The Privatisation of the Security Function in the Public Transport Sector. A Comparison between Belgium and Romania

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by (00914236) Petrea Marius Catalin

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Promoter:
Prof. Dr. Marc Cools

Commissioners:
Prof. Dr. Patrick Hebberecht
Prof. Dr. Paul Ponsaers
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References
I. Introduction

Over the last decades, European countries have attached increasing importance to the subject of public security in public places, in the streets and open spaces and particularly at stations, bus stops and any other places where people come into contact with strangers. Inspired by developments in New York and the "zero-tolerance" strategy followed there, urban and district authorities have begun to pay particular attention not only to public security but also to what is referred to as the "subjective sense of security" and also to new models of countering the all too common subjective fears and anxieties of citizens.

Recent years have proven that public transport (PT) all over the world is an activity facing various problems. One of them, very complex and dangerous, is terrorism which together with criminal activities and vandalism, is making the top of the threats affecting public transportation and therefore urban life quality. Public transportation has several characteristics which make it vulnerable to criminality in general and to terrorist attacks in particular and a main target for them. To compensate for these weaknesses, certain solutions are necessary to prevent them or in case they already took place, to reduce the human and material losses. Contemporary terrorism turned urban public transportation in a new theatre for its attacks. We have many examples of world terrorist actions that targeted transport systems all over the world. The Parisian subway was the target of a bomb attack of the Algerian extremists in 1995 and 1996; the Irish Republican Army had a long campaign against the English authorities, targeting passenger trains and the London underground; Palestinian terrorists used suicidal agents who blew themselves up in buses in Israel; in Tokyo members of AUM organisation attacked the underground train with a lethal gas in 1995, and examples can go on. The attacks of September 9 2001 on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon showed the massive social, political and economic impact they may have under certain circumstances, and also pointed out the role of vehicles as an instrument of terrorist attacks. More recent the attacks of March 11, 2004 at the railway terminals in Madrid, besides the great number of victims, commuters killed or injured, had a huge social and political impact influencing the parliamentary elections in Spain, that were taking place the following days, and producing a change of government and policy of the Spanish state in the military campaign in Iraq. In July 2005, in Great Britain, 56 persons were killed because of 4 suicidal attacks in the public transportation network.¹

A study² of the Mineta Transport Institute (MTI) shows, for 1997-2000, on a global scale, a number of over 195 terrorist attacks targeting the urban public transportation system. The structure of the target locations shows a percentage of 41% buses, 22% trains and underground trains, 10% train and underground trains

stations, 8% bus terminals, 8% railways, 5% tourist buses, 1% bridges and tunnels, 5% other objectives.  

II. Carefully balanced public transport security plan

Empirical studies in this field have shown that there is usually no direct link between the crimes reported in surveys (by the victims themselves), police records of crime and individuals' subjective sense of security.

Public security, like individual security, is increasingly seen as an important feature of post-modern society, both in the “private” and in the “public” domains, of which local transport is a part. The democratic state has a duty to guarantee the security of its citizens in public spaces and it is increasingly judged by its success in fulfilling this duty. But, in the 21st century, in such a globalizing era, state’s power as the sole security provider for its citizens is starting to fade away. The same is true for Public Transport Operators (PTOs) who are struggling to keep their customers safe and secure, turning from conventional ways of providing security to other methods such as public-private partnerships. Even though Romania and Belgium are not completely implementing this kind of security management (which has proven successful in other European countries such as England & Wales and Germany) they sure are taking it into consideration now more than ever.

As early as the 1970s, though to a greater extent in the 1980s, criminological research was able to show that “special” as well as “routine preventive measures” had their limits. The problem of criminality could not be solved either by treatment/therapy or by deterrence/repression. Even conventional wisdom on police measures had to be abandoned, including the idea that it was possible to increase the probability of detection only to a limited degree and that, even where it was increased (by a massive police presence, for example), the problem was not solved but merely transferred to another place or made to assume a different form.

Even the declining opportunities for crime and the protective measures taken by individuals do not lead to a real reduction in crime in public transport systems, at least not always and not permanently. It has thus been impossible to successfully implement the “defensible space” scheme or the "social engineering” scheme involving control networks. Moreover, “security achieved through an excessive police presence may lead to a far stronger feeling of insecurity and a greater perception of lawlessness”, which counteract the moves to install a greater sense of security.

The American experience and various European projects show that a public transport security plan needs to be tailored to the situation in order to deal effectively

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3 Jenkins, B. M. and Gersten L. (2001) – “Protecting Public Surface Transportation Against Terrorism and Serious Crime”
6 Oscar Newman (1972) – ‘Defensible Space’
with the level of criminality affecting it. Such a plan calls first of all for a precise and comprehensive assessment, taking stock of the problems and difficulties as well as the opportunities in a given municipality or a given area. Just as the fit of a made-to-measure suit depends on accurate measurements, a customised security plan can only be as good as the assessment of the framework conditions it is designed to deal with.

This means that the subjective sense of security of the customers of public transport as well as the general problems cited by them plays an important role in designing the security plan. The modus operandi is therefore important since it is necessary to change the subjective perception and the objective situation. It also provides a better focus on the difference between the subjective sense of security and the objective situation. This analysis draws attention to the situations and circumstances that disturb PT users and might otherwise go unnoticed.

The analysis may be made on the basis of a representative but selective survey (e.g. a survey of experts or a series of interviews with opinion formers). If these surveys lead to perceptible change, their consequences are not limited to the information they yield: PT users feel that they and their problems or needs are being taken seriously. Here, the value of the analysis lies in the way in which it identifies the problems and fears experienced by citizens and customers and provides for common remedies.

The known security situation needs to be analysed, as revealed, for example, in police crime statistics or in the records of the local transport operator. It is important to take into account also the recognised limitations, such as the problem of unknown cases that are not reported and any factors that may affect reporting behaviour.

Accountability issues have to be dealt with by determining when a problem directly concerns (for example) the operator, when it is a “mixed problem” concerning various institutions (the private security company in charge or the transport police) and when the problems that arise or become manifest in the local public transport sphere are actually the responsibility of other authorities and institutions (vagrancy at railway stations – the ‘Herscham’ patrols). These problems can only be solved in co-operation with other bodies or by other bodies.

In short, an analysis of this kind may have various consequences, including more rigorous control and surveillance measures, further preventive measures (including techno prevention) and even completely new approaches (outsourcing the security service). It is important to involve all persons and institutions with responsibility in the district from the outset, both in the analysis and in decisions on the conclusions to be drawn from it.

Finally, in order to take appropriate measures to deal with the crime problem in the public transport sector, stakeholders should keep in mind that the fear of criminal acts per se (i.e. of being the victim of such acts) is actually a secondary concern for most citizens and is often overestimated. If citizens are asked to speak frankly of the problems that threaten them or lower the quality of their lives, only a small minority
actually say they feel threatened by crime. If, however, the subject of crime is raised explicitly, the majority of people questioned will acknowledge that it is a problem. They will respond as they would when asked specific questions about particular places or situations. Crime is seen as a problem, not only by older people, but also increasingly by younger people. These trends point to a decline in the quality of urban life, even in municipalities with rich historical traditions such as Brussels or Bucharest, reflecting the change in the function of the inner city (predominance of the commercial function with the loss of the residential and communication functions).

1. Causes of insecurity in public transport

The perceived threat of crime is only one (and by no means the dominant) aspect of the development of the urban environment. The public tends to attach much greater importance to the problem of transport. Thus in all surveys in which citizens are asked “open-ended” questions (i.e. without multiple-choice answers) about the most serious problems in their district, transport problems always come on top.

Why then, even though from a strictly objective standpoint there is often no cause for concern, are the users of public transport afraid? A survey conducted at the beginning of 2000 in four Swiss cities on the subject of victimisation, fear of crime and assessment of the police had the following results: as regards the fear of crime and the sense of personal insecurity, the respondents who had themselves been victims of crime were no different from those who had not been victims. However, those who knew somebody who had been a victim of crime exhibited far higher levels of fear and anxiety — and this was true for all areas and in all places, even in the individuals’ own homes, despite the fact that they themselves had not been victims of crime. It is thus clear that “the sense of victimisation resulting from hearsay” has more serious negative effects on the individual’s sense of security and hence quality of life than actual victimisation (this applies in the case of less serious crimes that are not repeated). This means that the communication of insecurity is more important or more threatening than insecurity itself. It is well known that a poor image, in our case of the local passenger transport operators, can be acquired very quickly, but can only be shed very slowly and at great expense.

a) Survey - Brussels’ subway

In order to analyse the subjective sense of security that characterizes public transport users in Brussels I used the findings of a survey conducted by VUB concerning issues like security and quality in Brussels subway. Annually, the STIB carries about 240 million passengers by bus, tram and metro. STIB faces several challenges. The biggest of them seems to be the fact that nowadays a lot of people don’t dare anymore to use public transport in certain time schedules due to an

12 Carla DeJonge, (2006) – “Securite et Qualite dans le Transport Public Bruxellois”
increased feeling of insecurity. Furthermore, it seems that the STIB has difficulty in attracting another type of clientele during the day. Despite these trends, STIB is struggling to raise the number of passengers on its lines. In order to attract a more diverse audience STIB should invest primarily in issues like passenger security and infrastructure safety.

Through a survey, VUB wanted to understand the reasons that cause this feeling of insecurity in public transport and determine the arguments for and against the use of public transport. Getting involved in improving some aspects of public transport can help make the entire city safer and more enjoyable. Metro stations, bus stops and train stations are a big part of public space in cities. These areas act like transit hubs for impressive numbers of people every day. Therefore, in a globalizing era, security and safety aspects started to become of great importance in these places. STIB has already made a step in the right direction by taking some initiatives such as increasing the number of CCTV cameras in subway stations, the number of security guards and the adaptation of infrastructure.

Questionnaires were sent to 1866 persons: 1399 commuters of which 825 use public transport and 487 work and live in Brussels. The survey was conducted between March 16, 2005 and April 20, 2005. The respondents were all employees. The percentages of the survey, by sex and age of respondents, are as follows:

Men: 20-29 years (11.3%), 30-39 years (17.4%), 40-49 years (16.8%), 50-59 years (10.4%), +60 years (1.5%). Women: 20-29 years (9.6%), 30-39 years (13.8%), 40-49 years (12.5%), 50-59 years (6.6%), +60 years (0.6%)

**RESULTS:**

- 23.9% of respondents do not feel safe in Brussels public transport system
- 19.5% of commuters who live outside the Brussels Region occasionally do not feel safe in Brussels public transport
- 36.55% of people who live and work in Brussels occasionally do not feel safe in the Brussels public transport.
- 8.3% of private car owners do not want to use public transport because of the feeling of insecurity
- 7.4% of transit users consider that security should be improved

The feeling of insecurity in the Brussels public transport is due mostly to the presence of youth gangs (average of 84.4% of respondents), followed by un-crowded stations (41.8%), dirty stations (24.2%), poor lighting (23.8%), lack of information (7.8%) and other factors (14.8%). In the category 'Other factors' people questioned had to write other aspects that caused feelings of insecurity. Some of what they wrote was: behaviour of drivers, shady characters, late hours, presence of beggars/homeless, lack of sufficient control, graffiti and vandalism.

According to this survey, the public feels afraid wherever it is dark, wherever it is, in the broadest sense, “disorderly” and wherever there are “strangers”. So far those are not uncommon fears but they are an indirect expression of the primordial fears which originally served to help and protect man: it was impossible to know whether the intentions of an approaching stranger were good or bad. But this fear
has since become more of a burden, paralysing the individual, and is increasingly exploited for socio-political ends.

What lies behind these, objectively speaking, largely unfounded fears? Empirical investigations indicate that transference occurs, whereby abstract and normal existential fears are channelled into the specific fear of crime. In order to get through life safely, you need firm ground under your feet and because the ground is becoming more and more shaky, unstable and unreliable, confidence – in the State and its organs, and also in other people – is evaporating. People withdraw, cut themselves off, deplore the growing egotism, nihilism and cynicism of their contemporaries and call upon strong government, the criminal law and the police to deal with the problems which (so they allege) are caused by others and which (so they believe) can be specifically identified. If the global economy, the struggle for power against a background of organised state terror, the decline of the health service and the uncertainty surrounding pensions are found to be too complex, insufficiently transparent and beyond their control, people will dwell upon the most obvious threats and the “usual suspects”, delivered directly to their homes. At this point the asylum-seeker, the black African drug dealer, the homeless or the foreigner will generally become a scapegoat for those whose fears are not specifically defined and are therefore uncontrollable.

And their attitude receives strong support from politicians inasmuch as they foster the notion that one needs simply to expel all foreign criminals as quickly as possible (or better still, not let them into the country in the first place), and the problems will be as good as solved.

Sociologists say that modern societies are marked by increasing individualism in lifestyles, more and more searching for the meaning of life down various avenues, more marginalisation and more “filtering-down”, the impoverishment of communication and a consequent fall in the level of interaction, lower tolerance thresholds, less willingness to settle conflicts informally and, finally, the increasingly inhospitable nature of cities. Furthermore, there are many signs that the social contract that has prevailed for years, indeed centuries, is being rejected, power relationships are hardening and an arrogant liberalism is being proclaimed, which dismisses or even justifies unemployment. Pierre Bourdieu has called this “the return of social chauvinism”.

This development gives rise to insecurity, mistrust, fear and greater isolation. As the survey in Brussels subway reveals, certain visible groups or phenomena (young people, foreigners, and disorder) are held to be the cause of developments that arouse negative feelings in the individual, with the result that scapegoats for the changes in society are sought and found. Moreover, the subjective sense of being afraid of them can lead to a sense of victimisation, to an excessive preoccupation: everything centres on this one point, both when other causes of fear and anxiety

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14 Jürgen Habermas (1962) - “The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere”
(illness, age, unemployment) are not present and, more especially, when they are, and are expressed through the fear of crime. Whereas people somehow feel personally responsible for illness and health, age and social status, crime has to do with “other people”, “foreigners”, and originates with them. This “scapegoat function” of crime was identified by criminologists a long time ago, but its significance as a factor in people’s sense of security is still not sufficiently recognised.

If people are asked precisely what it is they fear, about public transport in our case, the same old themes resurface – “strangers” and “young people”. “Strangers” are strangers to the locality and to the culture, and young people are considered a particular problem if they are not “local”. Accordingly, where the majority of people are strangers, the sense of personal security is lowest; conversely, in small localities where “everybody knows everybody else” people feel particularly safe. Whether people feel secure or insecure, well or unwell, may well depend on whether they know the other people or not.

b) Survey - Bucharest’s subway

Through an investigation carried out in the Bucharest subway, I wanted to understand the reasons that caused feelings of insecurity in the Romanian public transport. Another reason was to have a comparative view to the survey carried out by VUB. Even though I am aware that this quasi-survey may not be relevant due to sample deficit (I only interviewed 30 people I knew that use frequently this means of transport) I still believe that it can be really useful in trying to see if there are any similarities concerning passenger fears from 2 different societies, Belgian and Romanian. Practically what I’ve done is to put some questions regarding issues discussed throughout this paper to ordinary people that use Bucharest’s subway as an everyday means of transportation. The exercise seemed useful because from comparing the results of the 2 surveys I could better understand why the Romanian and Belgian PTOs are constantly searching for new approaches of tackling the crime phenomenon in their business. Through the process of listening and analysing several stories revolving around the uncertainty level that’s common to this place, the reflection has focused mainly on determining the source of insecurity for different actors. Thus, three major categories were identified and subdivided into several elements:

- Individual or mental sources. I found out that the sensitivity of the individual person, his character and imagination play a role in the emergence of the feeling of insecurity. Thus, for Andrei (49 years, engineer), “it comes from anxiety. But often your worst enemy is yourself. Our own fears are often the source of our discomfort. It is often we who create our own fears.” Another source of insecurity is perceived to be the state of loneliness. Radu (22 years, student) points out that “the waterfall of insecurity began when he was alone”. It is somewhat paradoxical because, in general, that happens when a person is assaulted by someone else. And then everything starts from a determined situation. Socially, it's interesting to see that insecurity can live alone. It is the inner ‘cinema’ that gives a ‘helping hand’. According to Maria (45 years, economist) it is the breakdown of the surrounding environment that makes her insecure. There is a fear of being alone and also a predisposition.

towards it. The state of mind at the moment was also reported to have an influence. According to Andreea (29 years, lawyer): "Perhaps you are simply more vulnerable that day, due to the accumulation of a series of small things, very related to the environment. Sometimes it’s sufficient to feel more insecure at a given time to understand things more frightened.” Past individual experiences play an important role because based on the experiences that the person has previously known, it can develop certain fears in specific situations where the context will remind him of scenes already experienced in a negative way. The break of routine - having to change his or her habits can cause discomfort, even a feeling of insecurity in relation to situations they know and control less.

- Social sources. The survey revealed that the social situation of the person could trigger the sense of vulnerability - the individual who is experiencing serious difficulties in his professional or family life will tend to perceive their environment as more insecure. Human interaction - the feeling of insecurity varies greatly in the absence of people in the metro, but also in terms of who are the people present.

- The physical environment. The risk of accident - an unsafe place seems inevitably insecure to people who become aware of it. Thus, this may be the case if the stairs to the entrance of a station are covered with leaves and become slippery or when pieces of glass cover soil, etc. The physical setting of an unstructured public station was another factor mentioned in the survey. Timing has a significant impact. Indeed, the perception of insecurity varies greatly depending on the time of the day (evening, morning or afternoon). Also it is important to also take into consideration the season, day of week, etc. The neighbourhood where the underground station lies plays a role in the perception of insecurity. If the environment is considered dangerous, the station will certainly borrow the same image, although in reality, there have been no serious problems in that particular area.

These three sources of insecurity, including several distinct points are interrelated to produce a feeling of insecurity. It is important to realize that generally it is not only one element which usually causes a feeling of insecurity, but rather the combination of several of them. Thus, the troubling event it is not an unsettling event in itself but an accumulation of details that will merge to create a situation of insecurity or even potential aggression. The same is true for both countries: in local transport, people are faced with a situation in which they are bound to encounter a very large number of strangers, and to an increasing extent. It follows that the situation is bound to be conducive to fear, and stakeholders must set out to reduce this fear. To do so it is necessary to learn more of what lies behind these fears and anxieties, so that they may be properly understood. Counter-measures may then be taken, where appropriate. If a person knows the people he has to deal with or the people he encounters, he feels able to categorise the situation in which he finds himself and bring it under control. To the extent that a person is prepared, he is able to adapt his behaviour to make sure he provokes only foreseeable reactions, for “feeling safe and secure” is sometimes just another way of saying “having everything under control”. Encounters with groups of (unknown) youths or young adults demonstrate this point: as soon as a familiar face is identified in the group, the sense of strangeness and uncertainty is lifted and fear is banished.
Public order in a particular district presents a number of different facets and is the result of steps taken by various institutions. The subjective sense of security is a more important (if not the most important) element in what is loosely termed “quality of life”¹⁸ in the post-modern era. The sense of being able to live without fear of crime and to use public transport without a care is most marked in periods when basic social provision is best guaranteed and most citizens are not experiencing problems that threaten their very existence. Breaking down subjective fear of crime is an important task and it demands the co-operation of all the institutions in the municipality. These include the local public transport authorities: they too have a special responsibility to address the subjective needs and fears of their customers. The police, the public transport operators and private security companies should not shrink from giving clear information on adverse trends or problems in the district, even if they do not fall within their own area of responsibility.

A reliable analysis of the problems is particularly important here since it provides information about situations and circumstances that unsettle the public transport user and make him feel insecure, even if the problems are not directly related to public security and public order. If information is presented in a way that is impossible or difficult to understand, adding to the difficulty of obtaining the right ticket for the chosen means of transport, the individual’s sense of insecurity will increase and the way will be open to other factors deemed to be “dangerous”.

By way of local security diagnoses or general reviews, it is possible to refer to studies whose object is to examine the subject of “security and confidence” in a specific, localised context. Two points are of central importance here: first, the realisation that immediate surroundings have a particularly important role in shaping the perceptions of the customers (and affecting their behaviour accordingly); second, the recognition that positive change can only be achieved locally and on a small scale. A “multi-agency approach” to a problem is likely to achieve more than an individual approach. It is particularly important to break with the long-standing philosophy of “more of the same”¹⁹; we often find that more of something is not necessarily a guarantee of more success.

Sometimes less familiar paths must also be trod, if a problem is to be solved. More security personnel, for example, is not always the right solution to combat the crime problem in public transport. It would seem to be more important to convey a realistic picture of the specific threat through public relations work and confidence-building measures.

The deployment of security forces in public transport is not always suited to the purpose, as it sometimes gives the impression of a permanent, massive threat. Thus, in one study on the police presence, it was established that the subjective sense of security first increased, as expected, as the police presence intensified and subsequently declined as it became excessive²⁰. In other studies, it has been

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possible to show that the awareness of a police presence tends to be associated with a greater fear of crime.\textsuperscript{21} It may be true that the effect of a police presence is not the same in familiar places as in unfamiliar ones.\textsuperscript{22} Moreover, there is clearly a threshold beyond which it is counterproductive to the citizens’ or customers’ sense or security.

III. Public transport stations – perfect targets?

The public’s experience of the public transport environment is often transient and temporary in nature, a setting that is given negligible consideration and taken for granted, except as a means to an end. The planning, design and management of the railway station speaks to the users of stations – the passengers, the staff, the shoppers, the homeless, the thieves, and those just passing the time of day – as to what activities are encouraged, permitted and tolerated, and who is in control; it tells them whether the station is cared for and respected or whether it has been abandoned and is neglectful of those who use it. If the latter is the dominant experience, it is likely that passenger confidence will be adversely affected, a fear of crime installed thereby creating a downward spiral of decline.

Unlike other public spaces, individuals may perceive little control over their surroundings in stations, and thus the physical attributes of the environment may serve to have a crucial effect upon passengers' perceptions of safety and security.\textsuperscript{23} The consequence of this lack of control could be a decline in the number of passengers using public transport services. Fear of crime in railway stations has been shown to affect passengers’ desire to use the railway system. Passenger surveys in the U.K. and other Western European countries consistently reveal that, despite low levels of reported and recorded crime, passengers have real fears for their personal safety whilst using public transport. There is evidence that these fears influence their decisions to travel and, in particular, their use of public transport.\textsuperscript{24} The UK Government’s Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) demonstrated that perceived threats to personal safety are decisive factors in deterring people from using public transport.\textsuperscript{25} Moreover, the findings indicated that measures on behalf of the station management to improve personal security would result in an increased use of services. The respondents ranked good lighting, visible presence of staff and CCTV surveillance as being the most effective measures in public transport stations. From this we can infer that issues such as the station environment, information and services provided by the PTOs are critical in defining perceptions of risks associated with using urban mass transportation.

Crime tends to be concentrated in particular places (bus, tram, metro, railway stations) it does not occur randomly. This suggests that there is something about particular places rather than simply the specific activities which occur there which


\textsuperscript{22} Reuband, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 115.


\textsuperscript{24} Crime Concern & Transport and Travel Research, 1997

\textsuperscript{25} Department of the Environment, Transport, and the Regions (DETR) (1998) – “Secure Stations Scheme: Manage and design to cut out crime”, London
may account for this. Passengers tend to perceive the environment as a whole rather than identifying individual elements. Consequently small crime prevention measures may not have any impact if the overall environment emits threatening signals; the design and structure of the station environment is a significant predictor of fear of crime. In order to comprehend the nature of criminal events it is imperative that research highlights the role of space and place in determining the time, location and character of crimes. As conceptualised by Barker (1968) “behaviour settings are areas of the physical environment that over time have become associated with persistent patterns of individual and collective behaviour”. This conceptualisation has been placed within the context of transport, presenting bus stations and commuter trains as examples of travel-related settings.

The mode of travel has a strong influence on the type, location and timing of crimes, with routine exposures to risks being considerably higher for users of public transport systems than for people travelling in private automobiles. Moreover, specific incidents are known to have had a profound effect upon perceptions of safety in using public transport networks; the resultant social costs are particularly significant, since people who perceive greater risks react by using alternative modes of transport on a routine basis.

By using the concept of “spatial attractiveness” and distinguishing between public and private territories, Rhodes and Conly (1991) suggest that public areas such as railway stations, metro stations or bus stations rank highly in spatial attractiveness. These places are considered to be attractive crime targets and will be a magnet for outsiders including prospective criminals who will almost certainly formulate detailed mental maps on which they will select possible victims – vulnerable people in vulnerable places – to perpetrate their actions.

One of the theoretical considerations I've also used in this paper is drawn from the work of Gibson (1979) on ‘affordances’. This is a theory of perception which conceives the environment as offering opportunities through its physical structure. Environmental affordances are the opportunities afforded or provided by the environment to enable certain behaviours. They are the resources within the environment that can be used by the individual to achieve their goals. Thus an affordance of a railway station might be a tunnel allowing the person to transfer from an over-ground train to the subway. The same affordance can be used by the graffiti artists whereby the walls in an unsupervised tunnel offer a canvass for their spray can. A crowded concourse where passengers are required to stand and gaze up at a train departure indicator board affords information for passengers, but also provides a distraction which thieves can capitalise upon. Clearly then there is something about

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places in general and railway stations in particular and the person-environmental relationship which is critical to both the incidence and the prevention of criminal activity.

IV. Threats to be taken into consideration in designing a public transport security policy

The causes of crime and incivilities are complex. Even though before the state first of all sought protection from crime principally through the operation of the law enforcement and criminal justice systems, nowadays the emphasis should be put on other specific methods of tackling the crime phenomenon like streamlining the judicial process, diverting less serious offenders, promoting public-private partnerships. The link between public transport operators and this system is police surveillance and the procedures implemented after a crime has been committed.

The reasons that prompt operators to introduce a security policy most often given are vandalism and assaults on staff and passengers. Other reasons are the cost of fraud, legal obligations and drug dealing. The security issues that are most important today do not differ very much from the factors that first prompted operators to introduce such a policy. Vandalism, assaults and the cost of fraud are still major factors. An interesting difference seems to be that the security of staff and passengers (physical assaults) seems to become more important than vandalism (damage to property).

Terrorist attacks are a matter for national security – Public Transport Operators (PTOs) cannot carry on their own the full burden of responsibility for managing terrorist threats. These forms of violence (e.g. bombs and chemical agents), differ greatly from other offences because of the scale of impact, kind of offender and the purpose of the attack. The impact is not only meant for the intended target but also to produce a psychological impact on citizens and politicians for political or social objectives.

Vandalism is a serious phenomenon which, in terms of cost, is still underestimated in our society. It causes damage to public and private property, for no apparent reason and at unpredictable times. It affects the safety and mobility of people at different places, times and on different transport modes. It is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate the social causes of vandalism. In Belgium, public property is often a target for vandalism, for example, telephone boxes, public transport infrastructure and vehicles (graffiti on the inside and outside of vehicles, seat slashing, shelters, etc.). Although it does not affect people directly, the vandalisation of public transport property cannot be underestimated, since it creates the opportunity for a further increase in criminality and keeps some people (e.g. those with low mobility, the elderly, women, etc.) from using public transport. Vandalism and security are issues that public transport operators have to take seriously, since they have an impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the transport service, increasing or decreasing the market share of public transport.

Before an offence or incivility occurs, users and staff of a public transport system already have an idea about how secure the system is. Factors that will influence customers’ perceptions are, as seen before: time of day (light or dark), the
location of a station, the design of the public transport building and structures, the (visible) security measures taken, the number and type of people around, the level of maintenance of the premises, the level of information supplied by the transport operator and previous experiences in the system. Staff is probably influenced by a mix of the factors affecting passengers’ perception of security and by hearsay information from other members of staff, information about actual security measures taken and information about the current security situation (statistics).

After an offence occurs, a whole procedure is set in motion. The interruption that takes place has to be taken care of. Passengers and staff involved in the offence have to be helped and incident forms filled in. These forms provide operators with statistics on the “actual” security situation. The “actual” security of the network is the number of recorded offences occurring on it. Although not all offences are always reported, recorded crime figures are as close as we can get to the number of offences that occur in reality. Actual security is distinct from perceived security, which is the feeling of security of staff and passengers while entering, waiting, travelling on and leaving the public transport system.

The perception of security of someone who is the victim of an incident will probably change significantly. However, the overall perception of security in the “before” situation will not be radically changed by the commission of a single offence.

V. Crime preventive measures in public transport

Complementing the formal system of control is what criminologists refer to as society’s “informal social controls”. These include a wide range of measures taken by interested bodies (e.g. parents, schools and religious associations).

More recently, faced with escalating costs, governments as well as transport operators have recognised the limitations of the formal system in controlling crime. Both have begun to explore more direct ways of improving controls alongside the existing informal social controls. This activity is called “crime prevention”. Crime prevention covers a very wide range of possible actions.

In what follows I will briefly describe different crime prevention approaches and their possible benefits to the PT system. An evaluation of specific programmes shows the benefits of the three approaches outlined above: law enforcement, society’s informal controls and crime prevention\(^{32}\). Promoting accountability can reduce crime by 45-63% by getting potential offenders to repair any damage done and seek help. Crime has also been reduced by controlling firearms, providing treatment for drug addicts and coaching to prevent sports hooliganism (law enforcement), improving society’s informal control. Young children will grow up to offend 50-80% less if pre-school programmes and home visits by nurses for children at risk are provided, along with co-ordinated efforts to reduce bullying. Young disadvantaged persons are 33-71% less likely to be arrested if they are given incentives to complete school, structured training for jobs or skills development (social prevention).

Residential burglary can be reduced by 35-75% by improved surveillance, such as neighbourhood watch schemes, or by improving the physical design of buildings. Delinquency in public areas, assaults, vandalism and fare dodging can be reduced by 17-68% through improved social control by civilian guards, recruited from the unemployed, and the introduction of closed circuit television - situational crime prevention.

Transport operators in Belgium and Romania currently adopt a range of measures to prevent security incidents occurring on their networks. These include educational programmes to deter potential young offenders, designing buildings to reduce opportunities for undetected crime, the deployment of CCTV cameras to monitor or record incidents, staff training to improve communications skills and bringing public security companies into the scene. Even the effective and efficient handling of incidents in progress can act as a deterrent. This points to the powerful interrelationship between the prevention, detection and effective management of security events. In Romania, Metrorex, the public company that manages the Bucharest subway, has chosen a private security company to deal with the rising levels of criminality on its stations and vehicles. The private security guards keep daily in touch with officers from the Transport Police and members of the Gendarmerie. Belgium, on the other hand, made a compromise by choosing a path between the classic involvement of the Police and the collaboration with a private company to manage the security segment. So, all of the 4 major Belgian PTOs (De Lijn, TEC, STIB, NMBS) have their own internal security service that cooperates with local law enforcement agencies. But we will describe in detail how they manage the security aspect in another chapter.

Additionally, many of the measures to deter crime in public transport are not undertaken in isolation by single transport operators, but rather in close collaboration with other relevant bodies. For example: collaboration with the legislature is critical to ensure effective legal frameworks; soliciting a police presence works to deter criminals; schools and educational authorities help to support public transport awareness programmes; and, one of the most important forms of cooperation, involving the private sector to deal with security and crime prevention issues.

Within this approach to the problem, it is important to make a clear distinction between security and safety. In my opinion, the level of safety has to do with the number of accidents and incidents that occur in the transport system per period of time, distance travelled, number of passengers and staff and it can be perceived as a broader notion than security regarding the actors involved in providing it. The level of security has to do with the number of actual and potential offences and incivilities committed and, compared to safety, it’s more linked to notions like crime, Police and criminal justice.

An important characteristic that distinguishes offences from accidents and incidents is that offences are committed by motivated offenders. In other words, they “intend” to commit an offence (i.e. murder, rape, robbery, theft, burglary, vandalism, sex offences and fare evasion). The distinction between safety and security can sometimes be confusing because certain safety and security procedures are comparable for operators. For example, in the short term, it does not matter how a
fire is lit in a metro tunnel. The first priority is to extinguish the fire whether it is an accident or arson.

A major effort by public transport operators to improve security is aimed at preventing offences and incivilities from happening, e.g. by providing more lighting, installing CCTV cameras and hiring security personnel.

Law enforcement agencies, whether we are talking about the Federal police in Belgium or the Transport Police and the Gendarmerie in Romania, in contrast, are concerned with crime control and also have a role in prevention by means of surveillance. In the event of a more serious offence, the police are usually brought in to investigate the offence committed and take action upon it.

Security in public transport, alongside “traditional” parameters, such as punctuality, frequency, efficiency, etc., is increasingly becoming a central issue in the public debate on transport. It is a crucial issue for service provision because it involves all of the stakeholders. On the one hand, security concerns transport operators (their staff, vehicles and infrastructure), on the other, it affects public transport users. Thus the issue directly and indirectly concerns the whole community and, by its very nature, has to be considered as both a technical and social issue.

As security is quite a complex issue, it is necessary to take a “systems approach” to it, using all the available instruments (operative, technical, technological, managerial) to analyse and reduce the “weak links” in the mobility chain.

Security and safety in public transport can be viewed from several standpoints. They can be considered either from the standpoint of the physical safety of passengers and personnel during the trip (i.e. accidents), of employee safety during maintenance operations (safety at the work place) or even from the standpoint of protecting passengers from robberies and assault (during the journey, on public transport premises).

With the large number of passengers relying on urban transport and the need for easily accessible personal mobility, security is a fundamental responsibility of a public transport service. As security is now becoming one of the public’s key expectations and one that affects the whole production cycle, it is important to apply a “systems approach” to the provision of passenger and employee security.

System security management is a form of risk management that identifies, evaluates and controls security threats and vulnerabilities (throughout the entire cycle). The basic elements of protection involve prevention or deterrence of acts or conditions threatening the safety or welfare of persons or resources, and corrective or remedial actions to limit the effects when such acts occur.

The first step is to analyse the role of and inter-relationship between all the elements of the system:
- passengers and employees;
- equipment and facilities;
- procedures;
The second step is to analyse the types of crime and the actual level of crime, considering the type and purpose of the trip as well as geographical factors. It is worthwhile pointing out that analysing the types of crime committed will require an improved data collection process in order to understand and monitor the actual situation, to forecast future trends and to have quantitative feedback on the measures adopted. In Romania, a systematic approach is still lacking, but this alone is not enough to solve the problem.

Public transport demand is influenced by the feelings of insecurity, especially at off-peak times and at night, when the public is freer to choose between public or private transport. This is the weak point by which public transport loses market share to private transport, which can guarantee, if not actual security, at least the perception of security. So, if transport operators are market oriented, they have to address customers' perception of security by adopting specific policy measures.

This is particularly true in Romania, where the ageing of the population and consequently the increasing average age of public transport customers gives passenger perception of security a fundamental role in security policy and in transport policy overall.

Following the system security approach, Clarke (1996) identifies four main strategies and sixteen techniques of situational crime prevention. First category of opportunity-reducing techniques is “increasing the perceived effort” by using the following techniques: target hardening, access control, offenders’ deflection, and facilitators’ control. In the so-called “increasing perceived risk” category Clarke includes entry/exit screening, formal surveillance, employee surveillance and natural surveillance. PTOs can “reduce anticipated rewards” by removing targets, identifying property, reducing temptation and denying benefits. And the last category called “inducing guilt or shame” comprises rule setting, stimulating conscience, controlling disinhibitors and facilitating compliance.

VI. Known security situation in the Belgian and Romanian public transport

In attempting to establish why security of the public transport network has become such a hot topic nowadays and what are the effective measures to counter increased feelings of insecurity in the Belgian and Romanian mass transit network, we have to keep in mind that the use of official crime statistics alone is of limited utility in that data collection by the police concerning the phenomenon is somewhat incomplete, time series comparative information is unavailable and, in all probability, many crimes remain unreported to the Police or other authorities. Another shortcoming is the fact that data regarding criminality is not divided to contain specific information related to public transport. Another limitation proves to be the fact that the 4 Belgian PTOs (De Lijn, TEC, STIB, and SNCB/NMBS) do not operate a uniform recording system for violent incidents which occur within their jurisdiction while the situation in Romania concerning data gathering in PT system is almost non-existent. The information I was able to get a hold on – academic research, surveys undertaken by public transport providers, newspaper articles, shows that PT is confronted with serious security problems that need efficient counteractive measures. Stakeholders
are trying to control this phenomenon by diversifying their approaches, even admitting the fact that they might be overwhelmed in which case outsourcing the security service (the Metrorex example) could become a viable solution to the problem.

1. Actors involved in securing the public transport system

1.1. Romania

In Romania all transportation infrastructure is the property of the state, and is administered by the Ministry of Transports, Constructions and Tourism, except when operated as a concession, in which case the concessions are made by the Ministry of Administration and Interior. That's why the picture of the public transport network is almost the same in the entire country and it's my reason to analyze only the capital city Bucharest (as the only city that has all means of public transport, including the subway). Bucharest's extensive public transport system is the largest in Romania and one of the largest in Europe. It is made up of the Bucharest Metro, as well as a surface transport system run by RATB\(^3\) (Regia Autonomă de Transport București), which consists of buses, trams, trolleybuses, and light rail. In addition, there is a private minibus system. As of 2007, there is a limit of 10,000 taxicab licences, down from 25,000 in the 1990s. Bucharest is the hub of Romania's national railway network, run by Căile Ferate Române\(^4\) (CFR). The main railway station is “Gara de Nord” (North Station) which provides connections to all major cities in Romania as well as international destinations.

- The main actor that deals with security issues in the railway transport sector is the Directorate for Transport Police\(^5\) which coordinates, guides, evaluates and monitors the activity of territorial railway, naval, and air transport police structures, ensuring unitary enforcement of the laws, orders and dispositions given by the Minister of Administration and Interior, as well as the dispositions issued by the General Inspector of Romanian Police regarding this domain. It cooperates with other units and bodies of the Ministry of Administration and Interior, the General Inspectorate of Romanian Police, the General Inspectorate of Border Police, the General Inspectorate of Gendarmerie, of the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of National Defence, the Romanian Intelligence Service, and with other central public institutions. To the purpose of setting up some common actions and activities, in order to prevent and counter crimes in the railway, naval and air transport field, it cooperates with governmental bodies.

Crime in the Romanian railway transport sector dropped in 2008 due to the efficiency increase in the activities undertaken by the Transport Police. In order to avoid such events, the Transport Police identifies the main causes and takes preventive measures so as to ensure the safety of the railway transport system. As part of the modernisation strategy\(^6\) elaborated by the Romanian Police, measures

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33 http://www.ratb.ro/
34 http://www.cfrcalatori.ro/
35 http://www.politiaromana.ro/Engleza/short_presentation.htm
have been taken to create regional transport police departments, which proved to be very efficient in time, and to increase the level of qualification in all the areas of activity covered by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure. As a result, the judicial crime rate in the railway transport sector decreased in 2008 compared to the previous year as follows: railway infrastructure thefts (-31.15%) and wagon thefts (-34%). However, the thefts of wagon components slightly increased in 2008 (+12.5%). As a result of the preventive measures taken by the Transport Police, with the help of representatives from the national companies that activate under the authority of the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, as well as the other members of the Railway Transport Community, starting with the year 2006, the judicial crime rate in the railway transport sector dropped, along with the prejudices recorded by the railway companies affected by thefts.

- The Romanian Gendarmerie is State's specialized institution, with military status, within the Ministry of Administration and Interior which, according to the law, exercises its attributions on protection of public order and safety, citizens' rights and fundamental liberties, public and private property, crime prevention and detection and other infringements of laws into force, as well as protection of State's fundamental institutions and countering of terrorist acts.

As a security measures on public transport in Bucharest, the Romanian Gendarmerie and RATB have renewed their protocol of cooperation in order to increase passengers’ security in public transportation in Bucharest. The agreement is in line with the campaign initiated by the Gendarmerie, in November 2007, entitled "Civilized transport for European citizens." The partnership was speeded up also because of the tragic event that took place 2 days earlier when a young 19 year old boy was stabbed to death in a bus station in Berceni neighbourhood and three others were injured after a conflict between two gangs. Another reason for signing this protocol is the excellent outcome of the previous campaign, "Civilized Transportation for European citizens." Between November 15, 2007 and February 10, 2008, approximately 8.500 Gendarmerie officers surveyed routes considered to have the highest risk. Results: 8.000 legitimated persons, 2.738 sanctions and a total sum of 265.750 lei fines (55.000€). The "top" crimes recorded during the campaign were: carrying weapons without permit in public places, high-risk drug possession and robbery.

The number of robberies, pickpocketing and other crimes in public transportation in Bucharest fell 10% in 2008 after installing cameras on buses and trolleybuses. The most significant decrease, by 40 percent, occurred in district 5. Thus, between January and June 2008, according to Bucharest Police 160 cases of robberies and pickpocketing were registered on RATB vehicles. The most important regression of the crime on public transport sector is recorded in district 5 with only 16 crimes recorded by police in the first six months of the year, while sector 2, with 48 crimes in the same period, seems to be the preferred ground of action for perpetrators. "Most robberies occur in the centre of the city, where public transport vehicles are more crowded," said a spokesman for the Capital Police Commissioner Christian Ciocan. Offenders prefer high traffic times, when means of transport are

crowded, and they can work more easily with better chance of not being noticed either by their victims or by surveillance cameras. Currently, in the Bucharest Autonomous Vehicle Transportation (RATB) operate 360 cameras – 100 on trolleybuses and 260 on buses. According to RATB bus cameras were installed in January 2008, while the trolleys have been monitored in this way since November 2008. "At the end of the day when vehicles come in the garage, all images are stored on a hard drive memory and will be available thereafter only for members of Police or Gendarmerie representatives" said RATB spokesman, Michael Vladar. Although Police statistics seem reassuring the reality is that all the CCTV cameras were installed on trolley and bus routes where the amount of crime such as theft, fighting or vandalism is lowest. Bus routes 131, 331 and 385 and the trolleybuses 69, 85, 86, 90 are monitored. Bus routes 102, 105, 116, 117, 282 are not monitored, although the districts covered are among the most dangerous in the capital (e.g. ‘Rahova’, ‘Ferentari’, ‘Pantelimon’, ‘Salajan’ districts). These cameras record all the activity that occurs within three days and the images are automatically stored on a hard disk. These records are centralized at depots where buses and trolleybuses equipped with digital cameras withdraw. These recordings are automatically deleted after 72 hours. No RATB representative has authorization to view these records. In order to detect recorded incivilities in the means of transportation equipped with cameras a referral to the Police is needed.

We can see that in Romania the largest amount of passenger security in public transport is provided by public law enforcement bodies such as the Transport Police or the Gendarmerie. From the official statistics we can find out that this kind of approach seems to be successful, but the reality is quite different since a traveller can rarely see the presence of a police officer, for example, in the public means of transport. Another aspect why the public perceives law enforcement activities in securing the PT system as a total lack of involvement is the delayed answer to calls and the idea that those called for help can’t do much to improve the situation.

- Metrorex (the company that runs the Bucharest subway) understood very well the disturbing situation in the local public transport segment and considered a solution to it signing a cooperation contract with a private security company, Scorseze Security International. In 2007, they were attributed, through direct negotiations, a contract valued at 24,2 million lei (6,6 million €) in exchange of security services in the subway stations and on the subway trains. The contract’s validity period was set for thirty months, respectively till the 30th of June 2010. By the end of 2006, the security services in the subway stations and on the subway trains were assured by the same company on the basis of a 4.46 million lei contract (1.2 million €) settled upon in March 2006, contract that was concerning services for three out of four Metrorex principle lines. Both the Managing Board of Metrorex, as well as thousands of passengers appreciate the activity of over 3 years of the Scorseze Security guards as being a very good one, and as being in compliance with the contractual agreement signed. If, before March 2006 (when the security company signed its first agreement with Metrorex), the climate in the subway stations and train sets was an extremely tensioned one, today, things are totally different. The passengers feel safe, and this thing determines most of them to take the subway as a transport alternative to arrive at work or to head back home. Official sources within Metrorex declared that once the contractual agreements were signed with Scorseze Security Ltd. an increased comfortable environment was created for the travellers by
evicting from the trains and stations the drug addicts, beggars, ambulant salespeople and people under the influence of alcohol. According to the same sources the presence of security agents in the subway stations has as result the substantial decrease in the “Graffiti” phenomena. In this context, ten persons of different nationalities (Dutch, Bulgarian and German) were retained after they were initially caught be Scorseze Security agents right in the moment in which they were trying to “display” their artistic talents.

1.2. Belgium

In Belgium I have focused on how is passenger security provided by the 4 major PTOs (SNCB/NMBS, STIB, TEC, De Lijn) and if there are any differences of approach compared to Romania. The main idea was to see if Belgium managed to keep under control the rising levels of crime in its public transport system and if that could be a model for its Romanian counterpart.

One important feature of the Belgian PT system is the fact that the amendment dated December 27, 2004 of the Act of 10 April 1990 on private security allows Public Transport Operators to organize their own security service. This change in the law gives internal security officers new skills. Although I am not going to present the content of the law, I will try to describe in what follows the specificity of each internal Security Service of the 4 major PTOs.

SNCB/NMBS

SNCB/NMBS, the national railway company in Belgium, has its own security service and recently has thought of a different way of dealing with security-related issues and that is involving passengers in the railway station security scheme. Going on with the security programme of the railway stations and trains, SNCB/NMBS has launched a campaign to render passenger sensitive with respect to the security issue. The passengers are urged to identify and announce suspect behaviour and the potential dangerous situations to SNCB’s security service called ‘Securail’. Under the motto “Safety Concerns Everybody”, a series of funny posters are destined to encourage passengers to contact a ‘Securail’ security agent or to make a telephone call at the special SNCB/NMBS number whenever they notice a suspect situation (pocket thieves, people walking on the lines etc.) or they feel threatened. The call is free and available 24h/day, 7 days/week. In the last year, the transport company received 43,141 such calls out of which 49% have proven to be really important. In the last few years, inside the plans for the development of the railway safety and security, SNCB has increased the number of security agents and equipped the railway stations with CCTV cameras. In 2009, the Belgian Government approved an extra EUR 10 Million for the infrastructure in order to increase railway safety. The “0800” number proved to be a real success in enhancing rail users’ feeling of security. The SOC (“Security Operation Centre”) is in charge of answering all the ‘panic’ calls. It is an intelligence service open 24 hours a day where all ‘0800’ and internal calls are processed (3,400 in the first half of 2009, more than 180 a day), and also the images produced by cameras covering some of the “big” stations and the rail depots.
A system connected to 1729 CCTV cameras is in place, probably the largest network of permanent monitoring of the country. It records, in particular, all entries and exits of major stations across the country. An emblematic example remained in our memories: the images of Jo Van Holsbeek’s aggression and the escape of his aggressors. This year is the 15th year since the first surveillance camera was installed in “Gare du Midi”, in the new Eurostar terminal. Have 15 years been enough to install a real ‘Big Brother’ system? SOC is located in a building near the Gare du Midi in Brussels. Two teams work in parallel and continuously, 24 hours on 24 and 7 / 7: one to respond to different calls, one to monitor, scan, and decrypt almost 1729 images available at all times. The project dates back to the police reform of 1998 which dictates the choice between police officers of railways joining the police or the railway staff responsible for security (now ‘Securail’ for the network security and ‘B-Security’ for railroad properties: stations, warehouses). In the beginning a dispatching central was created to centralize SNCB staff calls requesting the reinforcement of the police when a problem along the tracks occurred. Afterwards CCTV cameras and alarm systems were installed to protect SNCB properties. Today the SOC has 525 people spread over the whole territory (5 districts), on trains or in the SOC building itself. Some agents handle calls for train attendants or security personnel (Securail and B-Security) that require assistance, intervention or supervision. The team also has direct access to the CCTV images in order to better assess the situation, (pre) view the arrival of a police patrol called and also to understand the excitement or calmness of a certain place. Another part of agents focuses on the images. Each member receives a daily sheet detailing the mission to observe images: moments and special places of concentration, study of a peculiar "phenomenon" (eg. a group of young people disturbing regularly the users of a station), site-search (search for pickpockets) and real-time monitoring of daily incidents. Sometimes the team also guides patrols on site for special operations. At the centre of observation of the SOC giant screens are placed on which you can select one or more (up to 8 or 9) images from the 1729 CCTV cameras, from a single station or from different ones. But that's not all: on the desktop there are still four or five computer screens that can, in turn, play one or multiple images. Potentially, therefore, there are between 25 and 50 images which are observable continuously. Attention which obviously can not be sustained for long. A rotation is applied so that each agent changes task every 45 minutes maximum and that observation is limited to maximum 20 minutes. When they do not scrutinize the "live" images, other employees focus, for example, on the archives (7 days maximum), especially at the request of police and judicial representatives. Finally, a table and access to the images are permanently reserved for representatives of these 2 (mainly the police) who can engage in some 'pursuits'. “They are welcome to join us,” said Gaetan Carlens, Security Supervisor at SNCB Holding. “Anyway, we have a duty to inform 'Securail', for the typical railway situations, or the police when there is unlawful activity." SOC ground staff bears the title of security officers equipped with handcuffs and a tear gas spray. The officers are only able to deal with typical rail offences: travel without a ticket, material degradation.

For the rest, subtlety, they can intervene in the broad framework of assistance to persons in danger, including "measures" that accompany the physical maintenance of individuals. For all other offences (theft, assault ...) appeals must be made to the police. But the SNCB staff, like any citizen, may participate in maintaining on-site the offender pending the arrival of a law enforcement agent. The
duty to assist citizens in need is invoked in cases of flagrante delicto that surpasses SNCB staff competences. The SOC is directly dependent on the management of the SNCB Holding. There is currently no systematic policy or technical evaluation of its operation. For over a year, the Belgian stations are decorated with posters inviting users of the PT system to call a ‘0800’ number whenever they encounter suspicious behaviour. The images lying in the campaign posters are supposed to be a little bit “light” but the lack of an exact definition of “suspicious behaviour” may induce different interpretations, not all reassuring. There is no written definition of the character "suspect" targeted by SNCB Holding. "At first we received many calls from wacky people who took the opportunity to ask the train schedules ... Today, 90% of calls are related to security”, said Gaëtan Carlens 38. “In 2007 there were 43,000 recorded calls to the SOC, in 2008 the number rose to 50,000 and the first semester of 2009 we are already at 34,000. That does not mean that there is more aggression or violence but our new number is better known, including our own staff." According to the security manager, "every call is not connected to a security problem but a simple phone call can also prove us the existence of a feeling of insecurity. It sometimes helps to strengthen patrolling on a dock, station, to make the presence of officers more visible, it reassures people." SNCB-Holding ensures that the distribution of the huge amount of calls is consistent across all stations in the country. The campaign was so successful with the public that the ‘0800’ number will be released soon also in trains. Stations are considered "enclosed places accessible to the public”. This requires prior authorization for the installation of cameras. "We must make a request to the commission for the protection of privacy, details Gaëtan Carlens. It must be explained the purpose of monitoring, where the cameras will be installed, show that we operate on a computer system that we own that is secure, our security room is accessible only by identified personnel or persons carrying badges."

The only way to collect images of the network, according to the SNCB-Holding, is by burning a DVD after compliance with a stringent application process that involves a written request from the police or prosecutors. It is useless for normal citizens to contact the SNCB-Holding to search for video evidence of a bicycle theft, assault or any other types of offences. "We must turn to the police or justice who will judge if the request to view recorded images is justified. When filing a complaint, it is worth noting that the assault, robbery ... was committed in an area monitored by our cameras. Normally, the police or justice shall then automatically contact us and submit an application to see if there is a material usable for the place and time specified. In 2008, there were 829 requests from the police, we were able to provide useful images in 643 cases (77.6%)”, said Gaetan.

'Securail' security service of the railways is the first security service allowed in the public transport sector. The Ministerial Decree of 20 December 2007 which recognizes this authorization confirms the extensive powers of ‘Securail’. ‘Securail’ was born in 2004, from B-Security, the internal security service that the SNCB Group formed in 1999 following the reform of police. ‘Securail’ employs 400 employees, a workforce that has doubled since its formation. ‘Securail’ works closely with the police the benefit of the security of passengers and staff in railway stations and trains. To fulfill this mission, the ‘Securail’ staff has increasingly been using technical means, such as the extensive network of CCTV installed in stations. At the end of January, 2008, ‘Securail’ agents received new red and black uniforms, which make them

38 Carlens is Chief Security SNCB Holding
significantly more visible. A recent advertising campaign aimed at reinforcing the sense of security in stations and trains drew attention to the presence and accessibility of officers ‘Securail’ and on the free emergency number ‘0800/30 230’.

**TEC**

TEC has its own Security Council. This body comprises representatives of the Walloon public transport, staff, police, judiciary and, where applicable, the concerned municipality. It is called whenever a serious assault is committed on a TEC bus to coordinate the involvement of different actors who can exchange relevant information in order to avoid that the incident remains unanswered. An interesting aspect though is that despite the emotion they evoke, the number of assaults in the TEC remains low and has not increased significantly in recent years. Since 2000, it is around an average of 101 per year. The College of General Prosecutors has already issued a circular to harmonize the way the public transport offenders are prosecuted. According to that circular, “punishment must be swift, systematic and diversified”. It’s not a new ‘zero tolerance’ policy but effectiveness is clearly the aim. The Walloon Region has already taken a number of initiatives concerning prevention. For several years, buses are equipped with various security systems (closed cabs, cameras, etc). By 2011, in 90 per cent of the park TEC will have the right preventive equipment. The number of inspectors has increased by 44 units, prevention assistants and security staff have been committed. Now, security staff can also impose administrative penalties on perpetrators of antisocial behaviour therefore allowing public prosecutors to discharge such incidents.

Some ideas have also been excluded, such as the creation of a “muscle” response service allowed to use handcuffs and defensive sprays. In the eyes of the TEC, such a device may give a false sense of power and the Ministry of Interior has drastically reduced the use of such a device. "The service response has not and will never have the same powers as police, only able to use force to maintain public order," say TEC representatives.

In an effort to continually improve safety and passenger comfort, the TEC Group also performs annually works on its network, continuously improving infrastructure. More than 14 million € have been committed in 2008 for the development of stops, stations correspondences, its sites and infrastructure maintenance. The attention given to the problem of security on buses is part of that same desire. In 2008, the number of physical assaults or verbal vis-à-vis a member of the TEC and causing incapacity to work was 75 per 115 attacks in 2007. The TEC group remains protected under the European statistics: assault is recorded every 3 million passengers carried in the Group TEC for 3 per million travellers in Europe. The number of days of incapacity for work related to these expressions of violence is increasing: in 2008 for 1879 days 1710 days in 2007 (10%), but this figure was divided by two since 2004. In addition to actions undertaken in recent years, the TEC Group has launched a prevention campaign with the COREN association, which can issue a mobile permit for students in order to improve travelling usability at peak hours.
De Lijn

The Flemish public transport company De Lijn\(^{39}\) found 964 incidents involving its buses and trams in 2008. Based on this figure, De Lijn will list the neighbourhoods and the stations considered risky. These are the first experiments that the company will carry through a security plan. Most incidents were recorded in the province of Antwerp (292), West Flanders (129), in Flemish Brabant and Brussels (149), Limburg (176) and East Flanders (218).

Until now, De Lijn measured insecurity on its network to the number of working disabilities resulting from incidents. In 2007, these disabilities were 96, while the number of incidents reported by staff totalled 832. At the end of 2009\(^{40}\) the number of incidents has risen considerably. 353 offences were recorded in Antwerp, 201 in East Flanders, 180 in Flemish Brabant, 108 in Limburg, and 259 in West Flanders. The verbal abuse and insults are the most common incidents faced by the staff of De Lijn. Physical assaults account for one fifth of cases. Friday and evening peak hours of the day seem to be the most critical moments.

Since 2009 in order to ensure the safety and security of passengers and drivers, controllers of the company De Lijn are able to perform body search on passengers if deemed necessary. They also hold the right to ask someone to leave the vehicle, checking luggage and in the case of a theft, deprive a person of liberty for half an hour awaiting the arrival of the police. 250 controllers of "Lijncontrole", the new security service of the Flemish public transport operator, will be allowed to use these new skills. The controllers have in their attributions the obligation to ensure the safety and security of passengers and drivers. However, their first task is to check whether passengers have a valid ticket. They must ensure the quality of service and to assist travellers in case of accident. To be recognized, "Lijncontrole" agents must take 168 hours of training. They will also wear a new grey uniform. The security plan of De Lijn has been extended since there are more than two years after the deadly assault of a driver in Antwerp. De Lijn also has 224 people who fulfil more social functions: line monitors and street workers. "With the creation of a security service, we take a further step in a professional approach to security in and around our vehicles," said Ingrid Lieten, CEO of De Lijn.

STIB

Passengers and staff safety and security remain a key concern of the STIB. At the end of 2007, the Government established a system of administrative fines and surcharges which allow STIB to punish directly incivility perpetrated on the network. The amount of the fines is decided on by a regional officer and can be up to 500 €. The Region collects the fine payable for STIB. This new procedure helps to speed up the penalty process, which is settled within a period of 6 months. As well as the administrative fine, STIB can bring an action for damages against the offender.

An increased presence of security agents, particularly in the evening, reassures passengers and deters undesirable behaviour. The certification process

\(^{40}\) [http://www.delijn.be/over/veiligheid/resultaten_2009_kw3.htm?ComponentId=11806&SourcePageId=6028]
"Service Quality" is under way and it is related to the quality of relations between the control teams and customers. STIB patrol guards are available 24 hours a day to respond to requests for assistance from the STIB Operations Coordination Office, anywhere on the network. 15 additional officers have been hired. Additional CCTV cameras have also been installed in the metro stations and in vehicles. They enable data to be recorded. In the metro stations, the human presence has been particularly stepped up during the evening between 4 p.m. and midnight by putting in place the ‘Junior/Senior project’. Young recruits are hired for a period of one year under a "First Job" contract. They are given ongoing coaching by seniors who have been working for STIB for much longer. As part of this contract, the juniors also follow a training course which will help them get a job. The STIB Prevention Service currently has 171 officers.

The Security Service of the STIB has been recognized by the Ministry of the Interior. This approval brings new ‘powers’ to the 190 officers securing the network. They are now allowed to operate superficial searches, use of handcuffs and detain offenders until police officers arrive. But officials of the security service are also present on the network to help and assist travellers. They are clearly identifiable in their new uniform charcoal grey with the logo of the Security Service of the STIB, with the official emblem of “Vigilis”. The STIB has announced its intentions to respond positively to the possibility of equipping its security with handcuffs and ‘pepper’ sprays. This measure, however, creates a serious risk of confusion between the role of the Police and that of the STIB. This is one of the reasons asserted by TEC for not using them. Furthermore, the conditions for using ‘pepper’ sprays are rather restrictive: not in a vehicle - tram, bus or subway train - and not in a place where there is a strong current of air. This severely limits the possibilities. Moreover, the risk is high that STIB security agents who have such tools would quickly be tempted to misuse them. In 2001, there were quite a few problems. The Committee P has pinned some practices of the STIB Security Service and recalled that the jurisdiction of the STIB security guards is restricted to monitoring transit and recording traffic offences.

The Committee P notes on its site that the blur is becoming wider between the police role and that of some private security services and talks about creating a "new hybrid security". The TEC stated that their approach is rather the proliferation of ‘ambiance’ agents, the equivalent of stewards, and greater cooperation with police, instead of giving more powers to its security service.

The security service of the STIB in 2009 recorded a decrease in the number of cases of physical violence on the network of the Brussels public transport, according to figures released by Carla Dejonghe (Open VLD). The officers of the STIB Security Service have registered 437 interventions last year, compared with 498 registered a year earlier. The stations most affected are Simonis, De Brouckere, Gare du Midi, Rogier and Louise. STIB employees were victims of 46 physical attacks in 2009 and 83 complaints were filed for verbal abuse. The cost to recover from acts of vandalism (including graffiti) amounted to 750,000 euros.

41 http://www.comitep.be/uk/uk.html
2. Homogeneous network, problematic stations

Finally, in Brussels, the Metro has a team of Federal Police assigned specifically to the underground network and can reasonably estimate that there is no need to create a confusion of roles between the security guards of the STIB on one side and the police officers on the other side, especially since the uniforms of STIB Security agents can be confusing. It is not always clear whether we are dealing with a police officer or a STIB agent.

For the security responsible of the STIB, the problems present in the underground are clearly to be compared with the urban environment and the representation of it. The image the underground has is reflected by the image of the neighbourhoods where the stations are located. But this relationship is not always systematic and a concrete example, like Clemenceau station, can illustrate that. Indeed, there is much pick-pocketing, and sometimes there are assaults in the vicinity of Clemenceau and other serious matters. However, juvenile offenders, who usually operate in the underground, do not operate on the surface and confine in the subway. There is almost a definite territory.

Another interesting fact is that in Brussels subway, there are some nuances between officials regarding the underground stations posing particular problem. The ‘Ribaucourt’ station example is striking at this level. Thus, according to the STIB head of security the scene is particular because it is not petty crime of young people that they are dealing with, but serious forms of organized crime and predatory crimes (e.g. a cut-throat case in the middle of the day). He even uses the notion ‘captive customers’ to describe the situation since this station is a must for commuter officials and makes a comparison with the great wildebeest migration in Kenya, which must cross the river and the crocodiles are just waiting for the feast. Yet, according to the Metro Police chief, the situation seems far less worrisome concerning ‘real’ insecurity but having disturbing effects on the ‘perceived’ insecurity. From a purely objective point of view, based on the level of public figures, Ribaucourt station poses no problems whatsoever. According to him the problematic stations, mainly in terms of thefts, are those that experience large flows of users, called “mega-stations”. They are not dangerous but they encounter more facts at the statistical level, especially pickpocketing. Huge masses of people attract more thieves. There are certain stations that are strategically essential, as intersections of several lines, for example Simonis, De Brouckere, Montgomery, Clemenceau, etc. The security manager of the STIB agrees with these remarks, although for him, it seems rather paradoxical, since the feeling of insecurity for people using those stations is very low. Although there are places very insecure one usually agrees to use them only because they are very transited. For example all the ‘North-South axis’ (‘Gare Central’, ‘Gare du Nord’, ‘De Brouckere’, ‘La Bourse’) is very popular. People go there without asking any questions but those are the most dangerous places when you look at the numbers. And yet they go without asking questions. Ribaucourt, however, is another story.
3. Tensed coordination between security providers

Furthermore it is important to note an additional problem related to "insecurity" in Brussels subway, namely human resources established to fight against it. The Federal Metro Police is working with agents of the STIB Security Service. This collaboration has borne fruit in several actions, such as during meetings in 'Matonge' where the two parties exchanged information to put in place effective operations. Unfortunately tensions between different security departments at different levels occur quite frequently. For the security manager of the STIB, the problem lies more in terms of mutual understanding between services: "There is daily contact between STIB security staff and staff of the Federal Metro Police. But to be honest, first of all, the Federal Metro Police has an understaffing problem. It's hard for them to accomplish their mission 100%. Secondly, Brussels as a whole and the Underground, in particular, are a place of passage for young officers in their career. Therefore, there is a fairly large staff turnover. So they usually do not know the STIB security staff, their prerogatives, their status, powers, etc. These areas of friction are creating unease among them and among us. There are times when we could be mutually reinforcing each other to act on some areas and it does not happen because there is tension. So, paradoxically, insecurity is fed also by the teams that should fight against it”.

According to the head of the Metro Police it’s rather a problem of skills and a lack of distinction between those providing security in the eyes of the normal citizen: "There is collaboration with the STIB but each within its competence. We often have to work with them to help them when they have their problems. Sometimes they have missions quite different from ours. The Royal Decree of 1976 governs everything concerning Transport Police in Brussels. On which there is a debate. In the future, they will normally have expanded powers that will emulate the skills of officers SNCB, therefore B-Security. The legal framework will be reviewed because, to cite one example, do you see the difference between an agent of the STIB and a policeman? At fifty yards I defy anyone who sees the difference. For what interventions are concerned, it is not always clear either. Somewhere they work in jobs of police and somewhere not.”

The police officers working in the subway also complain of being frequently called by agents of the STIB to carry out identity checks and searches on certain users with a problem. Those kind of calls, according to them, cause an important delay in their work. They would like to deal with more important and urgent tasks, as well as preventive actions such as the Herscham patrols are doing related to homeless cases.

VII. Complementary measures to deal with insecurity in public transport

1. The ‘Herscham’ Project

‘Project Herscham’\textsuperscript{42} is the perfect example to illustrate the attempt of the PT industry in Belgium to decrease as much as possible the feelings of insecurity that are keeping the customers away. Every big city, like Brussels, is confronted with the

\textsuperscript{42} http://www.herscham.be/
problem of homeless, clochards, people with no settled home. Those people cause 'nuisance' because they smell or because they are drunken or beg. People usually skirt round them. They are also often victims, victims of a system in which they cannot settle. The development of a project through which members of a police service exclusively focus on a public of homeless, is rather unique. Two comparable initiatives are known: the BAPSA (‘Brigade d’Assistance aux Personnes Sans Abri’) in Paris and a unit of the New-York police.

Although the Metro Police is specifically competent for the 68 Brussels’ metro stations, the big railway stations (Brussels South, Central and North) were involved in the project as from the start. The biggest attention is given to the so-called ‘North-South axis’. Even though the target group is not only to be found on this axis, there is a suction effect which implies that those who want to be helped find the way. This delineation is purely practical and mainly linked to the limited number of personnel working in the project.

The presence of homeless people especially causes a subjective feeling of insecurity among the users of the public transportation, because the homeless people usually sit altogether and ask people for charity or because they drink alcohol in group or simply because they swan around. The fact that they hang around in a commercial environment, the public transportation company M.I.V.B. and N.M.B.S., makes the issue even more complex.

The kind of offences caused by this group of people is principally limited to:
- the development of feelings of insecurity by 'occupying' sections of a station;
- drunkenness – violation of public order – fights (among them);
- polluting a metro or railway station (garbage left behind, urinating in public, making a fire);
- neglecting children, animals;
- illegal stay;
- begging (from passive begging to aggressively approaching passers-by).

The privileged partners, the public transportation companies M.I.V.B. and N.M.B.S. and their security services, play a very important role since they are often the first ones confronted with the 'beyond-the-norm' attitude of the homeless. In addition to those partners, there are also many (about 30) social organizations which mainly work with homeless people who regularly make an appeal to the ‘Herscham’ cell.

The homeless cause objective insecurity (public drunkenness – fights) as well as subjective insecurity (odor nuisance – perception of the passers-by). It is difficult to really know the extent of the problems caused by the group of homeless, or about the circumstances in which a homeless person is the victim of a criminal offence. The willingness of the homeless to file a complaint as a victim is rather minor, due to the little involvement in the social life of this group. The ‘victims’ of the nuisance caused by the homeless are essentially the commuters who use the public transportation and especially do not want to spend time declaring some incivilities by the homeless. Since the start of the project, statistics about the homeless as perpetrators as well as victims, have been kept up to date. These data allow us to have a clear insight in the phenomenon.
- The project fits in the philosophy of the community policing, such as carried out by the railway police in Brussels (SPC), i.e. the Metro, Centre and Eurostar. Beside the contact with the partners, dealers, authorities, a bond is created with a target group.

- As far as the procedures are concerned, a distinction is made:
  • In case of a request for assistance, the initiative must come from the person concerned. We assume that if a person does not want to be helped, all the steps make little sense.
  • If the homeless committed an offence or caused nuisances, the initiative is taken by the policemen.

- If it concerns a judicial offence, the prosecutor must be informed; if it concerns an administrative offence (violation of the public order or drunkenness), an Officer of the Administrative Police must then be informed.

- The ‘Herscham’ staff members must keep a report of their activities so as to make it possible to easily use them later on (searches in own documentation, statistics, overviews, problems synthesis)

- The project works at best in case of fixed permanence days. One fixed day during which people come from the police post to the antenna, and one fixed day during which the ‘Herscham’ personnel goes on the field on its own in order to make contact with the people who are not able to come to the antenna by themselves.

- An important source of information is among others the intervention papers of the control services of the MIVB, NMBS and private security firms. Minutes drawn up by SPC and the local police contain sometimes valuable data. It is important that those data quickly come to the ‘Herscham’ personnel, so that they can, if necessary, react quickly and precisely.

2. The “PRISMATICA” Project – state of the art techno prevention

As we have seen throughout this paper even though there is a recognised need to shift transport patterns of usage from private means to public means, one of the most important factors that play against increased patronage is related with personal security aspects, both real and perceived. To understand what these factors are and to propose technical, operational and social solutions, the project “PRISMATICA” (“Proactive Integrated Systems for Security Management by Technological, Institutional and Communication Assistance”) was funded by the European Commission, involving important European transport operators (London, Paris, Brussels, Milan, Prague and Lisbon), research institutions, manufacturers and transport consultants. In addition to augmenting security staff presence on the field the Belgian PTOs have focused their attention to the preventive side of the raising crime phenomenon, thus turning to the ‘state of the art’ techno prevention.

With the appropriate technological equipment in place a public transport environment is then conceived as being in the hands of what sociologists call a
“capable guardian”. Traditionally, this has meant an operating company deploying staff and monitoring systems (such as CCTV) to carry out manual based surveillance of the environment to prevent undesirable events and to reassure the travelling public that they are in a safe and secure environment.

An important objective of this project was to explore how the advantages of new technological solutions can be fully exploited and provide opportunities for the enhancement of security management. The introduction of new tools and technologies in organisations can fail because of an inadequate understanding of the practical problems the security staff face everyday in the workplace. Thus, the design and development of the innovative tools was informed by field studies and interviews with security staff in public transport networks. These case studies provided a detailed understanding of the working context into which the tools and technologies are to be deployed and formed the basis for the elicitation of operational requirements and user needs.

This detailed understanding of the current practice of security control and surveillance work focused on a number of issues. Firstly, the case studies showed how staff envisage and identify problems. Among the security incidents which the personnel deals with on a daily basis are events such as overcrowding, people falling in escalators, ticket-touts, beggars, buskers, pickpockets, etc.. It was recognised that the development of detection criteria for these events needs to take into account how the relevance of events are established and how they are identified in the course of the organisational activities.

Secondly, the accomplishment of the surveillance work depends on the technical and organisational resources on which they rely, and how these resources, such as CCTV and traffic information, are interleaved and interdependent. Control room operators use multiple sources of information to assess scenes – these include multiple images viewed simultaneously from several cameras and other technologies like traffic information and alarm systems.

Thirdly, the design process depended on an understanding of the ways in which the staff, as a team, develop and implement solutions to problems and difficulties, and in particular how they manage and coordinate the activities.

In short, the development of automatic recognition systems and passenger alarms was related to an understanding of the various ways in which events are detected and managed, the dependence on collaboration and interaction with other staff and organisations, and the resourceful use of camera views and communication devices.

On aspects pertaining to perceived security, several personal and environmental factors that influence the perception of risks to personal security were

identified during some projects. Public transport operators’ efforts to improve perceived personal security usually seek to reduce the impact of personal factors by altering environmental ones (space and information). People’s most frequent request is site-wide presence of staff, which cannot always be fulfilled. Their stated “second best” is on-line, active, CCTV monitoring, which can only be achieved with the help of an automatic surveillance system for site-wide coverage. CCTV monitoring affects environmental factors by letting the public transport operator be seen as in charge of its space. Of course this perception is lost if no response is obtained when trouble occurs. Thus, the need for the system to be on-line and for special response procedures dealing with alarms to be established at the same time. Information on the existence of this CCTV system, the related procedures and any results obtained (from customer surveys and/or prosecutions) while using active CCTV need to be displayed in a clear and accessible way, so that it reaches potential users of the system. It is therefore important that the design and provision of tools not only take into account specific operational requirements (how the tools are used in a particular management context), but also as means to free-up staff resources to increase direct presence and, eventually, to route appropriate information to passengers (e.g. on levels of congestion or “solitude” of particular areas).

Components

The PRISMATICA tools are aimed at providing an “instrumented” detection/action environment that enables control room operators to obtain timely information to improve personal security (reported and perceived) in public transport sites (in particular, metropolitan railway systems). It is clear that this can only be effected by deploying a range of sensing technologies and transmission means combined with usable human machine interfaces. Key requirements include:

- The deployment of detection devices especially in areas that cannot be constantly monitored due to the costs associated with deploying conventional (human) monitoring, especially in the context of lower costs of hardware.
- The integration of diverse devices into a flexible system architecture first to mirror the variety of information sources that are needed to support decision-making and secondly to support future improvements in the development of detection devices.
- Convergence of information into an integrated form of presentation (Human Computer Interface).
- Use, as far as possible, of current site infrastructure (hardware and liveware: people) to improve the chances of early deployment with evolutionary changes in organisational procedures and equipment.

A PRISMATICA system can be regarded as providing a set of diverse devices each of which can contribute added value to the monitoring task, generally in a localised manner. That is to say, each device deals with a relatively small physical area (e.g. a camera, a microphone, a mobile camera, a mobile panic button) without necessarily being required to handle global information. A possible analogy is a human guard checking that people do not jump over the gates in a particular area of the station. This is her/his limited task, dealing with it locally and sending information

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to a (more central) supervisor only when needed. The supervisor could also instruct
the guard from time to time to change her/his task or her/his location.

VIII. Conclusion

In this paper we’ve understood that Belgian PTOs have found a way of
compromise (between Police and private security companies) by choosing to have
their own internal security service to deal with the rising levels of crime and disorder
present throughout their networks. Constructing a secure environment and assuring
passengers’ feelings of security has been for a long time a key issue on the 4 major
Belgian PTOs’ agenda. Not only have they learnt from past disturbing events, the
murder of Joe Vanholsbeek and the death of Guido De Moor (to name the least),
but they are bringing technological innovations (see the ‘Prismatica’ project and the
impressive number of CCTV cameras) and more ‘man-power’ (see the ‘Herscham’
cell) in their struggle to offer their customers a safe and secure experience. It has
become clear for them that diminishing the subjective perception of insecurity is not
an easy task but it is the only way to convince more people to use the public
transport system. A very interesting aspect is the fact that, recently, internal security
agents have received new powers, e.g. the right to use handcuffs and ‘pepper’-sprays (see STIB or NMBS security staff) and the line between their activity and
Police’s activity is becoming extremely blurry. Accountability problems must be taken
into consideration in order to prevent the misuse of such ‘powers’ (Committee P).
The Committee P called this kind of approach: a "new hybrid security" where the
distinction between the role of Police officers and that of the internal security agents
tends to become unnoticeable. The private security market hasn’t yet got a share of
the public transport segment and only time will tell if the actual configuration of the
Belgian public transport system will feel the need to outsource the security service.
Even though the Romanian public transport system took the first steps to embrace
PPPs in what concerns the security issue (see the contract between Metrorex and
the Scorseze Security), things aren’t as they should be since the population is
becoming wearier of the real situation concerning safety and security in the public
transport network.

The resemblance between the sources of insecurity in both Belgian and
Romanian public transport systems is to be taken into serious consideration by
interested bodies. The huge difference, however, resides in the measures taken to
reduce them. Reassuring public transport users hasn’t undergone the same process
in Belgium and Romania. While Belgian PTOs have realised that being passenger-orientated by addressing fears of insecurity is the real key to success, the Romanian
PTOs still rely on the almost non-existent involvement of public law enforcement
agencies such as the Transport Police or the Gendarmerie.

Although I am aware that the tendency in the 21st century is to provide your
own security and not to rely on the overwhelmed state apparatus, in order to be
productive in a global market PTOs should acknowledge the fact that increased
numbers of users means consequently more responsibilities such as: providing a
safe and secure environment, taking efficient measures to counter the rising feelings
of insecurity, be that by relying on an internal security service or by turning to the
private sector. By introducing the private security sector into the public transport
segment, Metrorex had visible results: fewer incidents reported, fewer acts of
vandalism, less ‘grafitti’ and more content passengers. But for this kind of approach you need funds and the Romanian public transport system, right now, doesn’t look to eager to put security issues before cost issues.

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