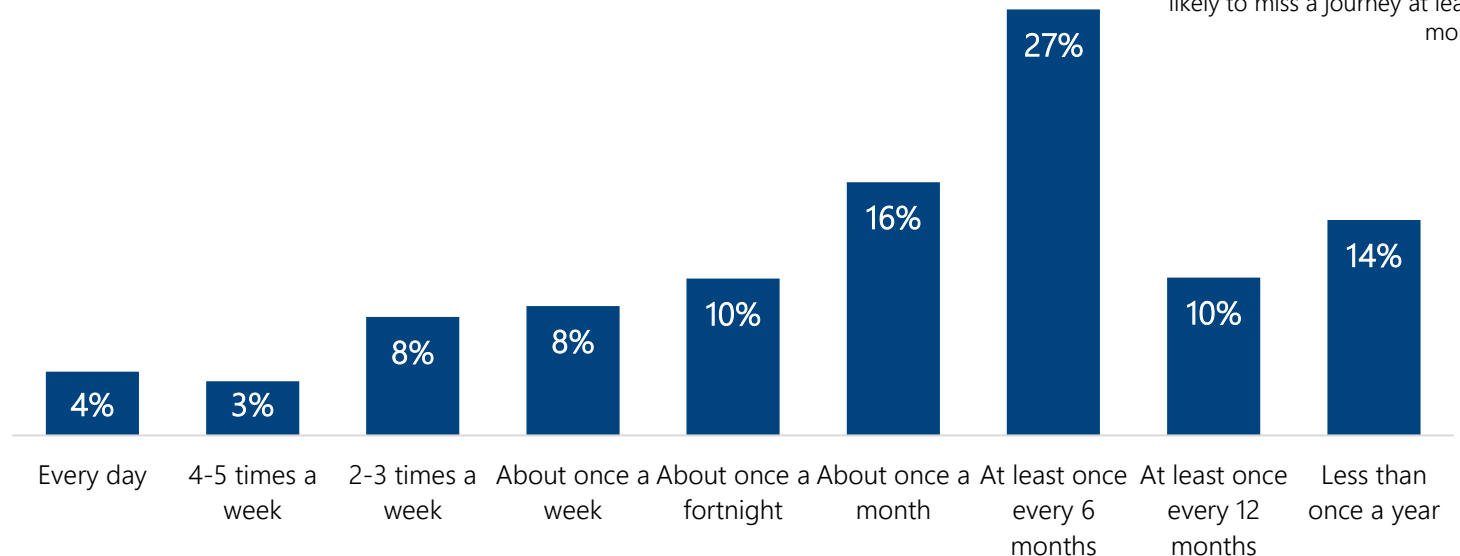
Those living in Inner London (46%) vs Outer London (36%)

LGBTQ+ Women (51%) vs all women (40%)

23% At least once a week

49% At least once a month

76% At least once in 6 months



*Those living in Inner London are more likely to miss a journey at least once a month (57%)

Note, frequency data shows frequency among all women who have missed journeys

Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment

Catcalling

Touching Someone Unwantedly is Sexual Harassment and is NOT TOLERATED

Cyber-flashing

Upskirting

The Guardian

UK

See it on your experience it can be that awful, subtle but...

Facial recognition technology to identify offenders & alert police

Sexual harassment trained customer-facing staff

Improved lighting and CCTV at bus shelters

Increased mobile connectivity

It comes after Tory candidate Susan Hall said that the mayor 'just isn't listening' to women about their experiences of harassment and assault



- ### Examples:

- Fundamentals – policing and enforcement
- Basics – Info on safety and security measures
- Differentiators – TfL reporting app

- Fundamentals – school education programme
- Basics – identifying suspicious behaviour through data and tech
- Differentiators – infrastructure design

Delivering Justice

Ongoing policing partnership with high priority on VAWG.

An example is the BTP's Operation Cerium - a proactive team focused on tackling VAWG and Sexual Offences across the network, resulting in increased detection and solved rates.

**SEXUAL
OFFENCES AND
HARASSMENT
HAVE
CONSEQUENCES**



November 2024, a man exposed himself

Tech and Innovation



Home → Safety →
Report a safety incident or crime

Report a safety incident or crime

Answer a few questions and we'll direct you to the best place to report.

Step 1

Is there a crime or a possible terrorist activity **currently** taking place, or

Is anyone **seriously injured** or in **immediate danger**?

Home → Safety →
Report a safety incident or crime

Report a safety incident or crime

Step 2

What are you trying to report?

- ☐ Another passenger's behaviour
Includes violent or suspicious behaviour, alcohol, smoking
- ☐ Robbery, theft or fraud
- ☐ Sexual harassment
Includes staring, pressing, touching, catcalling, exposing
- ☐ Hate crime
Includes verbal or physical abuse

Home → Safety →
Report a safety incident or crime

Report a safety incident or crime

Step 3

How were you travelling?

- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Cycle or e-scooter
- ☐ DLR
- ☐ Elizabeth line
- ☐ IFS Cable Car
- ☐ London Overground

ACE Accelerated
Capability
Environment



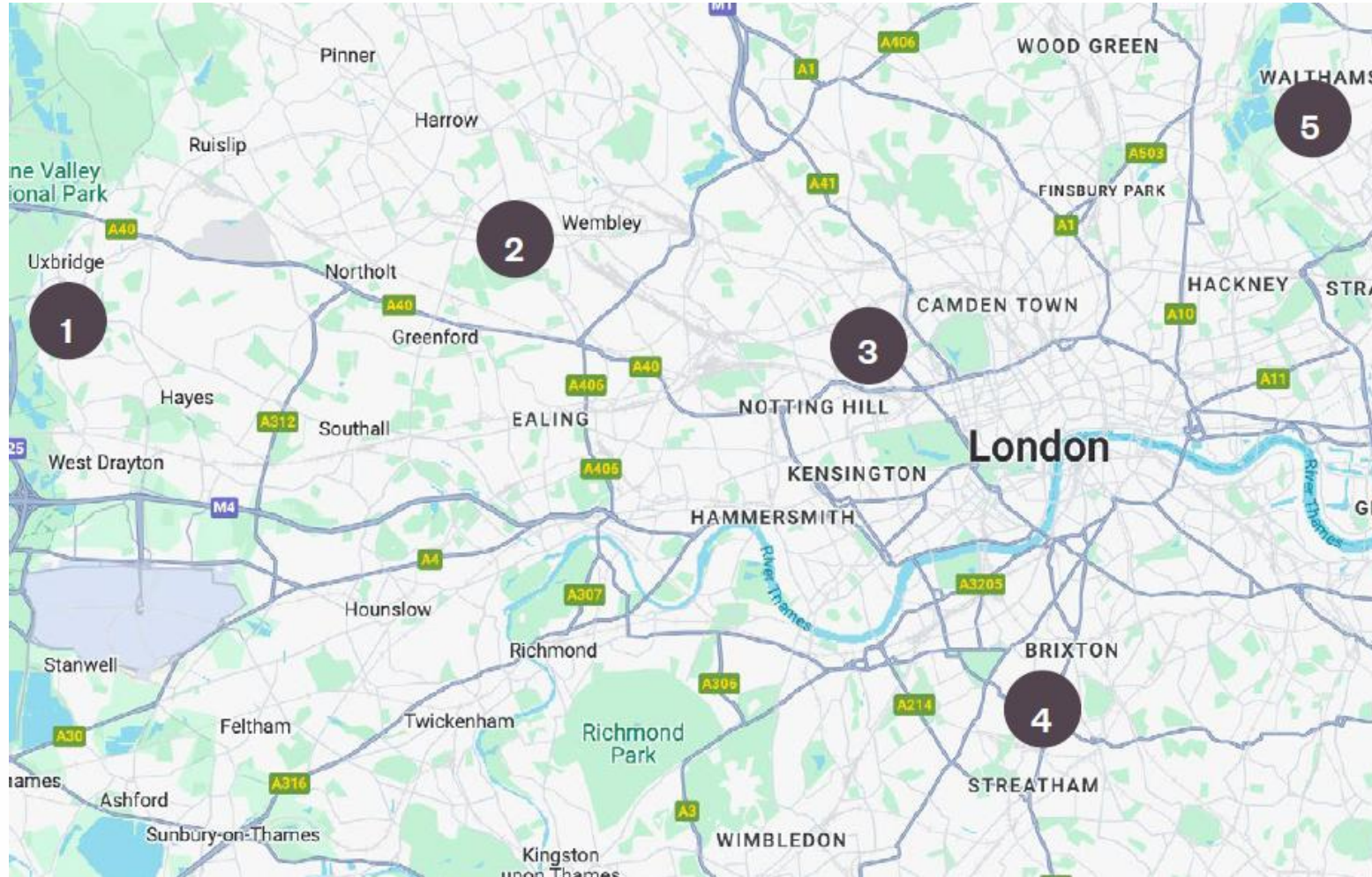
plexal



A strong, green heartbeat for London



Public Realm



A strong, green heartbeat for London



Strategy, Policy and Legislation

Delivery partner for
Mayor's VAWG strategy



Domestic Abuse Policy

TfL's domestic abuse policy is now live, following consultation with our trade union colleagues and input from support charity Hestia – Hestia.org

Please read through the policy and take action to support colleagues who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Scan the QR Code or go to bit.ly/tfldomesticabusepolicy to access our SharePoint site where you can:

- Read the policy in full
- Access helpful resources and information on specialist support
- Get line manager guidance
- Take our quick and easy e-learning module



Work-related sexual harassment guidance

Our new guidance and training helps colleagues identify, prevent and challenge work-related sexual harassment

OUR ZERO-TOLERANCE APPROACH

Sexual harassment can manifest in various ways including physically, verbally, or online



Scan the QR code or search 'work-related sexual harassment guidance' on Platform



Training and Behaviour Change



Communications and Engagement

Catcalling

MAKING UNWANTED REMARKS OF A SEXUAL NATURE ABOUT SOMEONE IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND IS NOT TOLERATED

Cyber-flashing

SENDING OR UPLOADING SEXUAL CONTENT WITHOUT CONSENT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND IS NOT TOLERATED

Exposing

REVEALING INTIMATE BODY PARTS IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND IS NOT TOLERATED

SEXUAL OFFENCES AND HARASSMENT HAVE CONSEQUENCES

In August 2024, a man sexually assaulted a female passenger. He was arrested by plain clothes police officers, sentenced to 46 weeks in prison and given a criminal record.



Acting like a friend can help defuse incidents of hate crime, sexual offences and harassment. If they can, so can you.

Only intervene if you feel safe.

On buses report to Met Police at [Met.police.uk](https://www.met.police.uk)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

Acting like a friend can help defuse incidents of hate crime, sexual offences and harassment. If they can, so can you.

Only intervene if you feel safe.

Always report anything you see to the British Transport Police on 61016.

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE



(1) What do you think?

(2) What do YOU want to know?

(3) What should WE do?

Can we help?

POLIS WG Safety & Security

Pedro Homem de Gouveia
pgouveia@polisnetwork.eu

Jorge Manso García
jmansogarcia@polisnetwork.eu