

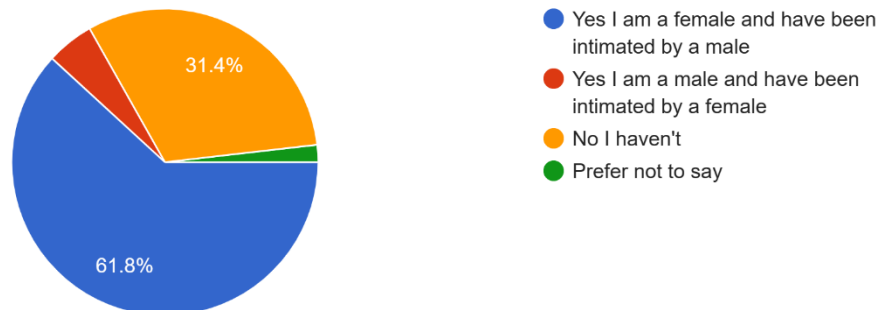
To what extent, and in what ways, is patriarchy alive and kicking?

Patriarchy. Is it just a “social system in which positions of dominance and privilege are primarily held by men”(Wikipedia, 2023) or is it why women cannot wear a skirt because it is too distracting? Is it why women fear walking home alone? Or is it why women feel unsafe in any public setting? As a young woman in such a society, I have read and watched innumerable amounts of advice on how *I* should use public transport or what *I* should not do to ‘avoid trouble.’ I must identify exits whilst on a bus. I must limit distractions whilst walking home. I must not travel alone on trains. It is due to these embedded ‘norms’ that I have chosen to investigate the comparative feelings of safety between men and women in public settings and how agents of socialisation may be the cause of sexual harassment committed by men, towards women. My initial idea was to investigate patriarchy in the household, but I could not submit an essay about families when an instance of patriarchy happened to me the day before I began writing this. Like any person, I was on a busy train with my female friends and a man began to masturbate whilst intensively staring and intimidating us. He continued when told to stop and clearly found frightening a group of 16-year-old girls humorous as he laughed. Laughed as he watched me become uncomfortable. Smirked when a *female* guard told him to stop, as if it was absurd for a woman to intervene and show authority. I suppose it must be funny when a man is superior and causes women to feel belittled.

But what were *you* wearing? Did *you* give them too much attention? Did *you* give them the eye? Sexual harassment is defined as any “unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature” (Acas, 2021) and these questions are often asked to women, contributing to the harmful notion of victim-blaming. In 2020, the Government Equalities Office (GEO) found that 72% of the UK population had experienced one form of sexual harassment in their lifetime. 42% of these harassments occurred on the street and 28% occurred on public transportation. Burton et al. (1998) found that more than one in two men thought that women provoke violence and harassment in many contexts, but particularly in the way that they dress. However more recently, the powerful, ‘What Were You Wearing?’ exhibit created in 2014 by Jen Brockman and Dr. Mary Wyandt-Hiebert depicts clothing worn by sexual assault and harassment survivors to tackle these myths that sexual offences can be eliminated by the survivor alone. It is my firm belief that viewers of this exhibit should not be shocked by the ‘normality’ of these clothes, but rather saddened by the ‘normality’ of these clothes. A woman can be sexually harassed whilst in her work uniform, whilst in her school uniform, whilst in her ‘going to the shops’ outfit, whilst in her pyjamas. In anything. Patriarchy is indiscriminate and can unfortunately happen to any woman, irrespective of class, ethnicity, age and even clothing.

I have conducted a questionnaire-based study to collect quantitative data from responses of students from 14 to 18 years old. There are 600 pupils that had access to my questionnaire, and I have collected 220 responses comprised of 163 females and 57 males. Despite this difference in response rate by gender, I believe that my data will show clear patterns of the difference in safety between males and females. I believe females will be more susceptible to sexual offences than males due to several agents of socialisation, including the family and the mass media. I carefully considered the format of questions and outlined the contents of the questionnaire beforehand due to a risk of causing distress to respondents. To prevent any further distress, I added a 'Prefer not to say' option to each question so that respondents were not forced in any way to answer the questions. I defined any words that I felt may need an explanation to hopefully prevent any confusion and to increase the validity of the data collected. Additionally, the questionnaire was anonymous to ensure confidentiality when answering potentially sensitive questions. The Opinions and Lifestyle Survey 2022 regarded sexual harassment to include 'catcalling, whistles, unwanted sexual comments or jokes in public', feeling 'that you were being followed' and feeling 'physically threatened by a stranger in a public space.'

Have you ever felt intimidated, by a member of the opposite sex, in public? e.g on a bus/train
220 responses



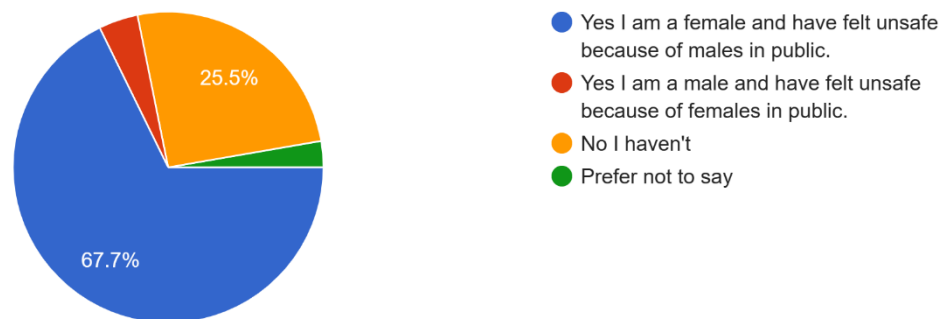
It is abundantly clear that from my sample, women are more likely to be intimidated in public by men with 136 "Yes" responses in comparison to 11 responses. Why?

It could be argued that the cause of this statistic is a result of attitudes formed during the critical period of primary socialisation. The family exercises primary socialisation, and it is where children learn the basic norms, values and behaviours that are expected of them in their culture. Burman and Cartmel (2005) assessed young people's attitudes towards 'gendered violence.' They found that the young women asked considered all forms of violence more serious than men. For example, 81% of women claimed that sexual offences were very serious in comparison to 72% of men and three quarters of the men asked agreed with the statement: 'You have to stick up for yourself, and sometimes this means getting violent.' Can

primary socialisation explain this? Ann Oakley (1974) believed that in the family, young boys are less likely to be sanctioned for being deviant and girls are *more* likely to be cautioned and discouraged from such deviance due to verbal appellations. These appellations vary between boys and girls and can reflect their future roles and values in society. Girls are stereotypically described as ‘princess’ which has connotations of kindness and purity, which could be the cause of women viewing crimes as more serious. Young boys are often referred to as a ‘monster’ which completely contrasts appellations given to girls, having connotations of dominance and fear. This can explain the data collected as boys are taught to be superior and aggressive from an early age, suggesting why men are usually the perpetrators of intimidation. From my findings, girls as young as fourteen have experienced this. I fear that patriarchy is so entrenched into our society that these sexual offences will become just ‘a part of life’ as a woman, rather than something to contest.

Have you ever felt unsafe in public due to members of the opposite sex?

220 responses



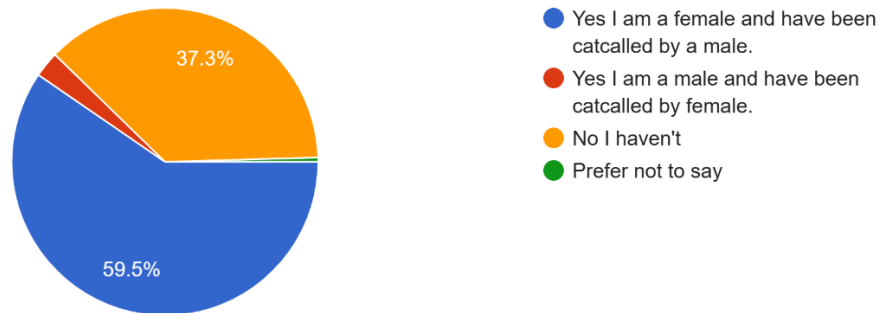
As shown in the pie chart above, 67.7% of females asked had felt unsafe in public, which is equivalent to 149 young girls. Although my sample is 36% of the maximal responses for the target population, I believe that this data can be applied to a much greater population. This is evident due to an agent of secondary socialisation - the media.

Type into any search engine “self-defence keychains”. You are met with an overwhelming amount of different style defence keychains with decorative accessories like pom-poms and glitter covers. Self-defence rings, bracelets, rings, sticks, canes. These self-defence items can contain alarms, pepper-sprays, knives, LED lights, window breakers and whistles. The point is that these self-defence items are undeniably targeted at women as they are labelled as a ‘perfect gift for her’ or a ‘must-have for college students.’ The fact that these feminine self-defence items even exist proves that women do feel unsafe on a much wider scale. The prevalence of this difference in safety is obvious as the self-defence keychain market is set to reach the value of USD 4436.78 million by 2030, (Benzinga, 2023). So, despite *women* feeling unsafe in public, they are expected to alter *their* behaviour to assure their safety, which is an

example of patriarchy alone. Due to the contents of these self-defence items, a woman could be pushed into a position to commit a crime to protect herself, yet it is still apparent that men have not been told to change their frequent behaviour of intimidating women in public.

Have you ever been catcalled in public by a member of the opposite sex? (Catcalling is often a shout or whistle directed towards women sexually)

220 responses



The results above show that 131 young girls have been catcalled by men in public, in comparison to six boys in my school who had answered the questionnaire.

It can be argued that the media can explain this data and may even contribute to catcalling as we are constantly surrounded by sexist attitudes. The media is a highly influential agent of socialisation so such attitudes in the media can manipulate the male audience, which directly impacts their behaviour in everyday situations – potentially causing them to catcall women. Developed by Harold Lasswell, this is termed the ‘hypodermic syringe/needle theory.’ This is the idea that the media can have an immediate effect on its audience, causing viewers to think and act in certain ways. (Revise Sociology, 2023) Women are often sexualised and objectified in advertisements to promote certain products. A prominent example of this was an advertisement depicting a half-naked woman holding a sign reading ‘Ride Me All Day for £3’ on multiple buses in Cardiff. It is these advertisements, these beliefs that endorse the normalisation of sexism, sexual harassment and catcalling in public and on public transport. In 2020, the GEO found that 62% of people who have experienced sexual harassment had experienced an incident on a bus. Therefore, the ‘trusted’ people you would report sexual harassment to on buses, may also be the same people who condoned this advert.

I acknowledge that my sample is a small percentage of the target population and that there were significantly more female responses. However, the vast majority of male responses selected ‘No I haven't’ when asked about all areas of sexual harassment. This could suggest that these results can be generalised and applied to the male target population. Although qualitative data was not collected, I believe that the quantitative data collected is enough to

display a clear trend and pattern – that women are more likely to experience sexual harassment on public transport. It is due to the presence of the media, family and many more factors, that this issue is universal. Several practical measures have been introduced in an attempt to reduce sexual harassment. Including additional police in New York subways, women-only train carriages in Japan and British transport companies encouraging passengers to intervene if they witness sexual harassment. Although these measures may somewhat improve public transport for women, I strongly believe that it is male attitudes derived from agents of socialisation that need to be changed. Public transport should just be a part of a woman's day, not a trauma that will become a part of her life. For that reason, it is clear that patriarchy is truly, alive and kicking.

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Appendix A

The screenshot shows a survey interface for 'Patriarchy in Everyday Life'. The survey is anonymous and aims to collect data for an essay. It contains three questions:

- Question 1:** 'What year group are you in?' with radio button options for Year 10, Year 11, Year 12, and Year 13.
- Question 2:** 'What option best describes your sex?' with radio button options for Female and Male.
- Question 3:** 'Have you ever felt intimidated, by a member of the opposite sex, in public? e.g on a bus/train' with radio button options for 'Yes I am a female and have been intimidated by a male', 'Yes I am a male and have been intimidated by a female', 'No I haven't', and 'Prefer not to say'.

The interface includes a top navigation bar with 'Questions', 'Responses' (220), and 'Settings'. A 'Send' button is visible in the top right corner. A sidebar on the right contains icons for adding, deleting, and other actions.

Have you ever been catcalled in public by a member of the opposite sex? (Catcalling is often a shout or whistle directed towards women sexually) *

- Yes I am a female and have been catcalled by a male.
- Yes I am a male and have been catcalled by female.
- No I haven't
- Prefer not to say



Have you ever felt unsafe in public due to members of the opposite sex? *

- Yes I am a female and have felt unsafe because of males in public.
- Yes I am a male and have felt unsafe because of females in public.
- No I haven't
- Prefer not to say



Do you have a curfew? e.g you have to be home at 10/11pm etc *

- Yes
- No
- Not sure



Have you ever felt conscious about your clothing due to the opposite sex viewing it sexually? *

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say
- Not sure

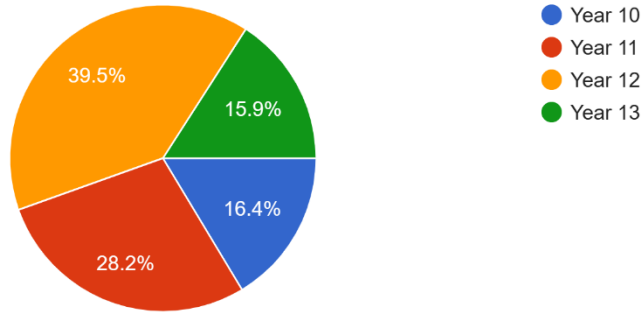
Have you ever received **unwanted** sexual attention from a member of the opposite sex in public? *

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

Appendix B

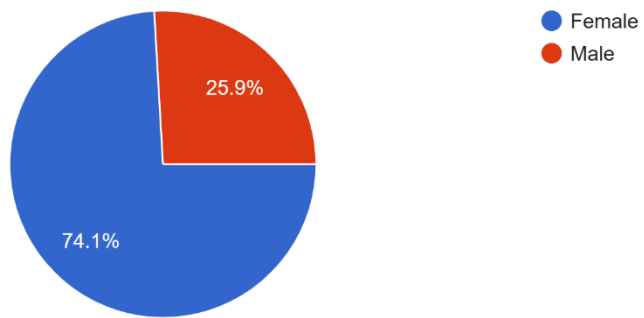
What year group are you in?

220 responses



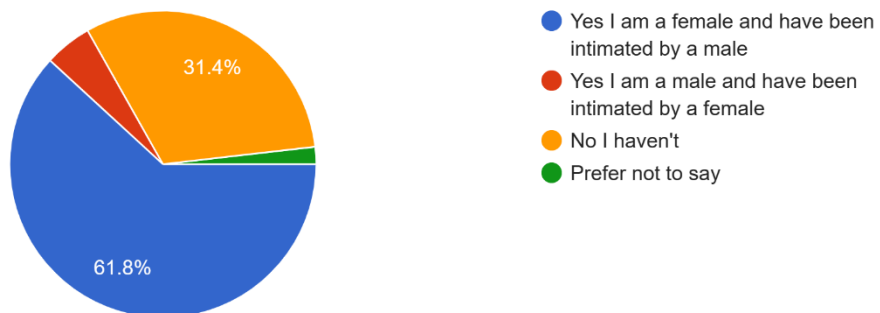
What option best describes your sex?

220 responses



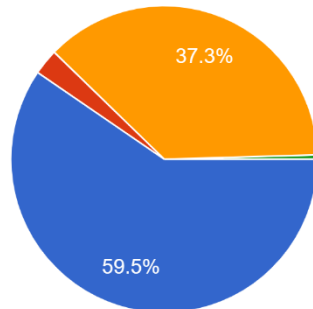
Have you ever felt intimidated, by a member of the opposite sex, in public? e.g on a bus/train

220 responses



Have you ever been catcalled in public by a member of the opposite sex? (Catcalling is often a shout or whistle directed towards women sexually)

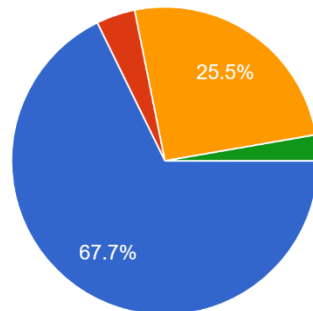
220 responses



- Yes I am a female and have been catcalled by a male.
- Yes I am a male and have been catcalled by female.
- No I haven't
- Prefer not to say

Have you ever felt unsafe in public due to members of the opposite sex?

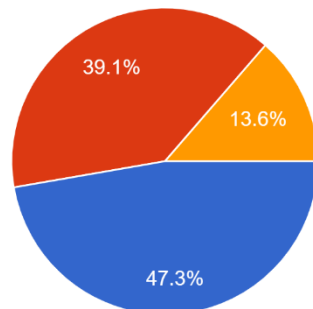
220 responses



- Yes I am a female and have felt unsafe because of males in public.
- Yes I am a male and have felt unsafe because of females in public.
- No I haven't
- Prefer not to say

Do you have a curfew? e.g you have to be home at 10/11pm etc

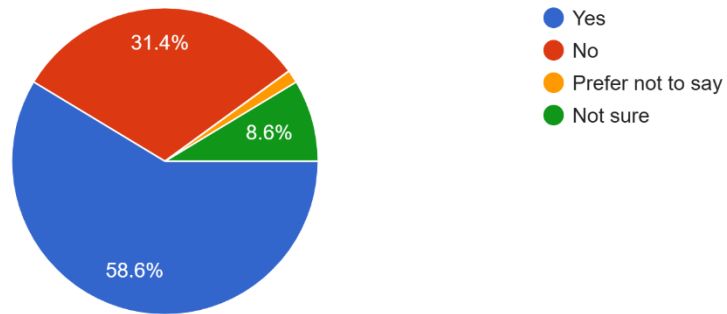
220 responses



- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Have you ever felt conscious about your clothing due to the opposite sex viewing it sexually?

220 responses



Have you ever received unwanted sexual attention from a member of the opposite sex in public?

220 responses

