Rebekah Mifsud
Noellie Brockdorff
Gordon Sammut

Social Representations of Policing Report (Vol I)

L-Università ta' Malta

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0.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Two studies are reported that adopted a qualitative and quantitative approach respectively. These aimed to acquire an understanding of the Maltese public's views on policing in Malta. In the first study, a series of online interviews were conducted, based on specific age, gender and location criteria, with the aim of exploring attitudes towards the police and their work and with a particular focus on the Community Policing initiative. Subsequently, the second study investigated issues that emerged from the first study and examined their distribution within a large national probability sample. The following are the key findings pertaining to the two studies.

0.1 KEY FINDINGS STUDY 1

The Prototypical Police Officer

1. Participants described the prototypical officer as one who is responsible for protecting citizens, maintaining public order, and enforcing the law. Additionally, the prototypical officer was described as someone who goes beyond the call of duty when needed.
2. Views were divided over whether police officers serve as actual role models and the extent to which they represent a reliable authority figure to turn to in moments of need.

Police Duties and Responsibilities

1. Participants were divided as to whether police should strictly adhere to their job description. On the one hand, some expressed the view that administrative and clerical work should be outsourced to other entities so that police officers can dedicate their time to more serious matters. On the other hand, others expressed the view that the police should carry out whatever duty they are assigned.
2. There was a consensual agreement that both apprehension and prevention are important duties of the police officer. Some expressed the view that apprehension should be prioritised because it is more attainable than prevention.

Public Perception

1. The police mentality tended towards negative attributions. The prototypical officer was represented as having a macho mentality, and as a work evader lacking people skills.

Nevertheless, this was accompanied by advice against generalisation with some participants arguing that there are police officers who are passionate about their work and who are trustworthy.

2. There were mixed experiences with police encounters. Participants recalled experiences in which they were treated professionally and with respect. Others recalled experiences which left them disappointed with the police's treatment. Consequently, participants were also divided as to whether the police are effective in their work.

3. Participants divergently represented policing as either a vocation requiring patience and commitment, or a career requiring execution and progression.

Improving the Force

1. Participants identified various areas for investment, including: communication with stakeholders (operations) and the public (image); establishing different sections and specialisations; education (of public); human resources; improving police and conditions for officers; material resources, logistics and upgrades; physical surveillance, crime prevention, and enforcement; tackling job culture and corruption; and training.

2. Community policing was consensually regarded positively, though with warnings of caution. Participants expressed both advantages and drawbacks of community policing including an opportunity for police to develop relations with the community and the risk of overly familiar relationships, respectively.

3. The consensual understanding of body cams is that they are an asset for both the police and public protection.

4. Views on CCTV were divided. CCTVs were regarded to be good for prevention and apprehension, however, they were also regarded negatively due to the risk of data protection issues, excessive surveillance, and misuse.

5. The use of social media by the police entailed the consensual understanding that it may be instrumental to improve people-police relationships. However, participants also expressed concern as to whether this may lead to a waste of police time.

0.2 KEY FINDINGS STUDY 2

1. Overall respondents tended to agree that police should go beyond their call of duty, however, findings were mixed as to whether they should strictly adhere to their job description.

2. Respondents tended to agree that both apprehension and prevention are important, however, priority should be given to prevention of crime.

3. Respondents tended to agree that stop and search is a necessary right of the police officer but that it may also be misused. Additionally, they tended to agree that force should only be used in instances where it is absolutely necessary.

4. Regarding body cams, respondents tended to agree that these are beneficial and that they should be used. Furthermore, respondents also agreed that CCTVs are an aid for police operations. Findings relating to issues of privacy were mixed.

5. Generally, respondents tended to agree that policing is more of a vocation than a career.

6. The need for greater physical presence of police tended towards agreeableness. Respondents also tended to agree that more physical presence may prevent crime. Findings were mixed as to whether more police in stations or police in streets should be given priority.

7. With regards to community policing, respondents tended to agree that closer police ties with the community may result in people feeling safer.

8. Regarding the use of social media, findings were mixed, however, respondents tended to agree that it is better to report crime personally to the police rather than through social media.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

During the past years Malta has experienced a change in crime rates and types of offences carried out. Racially motivated hate crimes, domestic violence, threats and public violence, and computer-related crime have seen an increase (CrimeMalta Observatory, 2020). Consequently, the police force has had to keep up with the changing dynamics characterising crime in Malta. Indeed, a number of specialised units and services have been implemented to address these shifts in crime. For instance, the Gender-based and Domestic-violence unit (GBDV) was set up to handle cases of domestic violence, whereas the Cyber Crime Unit (CBU) was set up to handle ever-increasing cases of online and computer-related crime (The Malta Police Force, 2021). A recent addition has included the Community Policing section that has been tasked with promoting problem solving and establishing a police-community partnership in order to address community-related crime and fear issues (The Malta Police Force, 2021). At the time of this report the community policing initiative has been rolled out in 12 localities in Malta, and is aimed to be distributed nationwide by 2023.

The premise of community policing is to improve community relations and facilitate effective responses to various issues that may arise (Donnelly, 2013; Gill et al., 2014). Though lacking a consensual definition, community policing is typically conceptualised as a philosophy of policing that situates a section of the police force in direct contact within a community, building relationships with its members in order to increase public safety and reduce crime (Gill et al., 2014). Community policing offers a slight departure from traditional policing where the focus is primarily on maintaining order and law enforcement. Furthermore, community policing presents an opportunity for decentralising command and empowering the police officer to carry out decision-making at the local level (Donnelly, 2013). Another benefit of community policing is that it emphasizes a proactive approach to solving issues of crime, as opposed to reactive enforcement of law (Donnelly, 2013). Nonetheless, the successes of community policing hinge on a known crucial factor, the public's perception of the police (e.g., Peyton et al., 2019). Determining and managing the public's beliefs and expectations about the police force is therefore essential for the success of a community policing project.

The aim of this inquiry is to investigate attitudes towards policing and the police. The research project is comprised of two studies. The first study provides the basis for the second study through undertaking qualitative interviews to gather an in-depth understanding of individual perceptions from different localities. The second study follows from the first

through a survey that examined the various issues that emerged from the qualitative interviews. These are extracted and measured within a larger, nationally representative sample. Together, findings from both studies are used to inform an understanding of the best practices to manage police-citizen relations for an effective and efficient community policing service.

      The following will firstly present the methodology and findings from the first study. It will then proceed to do the same for the second study. Lastly, it will conclude with a general discussion that integrates all findings.

STUDY 1
2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to understand Maltese people's views on policing. The study involved a series of online one-on-one, in-depth interviews, during which participants were asked to discuss this topic, following questions asked by the researcher. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the interviews were conducted online using Zoom.

2.2 SAMPLE

A total of 41 participants were recruited using convenience sampling, all from different backgrounds and walks of life. Participants were recruited by means of recruiters, who contacted potential participants and passed on the details of willing participants to the researchers, with their consent. All participants were paid €10.00 for their participation, and all recruiters who assisted in successfully recruiting participants were paid €2.50 per participant who completed the interview. The interviews were conducted with participants from the following localities (see Appendix A for full list of demographics):

1. Cottonera (including Kalkara)
2. Fgura
3. M'Xlokk and B'Bugia (as one region)
4. Mosta
5. Rabat
6. Sliema
7. Swieqi
8. Valletta and Floriana (as one region)
9. Żabbar
10. Żejtun

If a member of a potential participant's family, or a person living in the same household, worked in the police, or if they themselves did, then that person was not eligible to participate. The interviewees were all Maltese, and were selected based on age and gender:

- **Age**: For each locality, 3 participants of 25-55 years of age, and 1 adult participant outside that age group (i.e., 18-24 or 56+), were recruited

- **Gender**: For each locality, 2 males and 2 females were recruited

The final sample thus consisted of (a) two males and two females, of whom (b) 3 participants were 25-55 years old, and 1 participant was 18-24 years old *or* 56+, for each of the 10 localities/regions listed above. The only exceptions were Fgura – for which 3 females and 1 male were recruited – and Valletta/Floriana, for which 2 females and 3 males were recruited.

2.2.1 Rationale for sampling criteria

In a previous quantitative study carried out as part of the National Safety and Security Monitor (Mifsud et al., 2020), Maltese respondents aged 18-30 years reported significantly better perceptions of personal security, when compared to respondents of 31-50 years of age. Accordingly, the 25-55 age bracket was broad enough to allow for successful recruitment and, at the same time, narrow enough to include diverse participants from within these two age groups. The age groups 18-24 and 51+ age groups reflected demographics that may have specific views on the police when compared to the bulk of participants within the 25-55 age group. Accordingly, whilst participants were also recruited from these age groups, the bulk of participants was recruited from the 25-55 age group. Concerning gender, the study aimed for an equal representation between males and females, which was achieved.

2.3 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection was done using in-depth one-to-one interviews. Details about the interviews are provided below.

2.3.1 Interview topic guide

The interview topic guide was developed with the aim of understanding people's views *of* the police, and people's views concerning what the police are *for* (Buhagiar & Sammut, 2020) (see Appendix B). The topic guide was improved following two pilot interviews, which – given the suitability of the protocol – were analysed together with the other interviews in the final analysis. A semi-structured topic guide therefore addressed the public's views relating to:

(a) the role of police officers in society;

(b) the (i) justifications for use, and (ii) limits to the authoritative powers of police;

(c) the perceived core duties of the police concerning (i) crime prevention, (ii) law enforcement, and (iii) crime resolution;

(d) other duties associated with policing, in terms of (i) what it is they should be helping out with, and (ii) what they should refuse to help out with;

(e) the extended duties of the police concerning (i) enforcement, (ii) protection, (iii) public order, (iv) private needs, and (v) quality of life issues;

(f) police function in (i) surveillance, (ii) stations, and (iii) on the beat.

The interview commenced with three preliminary questions concerning whether participants had family members, or members of their household, who work in the police force (in order to confirm that the exclusion criterion was adhered to); whether they ever had contact with the police; and whether they ever considered a career in policing. These questions served to break the ice, but also provided valuable information on participation criteria, and representations of the police.

Following this, the interview guide proceeded by tapping participants' views concerning what they consider to be the key roles and duties of police officers – including what they believe the police should help out with, or should refuse to help out with. Participants were then asked what they believe the police force should invest in, and whether the police should focus more on crime prevention or the apprehension of criminals.

Having understood their views on police duties, participants were asked whether they believe there should be more police officials in police stations, and subsequently, whether there should be more officials on the beat/in the streets. This was followed by questions concerning whether the police should wear body cameras in the streets or during patrols. All these questions were followed by probing questions seeking to understand participants' views and justifications in their entirety.

Participants were also asked what they think the police's attitude toward the people is, what they perceive the mentality of police officers to be, and whether they would seek the police for help. Other questions concerned their views on when the police should be allowed to stop people in the streets (e.g., during roadblocks), and whether they would obey the police if stopped. This set of questions was followed by asking participants how they think they can help the police do their job, and for their views concerning the use of social media by the police and the public in relation to policing. Participants were then asked for their views on

surveillance systems (e.g., CCTV cameras) and on surveillance by physical means. In conclusion, participants were asked whether they heard about the community policing initiative that started in Mellieħa (in northern Malta), and for their general views on community policing. At the end, all participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback to the researchers and to add anything else they might not have mentioned. Throughout the interview, participants were also given the opportunity to elaborate on their arguments, views or experiences with the police (see Appendix A for the complete interview topic guide).

2.3.2 Online interviews: procedure

Prior to starting the interviews, the research was explained to participants over the phone, and participants were made aware of the purpose of the study. Subsequently, they were sent an email with a Zoom link, a demographics sheet, an information sheet, and a consent form stating their rights as participants for their signature and completion. Alternatively, some participants provided verbal consent, which was audio-recorded with their permission. All participants were reminded that the online interviews were to be audio-recorded using the facilities of Zoom. Interview sessions lasted around 45 minutes. The interviews took place between the 7th May and the 1st June of 2020. The time and day of the interview was chosen by the participants themselves. The personal details collected during the course of this research were stored safely, and all participant names were given a pseudonym at the point of transcription. The University of Malta procedure for research ethics evaluation was followed and filed with the Faculty of Media and Knowledge Sciences (MaKS FREC). Whenever participant quotes are used in this report, the anonymity of participants is safeguarded as much as possible.

2.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

All data was analysed using Thematic Networks Analysis, and was brought together by means of a thematic network (Attride-Stirling, 2001). This enabled the identification and analysis of prominent themes and patterns. Moreover, links between themes were identified and described.

2.4.1 Familiarisation with the data

Prior to data analysis, all interviews were subjected to transcription. Transcripts were then reviewed at random by the researchers to verify accuracy. This helped to develop a general

understanding of the data collected. In turn, initial notes were taken, which guided the eventual development of an interview coding protocol.

2.4.2 Coding and identifying themes

The transcripts were uploaded to NVIVO12, a qualitative data analysis software. Data was coded at three levels: (a) basic themes; (b) organizing themes; and (c) global themes. Before coding at these levels, a preliminary coding framework was established, following the coding of one whole transcript, which was refined following the further coding of another 6 transcripts. By the coding of the 7th transcript, the coding frame solidified and general codes started to emerge. The coding frame was then applied to the interview data and the codes were re-visited and collated with every 10th interview that was analysed (starting from the 10th interview). This polishing of previously obtained codes made the large dataset manageable and ensured consistency in the application of the coding frame. Transcripts were thus analysed thoroughly and meaningful participant quotes were extracted based on their significance for the research project. The coding of 41 interviews resulted in a proliferation of low-level codes, which were subsequently shaped into a thematic network as follows (see Appendix C for full coding framework).

2.4.3 Constructing and interpreting the thematic network

The thematic network was built by establishing the (a) basic themes, (b) organizing themes, and (c) global themes respectively. This involved three steps. Firstly, the previously identified low-level codes were grouped into basic themes. *Basic themes* summarised the main points made by the participants and gathered within them the patterns identified when coding low-level codes. After polishing the low-level codes (e.g., removing redundant codes), the dataset yielded 422 low-level codes, which were subsequently grouped into 91 basic themes summarising the dataset. Secondly, basic themes revolving around the same topics were gathered together under meaningful *organizing themes*, which were sufficiently distinct from each other. A total of 23 organizing themes emerged from this step. Thirdly, the basic and organizing themes were reviewed and the organising themes were grouped into 3 separate *global themes* representing citizens' views of (1) the police, (2) their relation to the police, and (3) avenues for further development. These three global themes were described by 1 overarching theme, which represented the core tenets in participants' views and the dataset as a whole. The next section presents the findings in detail.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes the global theme that emerged from the data analysis, together with the organizing themes and basic themes subsumed within them. This is done through detailed description of the (a) *shared* and (b) *contested* aspects of the representation of policing. The themes are thus detailed by way of this dichotomous presentation between shared and contested views on policing. In this context, 'shared' elements refer to those that are understood by participants in an interobjective (Sammut et al., 2013) sense, even though participants may not individually orient themselves toward these elements in the same way. The 'contested' elements are those indicating a polarised view of police officers, where contrasting re-presentations play out, or where a representation is only understood by a subset of participants.

3.2 GLOBAL THEME: THE POLICE OFFICER

The global theme concerned the citizens' view of 'The Police Officer'. The prototypical police officer emerged as one who is responsible for protecting citizens, maintaining public order and enforcing the law; and who should go beyond the call of duty when necessary. Participants were divided on whether the police are a role model that people can turn to for guidance. Crime prevention was represented as crucial but difficult, and as more important than the apprehension of criminals. The use of technological surveillance by the police (e.g., CCTV cameras) was prototypically regarded as a double-edged sword. Body cams were almost unanimously represented as a protection tool for both police and the public, and physical surveillance was deemed necessary and more important than technological surveillance. The prototypical officer is thus *physically present* and only uses technological surveillance as an *ancillary means* of policing. The prototypical officer has a macho mentality, lacks people skills, has a bad work ethic and is generally unreliable, despite participants' calls against generalisations. The overwhelmingly negative image of the police (e.g., as prejudiced) was counterbalanced by an appreciation of their hardships (e.g., the police as disrespected, underpaid, etc.). Participants divergently represented policing as a *vocation*, or else a *career*. The police force is represented as one requiring improvement, both in terms of policing and public image/communications. Participants disagreed on whether police mistrust is fully merited, or partially unmerited. This global theme is characterized by

three organizing themes: 'Police Duties and Responsibilities'; 'Public Perception'; and
'Improving the Force' (see Figure 1). These are described in more detail in the following.

Figure 1

Overview of thematic analysis – Global theme and its Organizing themes
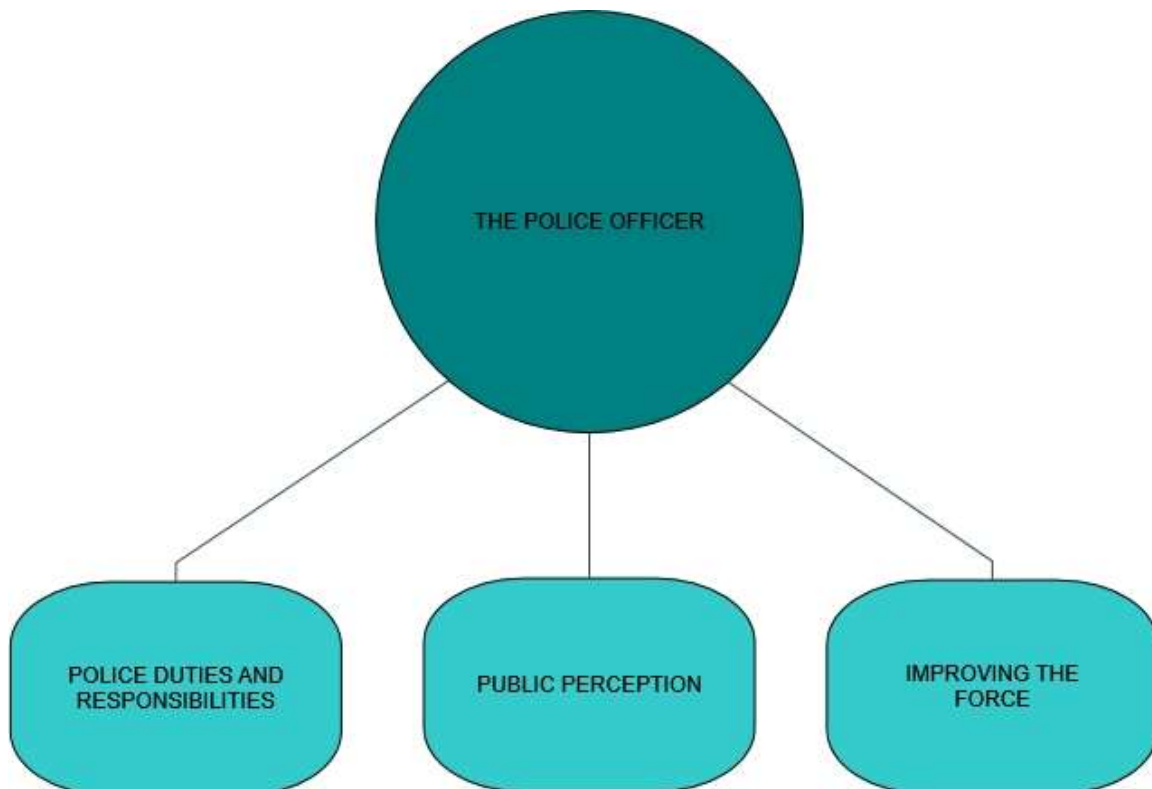
3.3 ORGANIZING THEME 1: POLICE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The first organizing theme that emerged from the data concerns police duties and
responsibilities and is related to views on what roles are within and beyond the remit of the
prototypical officer as well as the importance of prevention versus apprehension (see Figure
2). The categorical dimensions grouped under each of these three basic themes may be found
in Table D.1 in Appendix D.

Figure 2

Organizing theme of 'Police Duties and Responsibilities' and its Basic themes
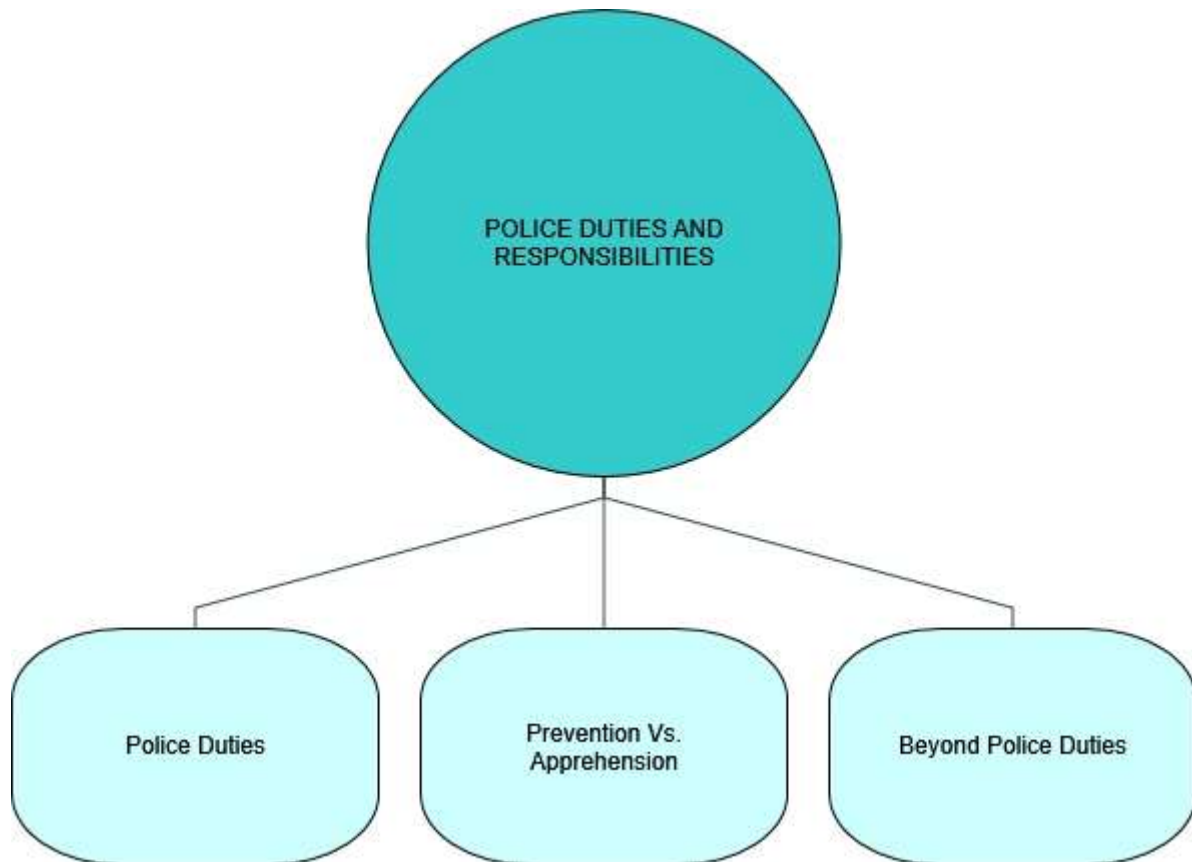
3.3.1 Police duties

In terms of police duties, the emphasis on law enforcement, citizens' protection, the maintenance of public order, and specialised and investigative work, stood out as main features of police work (see Figure 3). Participants saw the police as the first port of call in emergencies involving threats, accidents, and general security especially in crime hotspots. Law enforcement was generally linked to traffic, dangerous practices like drinking and driving, and even environmental crimes. Public order was broadly construed as relating to national security, public peace and the smooth functioning of society. The basic idea here was that the duty of the police is:

"to maintain public order. To see that everyone follows the rules, both the powerful and the powerless, and that everything works as it should. Society is like a machine, an organism"

(Male, 28, Żabbar, Tertiary Education)

In terms of investigation, the police officer was represented as one who acts on reports, gathers evidence, and solves serious crimes (e.g., murder, fraud, etc.). The limits of policing were recognised in that police evidence may be dismissed in court. Specialised sections (e.g., cybercrime, rapid intervention, etc.) were mentioned by participants as well, and some units were represented as doing 'hidden' police work (e.g., as opposed to visible patrols).

Some participants qualified their views by stating that police duties are obvious, and they should simply do their job more diligently – thus precluding discussion. Another contested feature of the representation presented officers as role models who should fulfil more social/civil duties by emitting a degree of integrity and accountability in one's work, and helping those in need:

"First of all, police officers are considered as public officers, and so they have certain duties toward society, so they have to be – sort of – role models, role models for the citizens."

(Female, 20, Rabat, Tertiary Education)

Officers were here attributed the duty of cultivating a culture of care among people, leading by example. This contested feature ranged from attributing to police an array of civil duties (e.g., helping vulnerable old people, the homeless, etc.), all the way to representing foot (or car) patrols as a means by which the police can keep in touch with citizens. The representation was variably advanced by participants preferring a legalistic approach to fines and punishments, and others preferring a more flexible 'second chances' approach (e.g., education, rehabilitation, etc.) to policing. Regardless of outlook, the contested representation of 'the dependable, approachable officer' featured substantially:

"the point is that you're close to people, that the people feel that, listen, there is someone who can defend them, especially vulnerable people"

(Male, 49, Marsaxlokk, Tertiary Education)

Figure 3

Basic theme of 'Police Duties' and associated categories
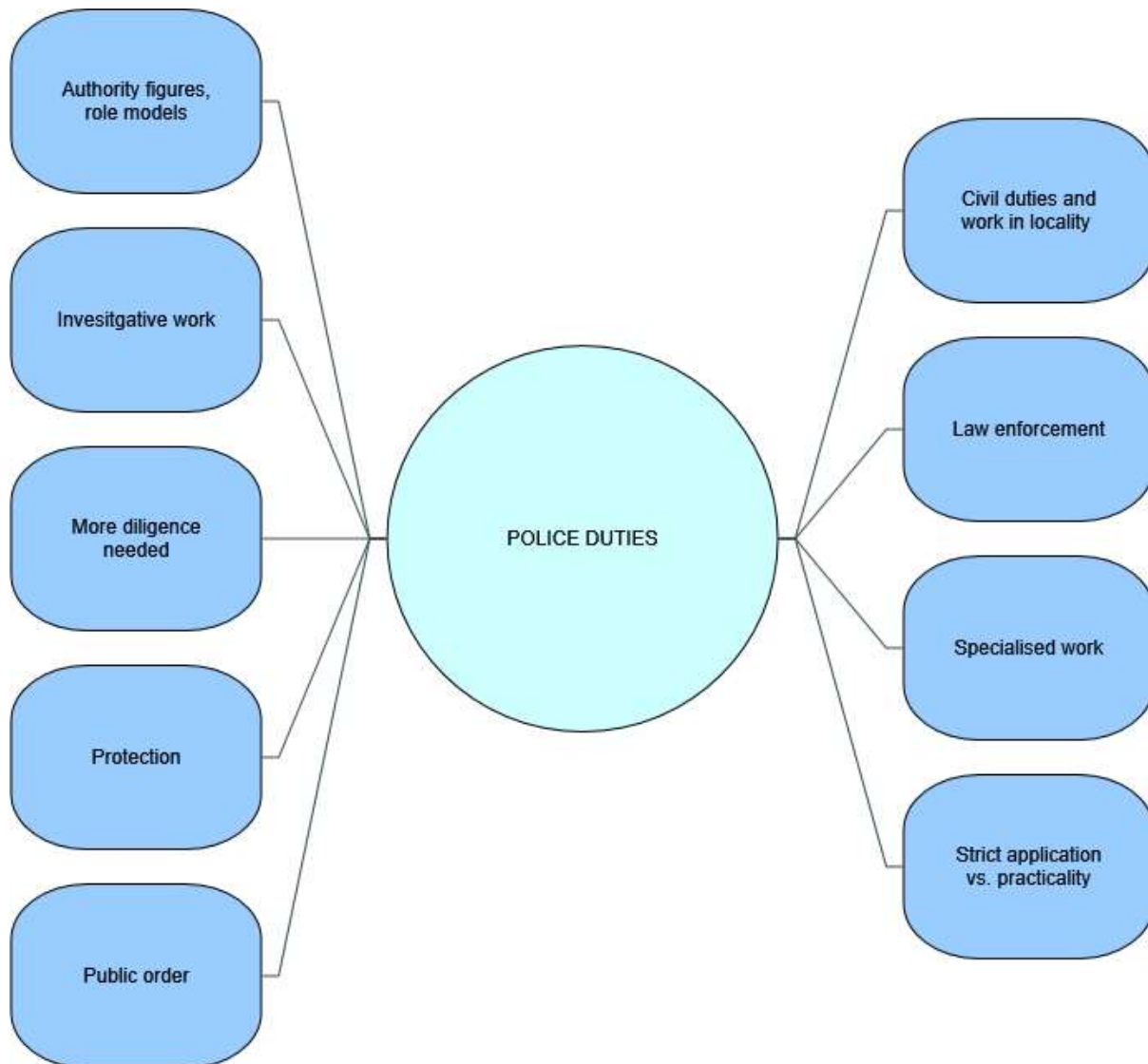
3.3.2 Beyond police duties

The prototypical officer was also someone for whom little *really* goes beyond the call of duty. This was either stated outright or else inferred by participants' hesitation to answer the related question. The idea here was that, just as nurses and doctors must always remain somewhat alert and 'on duty', so too should the police officer intervene whenever the need arises, as maintaining order is an endless job:

"I think – to the contrary – it's better if they increase the areas in which they are expected to help. I don't know what to tell you, because, there's nothing that's extra. It's their job."

(Male, 36, Żabbar, Secondary Education)

When contested, this representation was addressed in a multitude of manners. Some participants argued against the fulfilment of civil duties, such as helping old people. Others argued that non-police administrative work (e.g., office work) should be outsourced to non-police civilians:

"So, I understand that the police cannot manage to do everything. If they have a lot of paperwork to fill in, well, then that means less time in the streets for example."

(Female, 46, Sliema, Tertiary Education)

Other calls for outsourcing related to traffic policing (to other public entities), high-tech cybercrime (to specialists), minor tasks like littering (to other public entities), and some organised crime or physically taxing operations (to the army). Participants argued that this frees the police to deal with more serious issues and executive decisions within their remit. Outsourcing was always linked to other public entities, with the only exception of bank security where just one participant defended security privatisation. Moreover, other participants argued that whether the police lend a hand or not differs on a case-by-case basis. For instance, participants variably argued that the police should avoid exposure to disease/hazard; relegate violent incidents to the army; avoid punishing drug users; and not interfere in situations (e.g., family disputes requiring social workers) that are not their concern. Finally, a few participants stated that police job descriptions should be clear for fairness' sake, calling for a balance between job boundaries and exceeding the call of duty. The following figure illustrates the categories classified under the basic theme of 'Beyond Police Duties'.

Figure 4

Basic theme of 'Beyond Police Duties' and associated categories
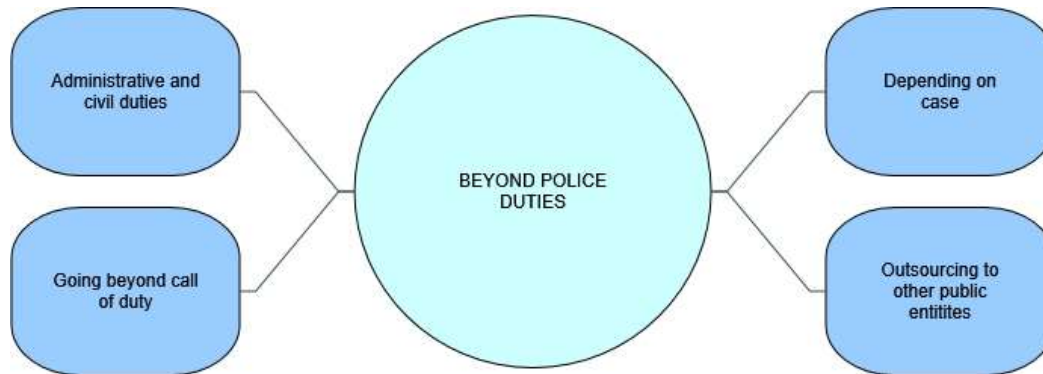
3.3.3 Prevention versus apprehension

Another consensual feature of the representation of policing highlighted the primacy of crime prevention over criminal apprehension (see Figure 5). Whilst recognising that prevention is very difficult – chiefly because it is difficult to know which crimes will be carried out, and because of people's upbringing/circumstances – participants argued that prevention is crucial and must be furthered mainly through education. Education was argued to be capable of preventing people from turning to crime, by teaching them (e.g., children in schools, people of all ages, people in disadvantaged environments, drug users, etc.) on minor things, and utilising the power of the uniform to cultivate a different mentality in people. Other prototypical ways of crime prevention included increasing police presence, studying crime patterns, integrating marginalised communities (e.g., immigrants, petty criminals, drug users, disenfranchised Maltese, etc.), and keeping an eye for criminal hotspots. An example concerning cybercrime warnings on television was provided as evidence for the power of education:

"Cybercrime, it's crime that happens, but I believe that through education, it should be, prevented. It's something that we can easily prevent. In fact, recently, I was viewing some adverts on a particular station where they get a police officer speaking, on how to prevent, these from happening."

(Male, 26, Kalkara, Tertiary Education)

In contrast, the precise scope for criminal apprehension was more contested. A sizeable number of participants argued that prevention and apprehension are intertwined and equally important, for instance, by stating that catching a criminal can *in itself* be a form of prevention as it deters future criminals. Others stated more categorically that there are huge limits to prevention, making apprehension the realistic route:

"the police are limited in terms of how much they can prevent. There are certain things, they're out of your control […] *So, rather, I believe that it's better for them to try to find who is doing – sort of – who is breaking the law and stuff."*

(Female, 20, Żejtun, Tertiary Education)

Participants argued that the police cannot be expected to be the watchdogs of society either, especially in cases (e.g., domestic violence, robberies, etc.) where prevention often fails. It is here worth noting that a few participants also positively represented police law enforcement during the Covid-19 pandemic; and favoured the use of force by police only as a last resort, for police self-defence using non-lethal weapons.

Figure 5

Basic theme of 'Prevention vs. Apprehension' and associated categories
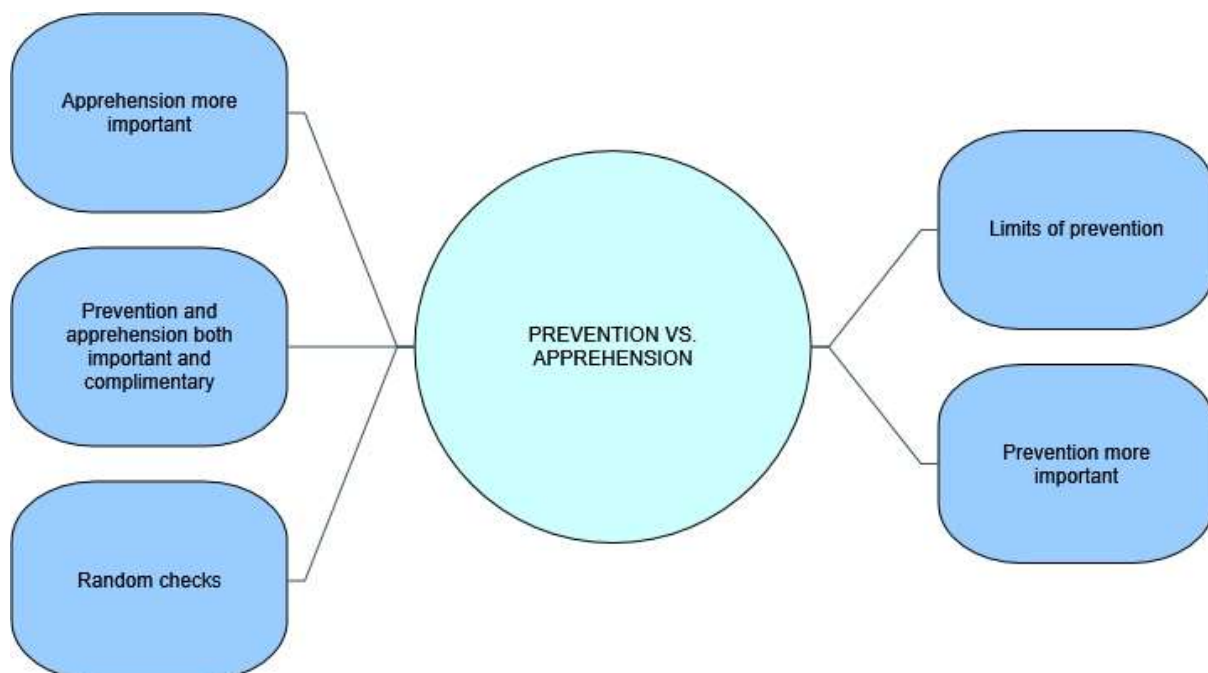
Random checks. Participants generally differed in their appraisal of instances where the police stop people (e.g., for searches). Participants against random checks argued that they give the police too much power, and warned against the abuse of power and the risk of profiling based on gender, race, and stereotypes. Those favouring random checks stated that only good can come out of them, even if police have no clear suspicion. They placed the emphasis on crime prevention, the apprehension of people with drugs or over-speeding, and the protection of the community/increased security. Another group of participants stated that random checks are only good if their goal is to educate people, and if the police have a respectful attitude (e.g., not power-tripping). In contrast, others posited reasonable suspicion as an indispensable criterion for checks, especially if conducted on pedestrians/in the streets. Their fear revolved around the possibility of a slippery slope in terms of invasive practices. Finally, participants represented random checks as being more useful for some things than others (e.g., drug busts, DUI cases, etc.), and that random checks by police should be truly random and follow ethical guidelines (e.g., not based on impressions, people's status, political power, etc.). The absolute majority of participants would obey the police if stopped by them, despite possible discomfort.

3.4 ORGANIZING THEME 2: PUBLIC PERCEPTION

A second organizing theme that emerged from the data concerns the public's perception of the police. This theme is characterized by individuals' personal positioning towards the police and is related to trust, image and attributed mentality, perceived effectiveness of police operations, and views concerning a career with the police (see Figure 6). The categorical dimensions grouped under each of these three basic themes may be found in Table D.2 in Appendix D.

Figure 6

Organizing theme of 'Public Perception' and its Basic themes
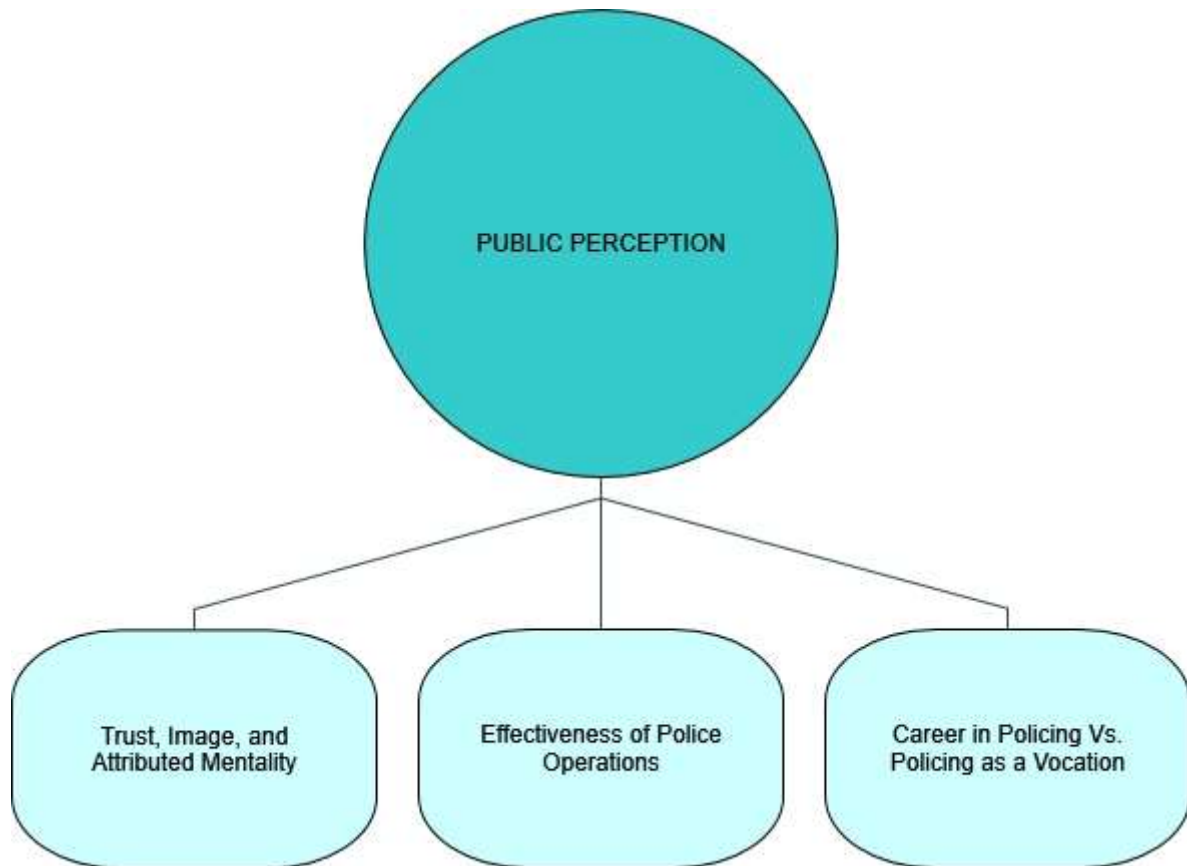
3.4.1 Trust, image, and attributed mentality

The general view of police mentality was mixed at best, and tending toward negative attributions. The prototypical officer was represented as having a macho mentality, and a work evader lacking people skills. This representation was usually accompanied by a caveat advising against generalisations, and was contested by a minority who viewed the police as nice people passionate about their work and vocation. In terms of police trust and image, the generally negative image of the police as prejudiced, as unreliable/untrustworthy, and as people who ignore/relegating certain cases (e.g., domestic violence cases) was counterbalanced by an appreciation of their hardships (e.g., the police as disrespected, under-resourced, underpaid, lacking protection, etc.) and a representation of the force as in need of improving their image/public communications. Participants also divergently represented policing as either a *vocation* requiring patience and commitment, or else a *career* requiring skilled execution and progression. The representation was contested in that some participants

did not view the negative image of police as fully merited. The following figure illustrates the two categories classified under this basic theme.

Figure 7

Basic theme of 'Trust, Image, and Attributed Mentality' and associated categories
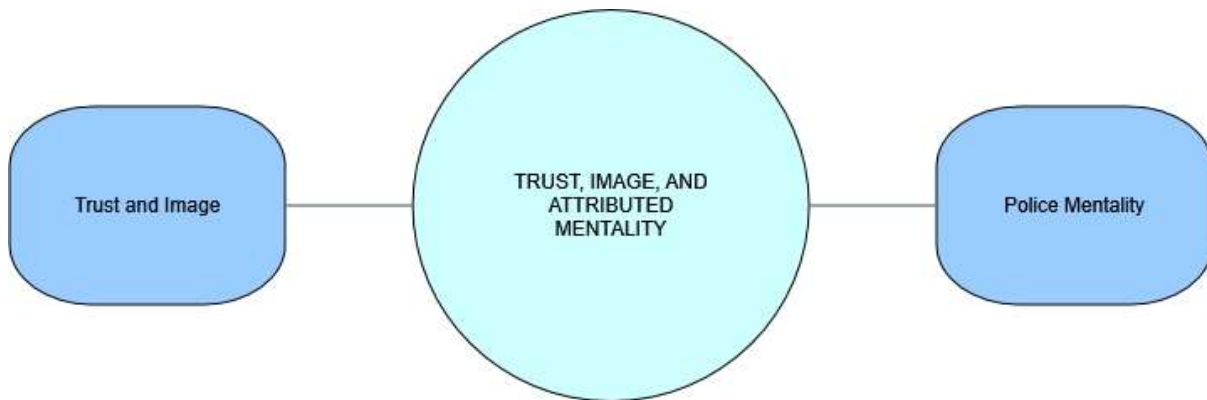
Trust and image. People's image of the police, and subsequently their trust in them, revolved around two facets: (a) a generally negative, but somewhat mixed, image of the police; together with (b) the recognition that improvement is necessary and can be done with better police-public relations.

The police officer was mostly seen – or posited as being seen – as someone not to be fully trusted, because he/she all too often fails to fulfil his/her duties. Attributions of racism and misogyny were relatively common, as were expressions of futility vis-à-vis crime reporting. The police were represented as doing the bare minimum, as requiring help to solve important crimes, and – simultaneously – as suffering from stressful understaffing. The police officer was imagined as someone who generally neglects cases of domestic violence, due to patriarchal notions, a lack of interest, or a desire not to interfere in domestic life. This negative image was either attributed to society's lax views of authority, or else blamed squarely on the police themselves:

"I'm sure that some do the best that they can with the resources they have, but personally I don't have a lot of trust in them and I don't really know anyone who has trust in them. […] When they have to investigate, I think they do the bare minimum"

(Female, 22, Fgura, Tertiary Education)

Interestingly, the more participants perceived policing as a career, the worse their image of the police was. In contrast, participants advancing a more charitable view of the police stated that policing is a vocation and that many police recognise/live it as such. Moreover, these participants praised the police in their work in catching drug traffickers and expressed respect and gratitude to the police:

"I have a lot of respect toward the police, as one of these jobs that offer a service to society always. I mean, I always see them as jobs that are important, and I do not think that they are paid enough."

(Male, 36, Rabat, Tertiary Education)

Whilst some participants stated that the image of the police depends on the issue in question (e.g., serious crimes vs. everyday disputes), others viewed the police as being unfairly treated by the people or the media, calling for more respect and stating that although high profile negative cases (e.g., concerning overtime abuse, high profile murders, etc.) tarnished the police's image, many do good work that is not represented by the media. Participants also called for better public definitions of what police duties are, for instance by differentiating them from public entities such as those in charge of transport or traffic. Communication strategies and educational efforts (for the public and officers) about policing were also proposed for targeting misconceptions and improving the force and its image.

Police mentality. Most participants had a negative, or at most a highly mixed, view of police mentality. Attributions of laziness, machismo, and of work evasion were fairly common, despite calls against generalisations. The officer was also represented as someone who will respect you if only you show them respect. In contrast, a minority represented the police as being motivated by a vocational drive to do what is right. These participants also tended to see lazy officers as exceptional cases.

This representation is compounded by the fact that, despite negative views, most participants de-categorised the police and gave individual officers the benefit of the doubt:

"Not everyone [is the same]*. Because sometimes, you encounter a police officer who's all right, and sometimes you meet a police officer and you're afraid of him, or else you say, 'I can do anything I want in front of this one, he won't tell me anything'."*

(Female, 25, Valletta, Tertiary Education)

Nonetheless, such views tended to be qualified with statements that negative examples are still more frequent than positive ones. Thus, whilst the police officer was seen as being potentially friendly and helpful, attributions of laziness, machismo, aggression, racism, sexism, and lack of initiative, were very common:

"I think they should take a more pro-active role. Not just wait for people to report certain things, but take more of a proactive role."

(Female, 22, Fgura, Tertiary Education)

3.4.2 Effectiveness of police operations

When asked about past experiences with the police, many claimed to have had experiences of contact with the police whereas very few did not recall any experience of direct contact with the police. These experiences were predominantly related to minor cases such as traffic incidents and violations as well as cases involving the disruption of public peace (e.g., loud music), whereas the consensual affective interaction during these experiences was mostly negative or mixed (see Figure 8 for illustration of categories classified under the basic theme of 'Effectiveness of Police Operations'). The lack of mannerisms of police officers towards people features as a common element of these bad experiences. This was contested by other recalled experiences characterised by instances of slow service and apathy by the police officers.

"The people's skills and approach, they [police] *were not really interested, you know? It was more of a bother."*

(Female, 47, Swieqi, Tertiary Education)

On the other hand, some participants also recalled mixed experiences and experiences in which they felt they received a good service and were treated respectfully. Regarding the latter, one participant recalled a case in which he sought help of the police after losing his wallet. Even though the police did not manage to locate the lost wallet, the participant was still left very satisfied with the service both in terms of the quality of interaction as well as in their professionalism. Conversely, regarding the former, an interesting point to note is the distinction that some participants made regarding their experiences in their professional work life as opposed to their personal life. Particularly, experiences emerging from one's professional work life appeared to be recalled more positively as opposed to those emerging from one's personal life. Participants sharing such experiences, a social worker and a mental health worker, expressed more satisfaction with the service received when requiring the police in their professional work life as they found them to be more approachable, polite, and dedicated. This contrasted with those instances experienced as a civil citizen where concerns were not treated seriously.

"I did not feel they took it [personal concern] *seriously. However, then when I went to the police as a working professional, they treated my colleague and I completely different."*

(Male, 22, Sliema, Tertiary Education)

Even though many participants recalled negative experiences, when asked about their views on whether they would seek the service of police in future instances, most expressed willingness to go to the police for help. Consequently, only a few expressed refusals to seek help from the police in potential future cases, citing the polices' superior attitudes and a general lack of privacy as reasons to avoid their services. A shared perception of the role of the police thus acknowledged the purpose of the police as an important first point of contact due to the belief that it is within the polices' responsibility to help.

"Yes, I think when you are in a crisis, it is inevitable. You will trust them because you have to."

(Female, 40, Mosta, Tertiary Education)

The reasons as to why someone would seek the police's help were relatively contested. On the one hand, the pragmatic view asserted that one would seek help because it is necessary for compensation (i.e., insurance purposes). On the other, the moral view asserted that one would seek help because it is the right thing to do, despite any issues of distrust and futility arising from negative past experiences.

"Because I have passed through those [bad] *experiences, my innate response would be that I would not be confident that they'll help. But then again, who can I go to?"*

(Male, 23, Mosta, Tertiary Education)

Other contestations to the argument of seeking help from the police included a case-by-case assessment based on a distinction between minor inconveniences such as environmental issues (vandalism, littering, etc.) and serious issues such as theft or lost children. Particularly some felt that calling on the police for help for minor inconveniences would be a waste of time both for themselves as well as the police. Indeed, they also expressed that such minor inconveniences could be handled with assistance elsewhere (e.g., family or friends), thus not necessarily making the police officers an initial point of contact.

"I try not to escalate things. I try to solve it on my own…first you try on your own, and then you seek help."

(Male, 52, Żejtun, Tertiary Education)

Figure 8

Basic theme of 'Effectiveness of Police Operations' and associated categories
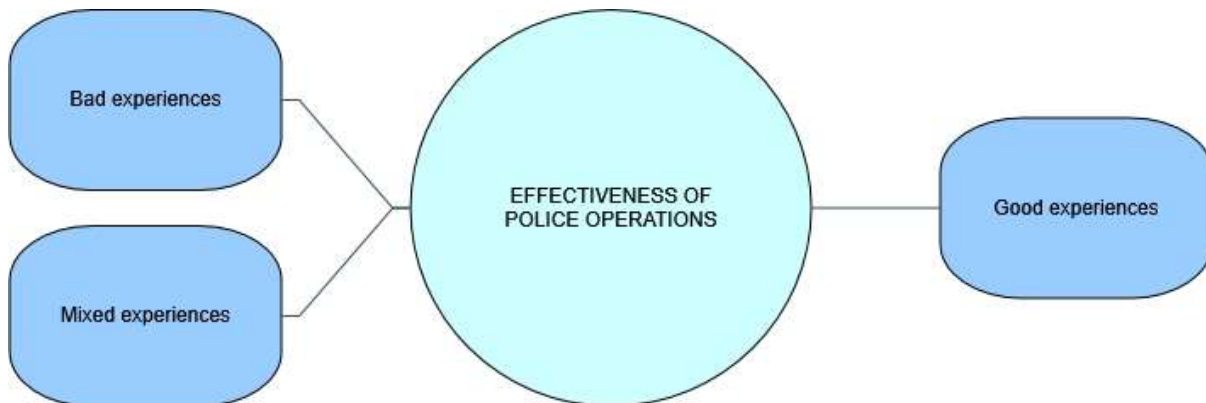
3.4.3 Career in policing vs. policing as a vocation

This theme outlines participants' consideration – or lack thereof – of a career with the police (see Figure 9). Generally, considerations related to policing as a possible career choice were scarce with only a few expressing interest in policing as a career. A variety of reasons emerged as to why the majority had never considered a career in policing, the most prominent of which was that policing was simply not their line of interest.

"In fact, I like all jobs where you are helping society, I respect them all…It is simply that the health sector interests me more, it was always more attractive."

(Male, 36, Rabat, Tertiary Education)

The consensual understanding of policing thus entailed the notion of policing as a vocation such that one must possess the will to consider such a career. Conversely, this was contested by arguments relating to policing as a career, drawing upon the dangerous elements of the job as well as the negative perception of internal regulation and lack of opportunities. For instance, some expressed concern regarding the lack of physical and legal protection that is offered to the police, whereas others opposed a career in policing due to the negative image associated with the police, the perceived lack of career progression, and internal politics. When asked about what would change their decision to consider a career in policing, a few participants cited that they would consider a career in policing if within a specific sector (e.g.,

criminology) or if it offered a good pay. Nonetheless, the consensual incentive appeared to be addressing internal regulations, increasing accountability, and increasing protection.

"I think honestly it has to be a miracle…but it would be that the job [policing] *is protected. Such jobs are always needed."*

(Female, 20, Żejtun, Tertiary Education)

Lastly, participants were asked about their reaction if one of their relatives were to join the police. A common underlying perception entailed the notion that this decision is entirely up to their relative and they are free to make their own choice as long as they are aware of the responsibility and image that may surround the job. Interestingly, even though most claimed to have not considered a career in policing, most were in favour of relatives joining the police. This ties with the commonly cited reason, noted in the aforementioned, that entailed the perception of policing as a vocation in which only those with interest consider it a career option.

"It is something good. In my case, I do not like it [career in policing]. *But for others it does not bother me."*

(Male, 36, Żabbar, Secondary Education)

Figure 9

Basic theme of 'Career in Policing vs. Policing as a Vocation' and associated categories
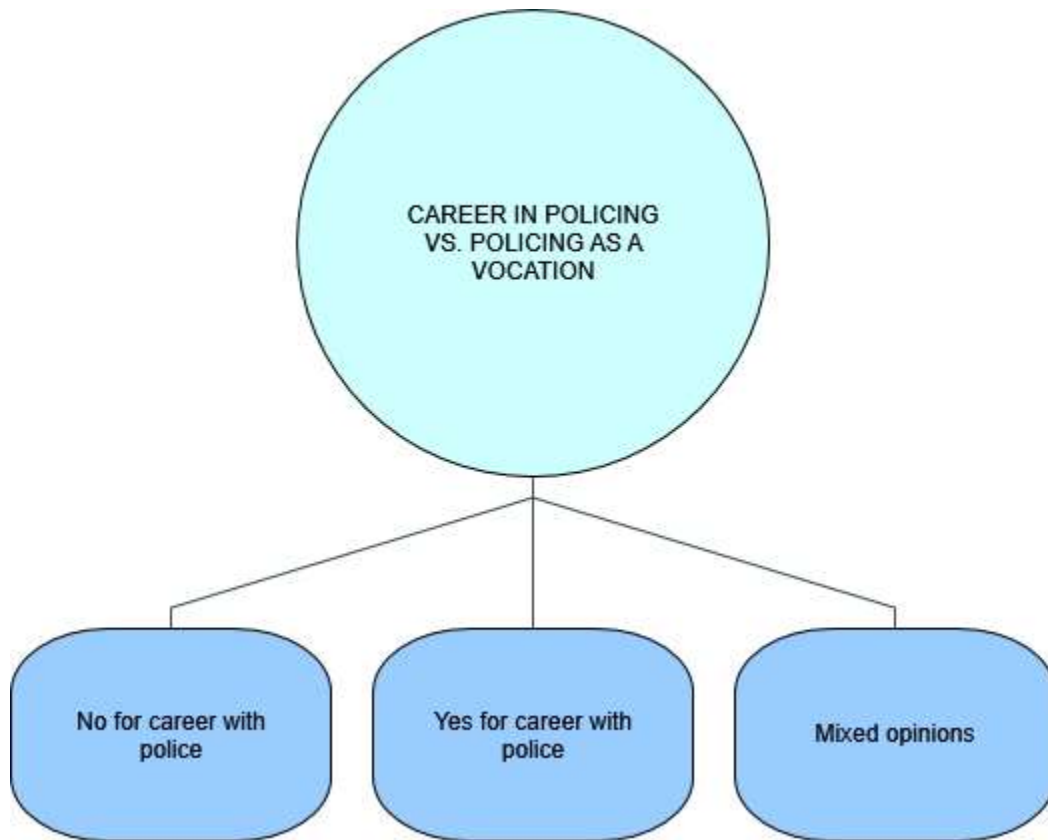
3.5 ORGANIZING THEME 3: IMPROVING THE FORCE

The organizing theme of 'Improving the Force' contained basic themes related to surveillance (technological and physical) and police presence, community policing, areas of investment, views on police stations, views on the use of social media as a communication tool, and lastly, suggestions concerning ways in which the public can help the police. (see Figure 10). The categorical dimensions grouped under each of these six basic themes may be found in Table D.3 in Appendix D.

Figure 10

Organizing theme of 'Improving the Force' and its Basic themes
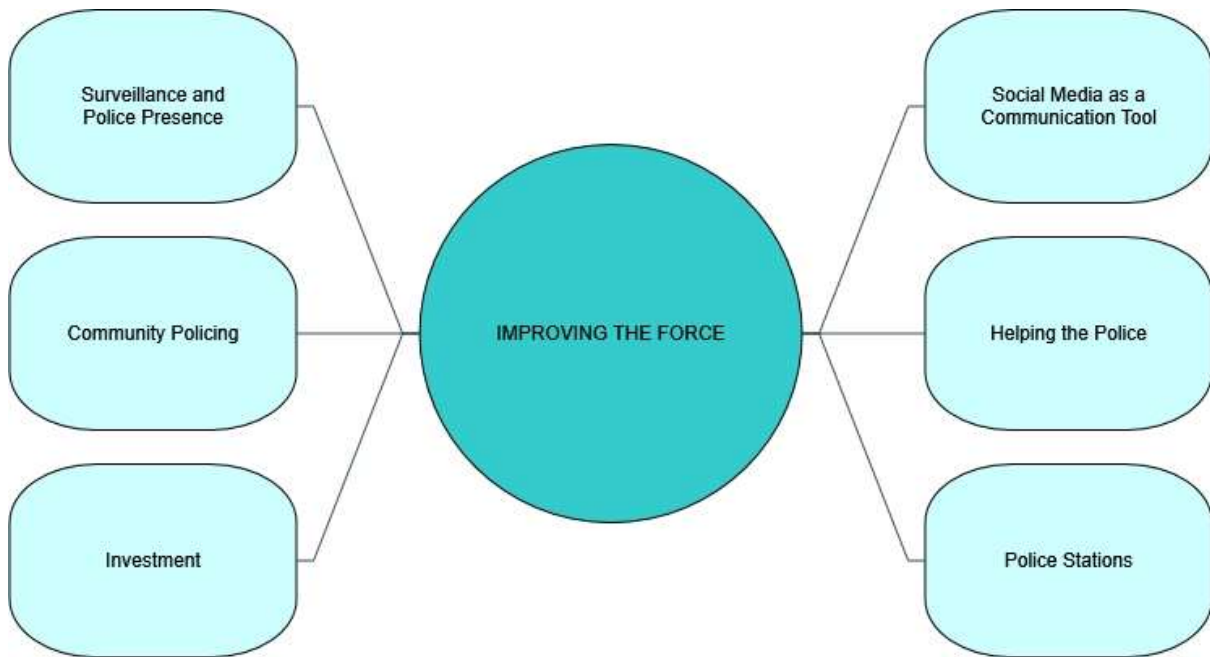
3.5.1 Surveillance and police presence

Many participants favoured the use of police body cams, both for their own protection and for the protection of civilians. However, CCTVs were viewed as a double-edged sword. Physical surveillance was generally preferred over technological surveillance, with participants generally favouring the physical presence of police. The representation was partly contested in that participants specified different uses of physical surveillance (e.g., different times, locations, extent of surveillance, etc.); and participants differed in their view of random stops by police. The following figure illustrates this basic theme in more detail.

Figure 11

Basic theme of 'Surveillance and Police Presence' and associated categories
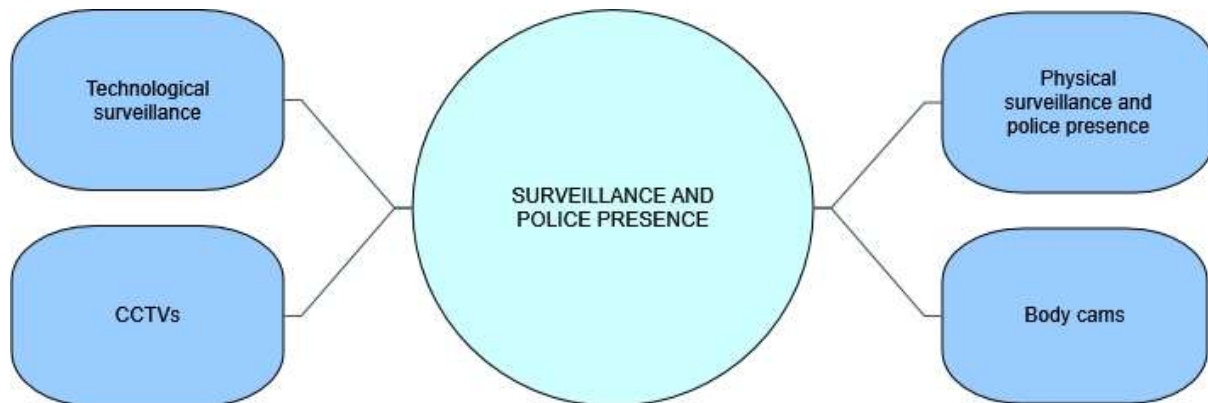
Technological surveillance. Concerning body cams more specifically, some participants contested their positive representation, arguing that body cams lead to data protection issues and a potential police state, favouring the targeted use of body cams (e.g., during specific incidents), arguing that the public should be informed about their use beforehand, and noting a need for a solid legal framework supporting their use as evidence in court. The positive case for body cams – the shared element of the representation – appealed to their potential in protecting the police (e.g., against false accusation) and people (e.g., against excessive police force), in increasing police accountability, as a crime deterrent, as an educational tool for the police themselves, and as a source of evidence:

"with that video, the police has proof that, I mean, clear proof of what he did and didn't do"

(Male, 36, Rabat, Tertiary Education)

In contrast, the representation of CCTVs was that of a double-edged sword, indicating contestation. On the one hand, CCTVs were positively represented as saving police work (e.g., traffic fines, etc.), an aid in catching criminals, less likely to capture individual identities (thus avoiding data protection issues), effective for crime hotspots (e.g., where pollution/bulk littering takes place), a source of solid evidence, and a means of prevention. On the other hand, CCTVs were negatively represented as effecting a slippery slope of further invasive surveillance, potentially fallible/too inflexible (e.g., wrong citations, wrong images in parking situations, etc.), problematic in terms of data protection (e.g., the view that

private cameras, producing a generalised sense of unease, body cams or speed cameras are better as they do not provide generalised surveillance), and highly susceptible to misuse (e.g., snooping by the police or politicians into people's personal lives). Moreover, participants highlighted their potential political repercussions (e.g., the police becoming an arm of government, future administrations being untrustworthy and exploitative, etc.). These various representations took the form of 'Yes, but…' or 'No, but…' arguments, indicating contestation and ambivalence. Such arguments specified locations where CCTVs would be more apt (e.g., urban areas, specific events, etc.), argued for a balance between criminal apprehension and privacy, or argued for stricter data protection frameworks:

"I mean, in reality, there are CCTV cameras everywhere, so, I think the police find them useful because they can use them to help them in their investigations […] It does not mean that this is a good thing, because you then have a lack of privacy."

(Female, 20, Rabat, Tertiary Education)

Physical surveillance and police presence. Physical surveillance was generally represented in positive terms, with participants being in favour of more physical presence by the police. Some participants also contested the need for more police presence. Similarly, a shared representation of random roadblocks as a sound means of prevention transpired. However, people had mixed views on random stops by the police. Although participants also stated they would obey the police if stopped in the streets, they differed in their views on random checks apart from roadblocks (e.g., random stops/checks in the streets). Here, the contestation revolved around whether reasonable suspicion is an indispensable requirement or not.

Firstly, whereas a few favoured the presence of police in stations 'ready for action' instead of in the streets, or else argued against heavy police presence due to feelings of threat/fear, a shared representation emerged which saw physical surveillance (e.g., foot/car patrols) as good, so long as the police know that they are there to help, and as long as their decisions are binding when they act against infractions (e.g., as opposed to people speaking to the right people and getting fines removed, etc.). Physical surveillance was justified on the basis of combatting criminality, especially violent crime, which participants perceived as increasing. Physical surveillance was also argued to bring about a more serious, organised environment (e.g., in front of banks). The police's physical presence was argued to prevent

crime by serving as a deterrent; to result in more criminal apprehension and a better police image; to facilitate relations – instead of remaining an inaccessible authority figure – with people, who would be able to reach the police quicker; and to facilitate/hasten the provision of help to the victims (e.g., in theft cases). Generalised feelings of security among people, and the possibility of disciplining people more on minor things (e.g., littering, pavements being blocked, etc.) were equally held as advantages:

"For example, if there are construction trucks being driven uncovered – we see them a lot in the streets, they wouldn't have tents or something similar. If the laws are enforced more, if there are more police in the streets, these things – and if there are fines, because that's important for us Maltese – these things will decrease."

(Female, 59, Marsaxlokk, Tertiary Education)

Participants observed that foot patrols are more possible/relevant in some locations than in others (e.g., in smaller locations, in locations with less traffic, etc.). They also observed that older people prefer foot patrols as they make them feel safe. Others argued that police in the street would be more useful if they were linked to particular activities (e.g., hunting, or markets) instead of just roaming around. Finally, places where clubbing takes place (e.g., Paceville), events like feasts, open areas, and specific times of the day (e.g., night) were argued to benefit more from physical surveillance.

Comparing modes of surveillance. Participants also compared physical and technological surveillance, arguing for the former over the latter, or else for a complementary view of both whereby the police use technology as a tool, as part of their work. The prototypical officer is thus *physically present* and only uses technological surveillance as an *ancillary means* of policing. The police's use of CCTV was deemed better than physical surveillance when it comes to traffic infractions, 24/7 surveillance, and a decrease in human error/corruption. However, the police's physical presence was more valued, as a preventative measure (e.g., because people ignore CCTVs), a faster way to apprehend criminals, and an aid to public feelings of security. Moreover, physical surveillance was perceived as allowing for calibrated police responses (e.g., flexibility with bad parkers), whereas CCTVs do not.

The police were seen as being most effective when they combined both modes of surveillance. Thus, physical surveillance was favoured for prevention, and CCTVs for

apprehension – or vice versa as a minority view. Physical surveillance was seen as reassuring, and CCTVs as facilitating the accumulation of evidence/police investigations. The mobility of physical surveillance was argued to balance the use of CCTVs in criminal hotspots (e.g., urban hotspots). One participant summed it up:

"Because then you'd have – both of them, they balance each other. What the police do not see, the CCTV will, but at the same time, people will see the police, and so, if there's a criminal, they won't commit crime."

(Female, 25, Valletta, Tertiary Education)

3.5.2 Community policing

This theme outlines views related to community policing (see Figure 12). Generally, there was a lack of prior knowledge on the community policing initiative in Mellieħa such that in some cases it was misunderstood as neighbourhood watch or roughly defined as police being localised in certain police stations. Despite this, the consensual understanding of community policing regarded the initiative positively albeit with warnings of caution. On the one hand there was a consensual understanding that community policing is beneficial because it allows an opportunity for police to develop relations and acquaint with people. On the other hand, there was opposition due to the risk arising from overly familiar relations.

Figure 12

Basic theme of 'Community Policing' and associated categories
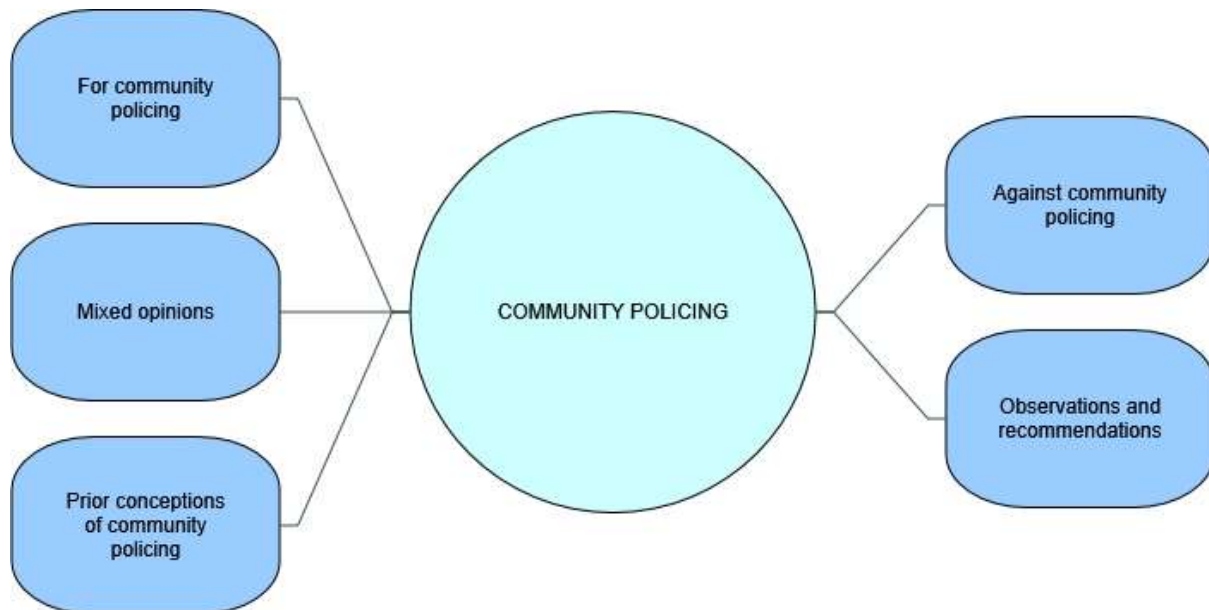
Arguments in favour. The favourable view of community police was relatively consensual, entailing the belief that community policing is a worthy initiative to invest in due to the benefits including the feelings of reassurance amongst citizens that community policing may provide, as well as the opportunity to improve the relationship between people and the police. Indeed, the rationale to these benefits appeared to emerge out of the consensual belief that by integrating police in the community and building a more reliable and familiar relationship, community police could bring about an increased sense of safety and trust in the police. Additionally, it allows one to establish a point of contact with a reliable authority figure in cases of need and reduces the chances of having issues overlooked due to bureaucracy (see Figure 13):

"This [community policing] *creates a dialogue with the community. They* [police] *are accessible to the citizen, and this is good for the police so they are approached like friends who can help out in the community."*

(Male, 36, Valletta, Tertiary Education)

Figure 13

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Police Duties' and the Basic theme of 'Community Policing'
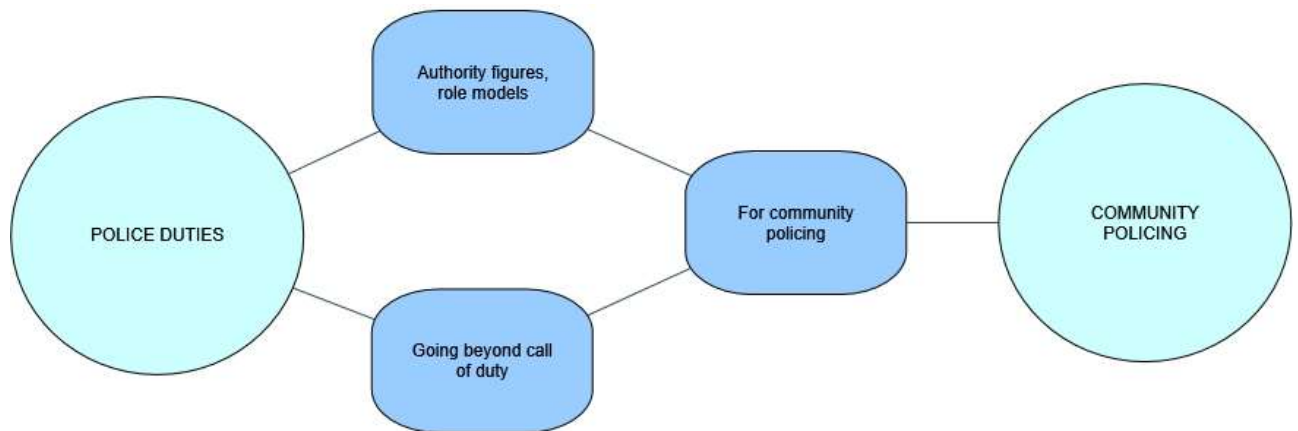
Contrastingly, while civil duties were largely considered to be beyond the police's responsibility (see Organizing Theme 1), the shared understanding of community policing suggests otherwise. Particularly, most welcomed the idea of having the police dedicating more time to civil duties despite believing that it may involve (civil) duties beyond their role (see Figure 13).

The reasons underlying the benefits of community policing were somewhat contested. For instance, some reasons centred around the active role of the police as a means to increase prevention and decrease criminality. Indeed, these were primarily based on the shared understanding of community policing as an opportunity to increase the police presence. Other reasons emerged out of the perception that community policing would benefit those individuals falling victim to domestic abuse and related crimes, addiction, as well as those issues that touch upon mental health.

"They [police] *can spot differences in other people as well, for example a person has a mental health issue…. they can see their changes; they can prevent a suicide attempt"*

(Female, 24, Żabbar, Tertiary Education)

A shared understanding of community policing also entailed the idea that community policing allows the police to gain a better understanding of the citizens who form part of the community. Conversely, another shared perception entailed the view of community policing as an opportunity for police to improve their image.

Arguments against. In relation to arguments against community policing, the consensual view entailed the concern regarding the nature of the relationship between the police and the people. Particularly, this appeared to be driven by the fear that if ties between the police and the people are too close, this may lead to issues of corruption where both police and people may fall susceptible to taking advantage of the professional relationship.

"So "good morning" they'll start, then it continues with a pat on the back, and then it escalates to money given in an envelope on the table"

(Male, 35, Swieqi, Post-Secondary Education)

For instance, in line with this general fear of corrupt relations, one participant expressed approval towards an increased physical presence of police but not if it entails community policing. The same participant also recommended rotating officers assigned to a particular locality in order to avoid corrupt relations. As illustrated in Figure 14, these concerns outline an element of mistrust towards the police in their ability to maintain a professional working relationship.

"To be honest with you, I think there are more cons than pros. Cons by creating relations will, will create corruption…it's better to rotate your officers here and there to keep things clean."

(Male, 35, Swieqi, Post-Secondary Education)

Figure 14

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Trust, Image, and Attributed Mentality' and the Basic theme of 'Community Policing'
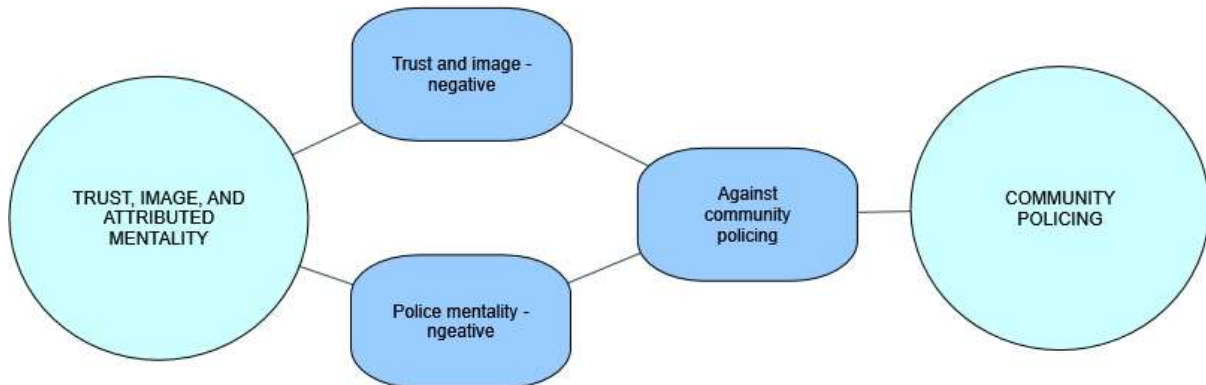
A notable contestation against community policing included the perception that police duties should not entail taking on a social role. For instance, one participant felt that through community policing, the police would lose people's respect and could become prone to being treated as a friend rather than as an authority figure.

"The police officer is a person of authority and not a person who gets to know you, monitors what time you get in and out of the house, and gets to know who your friends are. These things are not the polices' duty."

(Male, 29, Rabat, Tertiary Education)

Figure 15

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Beyond Police Duties' and the Basic theme of 'Community Policing'
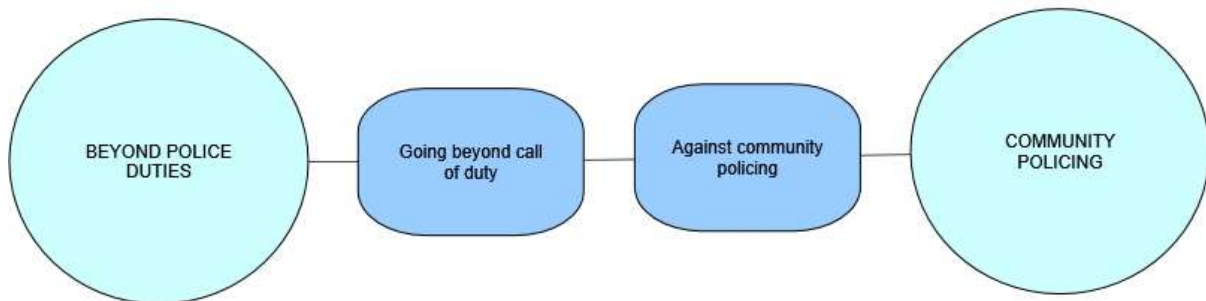
The notion of community policing was also contested by those expressing that community policing would only be worth investing in if there are enough police to allocate to the role and if there is a structured system set in place that does not reduce the accessibility of police elsewhere (e.g., in stations, RIU, etc.). Other contestations also included those based on the perception that some areas (e.g., popular with tourists or those experiencing higher crime rates) may reap more benefits than others.

"For me personally it [community policing] *does not make a difference, but I understand that it might make a difference for those people living in different places. We all hear that crime rate is higher in places with a lot of people, for instance Paceville, or in places financially worse off."*

(Female, 21, Swieqi, Tertiary Eduation)

Further contested views on community policing also included the need to be cautious with regards to which police are recruited for this role and the need to manage the workload to reduce the burden. On the one hand, regarding the latter, one participant recommended electing citizens of the locality to assist the community police in their civic duties. On the other hand, regarding the former, one participant noted that the community policing initiative

would only work if police put effort into projecting a professional and caring image, most important placing more focus on refining their people skills.

"There needs to be the image and professionality. Once there is that, there will be more direct contacts with the residents. As long as that is there, it [community policing] *will work out."*

(Male, 55, Żejtun, Tertiary Education)

3.5.3 Investment

Various areas were identified for investment, the most common of which included sectors related to human resources and material resources (see Figure 16). A shared understanding towards investment of human resources entailed the emphasis on the need for better human resource management where the underlying argument appeared to be that police should invest in allocating their duties better amongst themselves to avoid wastage of human resources. In particular, this emerged out of the general belief that there is an inefficient allocation of police duties. For instance, one participant believed that it is unnecessary to have police wasting their time on duty in banks when they can be out and about assisting people in a locality. Similarly, another participant believed that police should not carry out administrative duties in police stations as they could be doing more valuable work in the community. Lastly, another participant felt that having many police on duty during peaceful public protests is a waste of resources as the extra number of police could be fulfilling their duties elsewhere (e.g., cybercrime, in hotspots, doing the rounds in locality).

"There needs to be proper, modern, management of the force so that they are performing tasks which are worthwhile and there is no wasting of resources – doubling up."

(Male, 46, Sliema, Tertiary Education)

Figure 16

The Basic theme of 'Investment' and associated categories
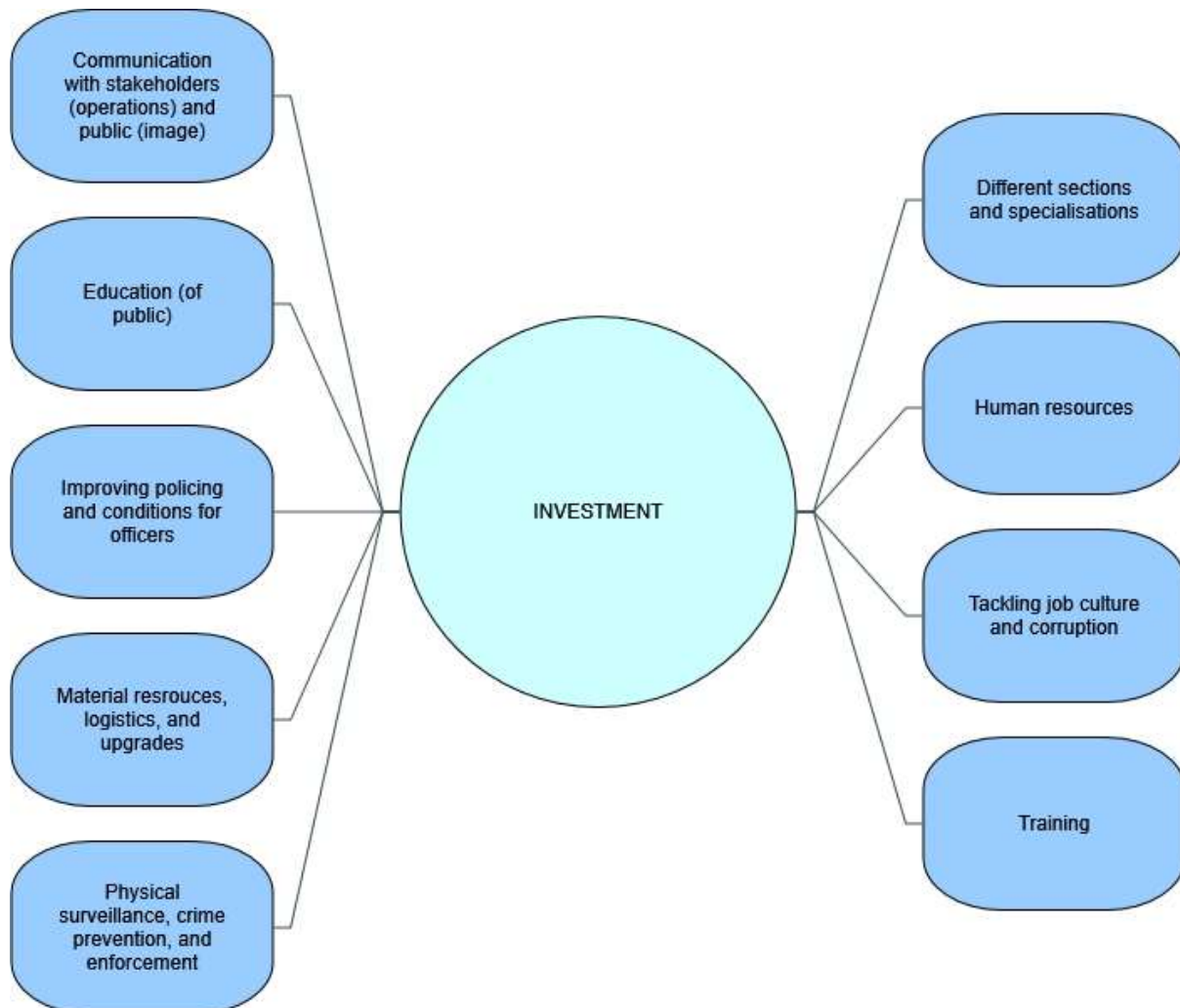
A further shared aspect of the belief in better human resource management included the need to recruit more police officers. Some participants believe that police are heavily understaffed and do not carry out their duties well because of understaffing, thus, increasing the number of police can help alleviate this problem whilst also allowing an opportunity for better law enforcement. In line with this were those who contested reasons in relation to investing in better recruitment. For instance, one participant emphasized the importance to educate young children to consider a career in police. Another participant recommended that the police force administration should be lenient on trivial requirements, such as excessive tattooing. Nevertheless, as opposed to this recommendation, the majority felt that requirements should be made stricter, tougher, and less forgiving. This was believed to be especially the case

in relation to educational requirements which were largely perceived to be lacking in a variety of domains (i.e., social skills, language, theoretical knowledge, law).

"There is this idea that if you do not want to continue your education, you go become a member of the police or the army. I want that mentality to stop. Make it harder to become a police officer, it is not just about physical fitness and being able to run a couple of miles."

(Male, 23, Mosta, Tertiary Education)

For instance, with regards to basic skills, some participants recalled experiences where they encountered police who did not have a good command of the Maltese language, English language, or basic computer skills. With regards to soft skills education, some participants expressed concern that some police do not know what they are getting themselves into. For this reason, they believe that police should invest in prioritizing the importance of soft skills that allow them to get along well with the people. A shared understanding of polices' social skills thus entailed the belief that police lack general mannerisms as to how to communicate and get along with people. Other training-related recommendations included the need to undergo physical training and to be healthy in order to ensure that they can carry out their duties well. As noted in Figure 17, this suggests that some feel that the police mentality as to how to handle people and issues and the police's physical image need to be addressed and rectified.

"He [police] *should first try and speak to you politely and not raise his voice and give you a bad look…Although it might be your fault, you do not want anyone to speak to you like that. It's the attitude, and there are a lot who have that attitude."*

(Male, 36, Żabbar, Secondary Education)

Figure 17

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Trust, Image, and Attributed Mentality' and the Basic theme of 'Investment'
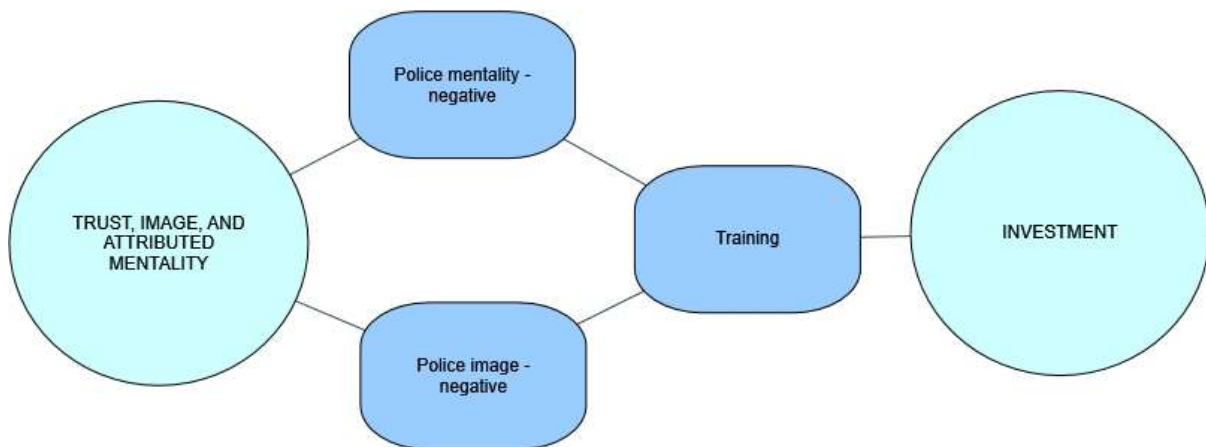
Other areas of investment contested by participants included those highlighting the importance of training police to handle certain scenarios, namely, white-collar crimes and cybercrime. This appeared to emerge from the general belief that there should be more specialised units such as community policing, domestic violence, and national and international organised crime (see Figure 18).

"I believe that police are very important for society, however, they should be prepared to carry out their own duty – there needs to be specialization….A police officer shouldn't have to do everything, there needs to be specialization."

(Male, 55, Żejtun, Tertiary Education)

Figure 18

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Police Duties' and the Basic theme of 'Investment'
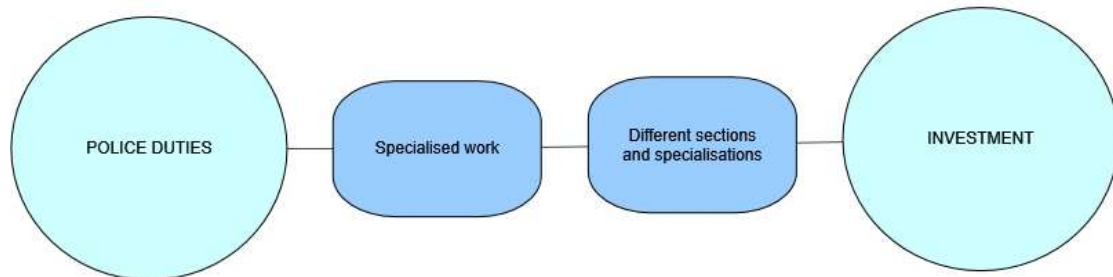
Comparable to the increase in the number of specialised units, some felt that it is important to invest in physical surveillance, crime prevention, and enforcement. For instance, some participants suggested that it would be worthwhile if the police were to establish a form of online reporting to facilitate reporting of certain crimes (e.g., domestic violence). Other participants stressed the importance of physical surveillance in order to deter crime, having more police on the beat interacting amongst people, as well as stronger law enforcement. In sum, these themes suggest that certain police duties (i.e., civil duties, surveillance, enforcement) are held in higher regard and therefore should be more important avenues to invest in (see Figure 19).

[On what the police should invest in] *"If it were up to me it would be patrolling…that they see that the law is abided to is the most important thing. That is what teaches people."*

(Female, 59, Marsaxlokk, Tertiary Education)

Figure 19

The relationships between the Basic themes of 'Police Duties' and 'Surveillance and Police Presence' with the Basic theme of 'Investment'
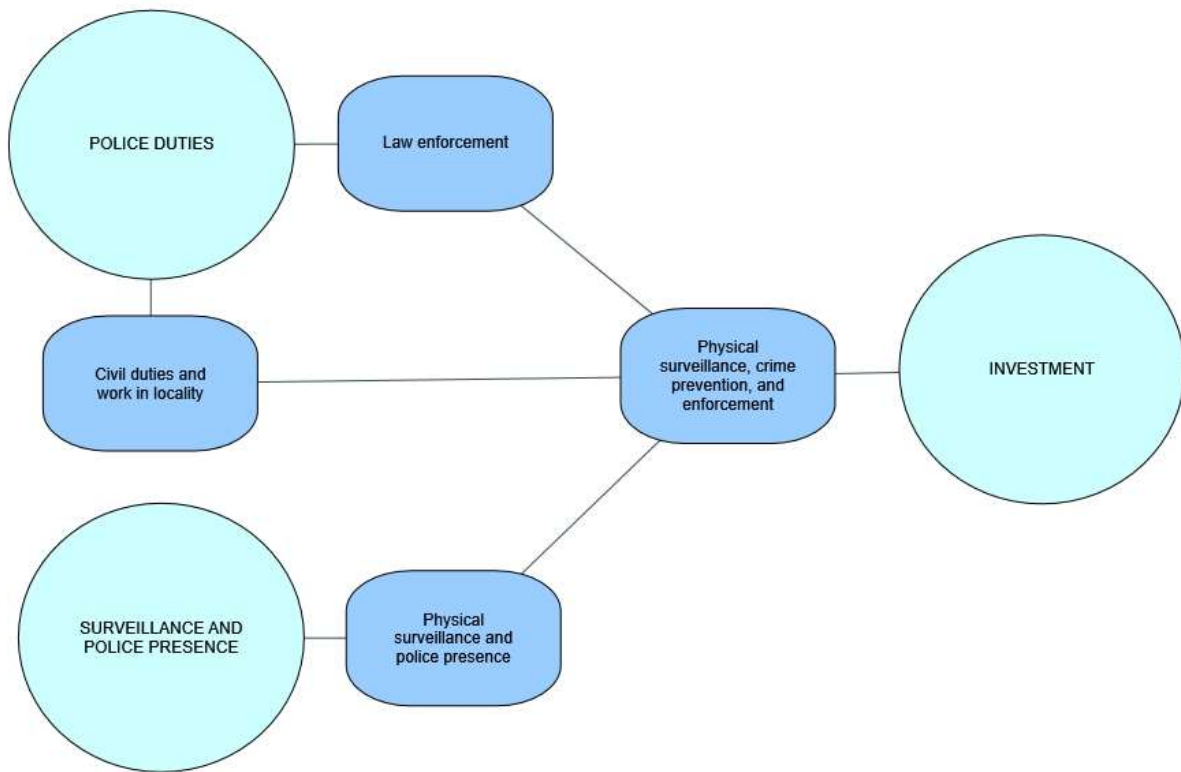
As a recommendation to aid in crime prevention some participants identified the importance of educating the public. In particular, this was based on the shared value of educating people from a young age, preventing one from turning to a life of crime. Other contested reasons in relation to education included those that entailed helping the police. Some felt that education may be instrumental in reducing the burden on police work by informing people on what constitutes a crime and what does not; and to increase respect towards the police.

Another significant category related to investment included the importance of material resources. This was particularly based on the shared belief that an increase in material resources could allow the police to carry out their duties well. The type of material resources cited included better uniforms equipped for the hot summer months, the use of body cams, more modes of transports for quicker response (e.g., cars, motorbikes, Segways, horses,

scooters), and lastly more CCTV cameras in crime hotspots or busy areas. Some also expressed that, whilst it is understandable that the police would want to give a good impression, the purpose of investing in such resources should be to ensure that they fulfil their role.

"Give them [police] *everything they need to carry out their work…I believe that there is no limit on resources, the more you give them, the more happy people will be at work and the better able they are to do their work."*

(Male, 36, Rabat, Tertiary Education)

In addition to better working conditions was the belief that police should be given better salaries, better working conditions, more opportunities for career progression, and physical and legal protection. For instance, with regards to better working condition, suggestions included the need to upgrade the state of police stations. Whereas with regards to better physical protection, the shared understanding entailed the belief that police should be provided with better protective equipment such as bulletproof vests and non-lethal weapons, to ensure that they are able to defend themselves against dangerous others.

"We all heard of police who ended up with a broken hand or a bloody nose…The police is the person that is supposed to protect you, your locality, and your country… It is important that they [police] *are armoured and protected so they do not end up as victims of violence."*

(Male, 25, Valletta, Tertiary Education)

Another recommendation for investment related to police working conditions included the need to address job culture and corruption. A few felt that police should remove double standards and put effort into treating everyone equally. For instance, one participant recalled an experience where they were dissatisfied with the police because they exhibited preferential treatment towards higher figures. As a recommendation to combat the police's double standards one participant emphasized the need for police autonomy, such that they are

able to police big businesses and politicians without fear of repercussions. Conversely, another participant recommended stricter internal regulations and a whistle-blower programme in order to combat corruption and ensure equal treatment.

"They [police] *should treat all people equally. Everyone is the same, there are no grades. If you did wrong, you did wrong…They need to be stricter with equal punishment."*

(Female, 25, Valletta, Tertiary Education)

A final consensual area of investment that emerged from the analysis included suggestions to invest in improving communication with stakeholders and the public. With regards to improving communication with stakeholders, this was based on the perception that the police need to put more effort in establishing a relationship with other professionals (e.g., those working in mental health, NGOs, local councils). Indeed, a consensual reason for this included the notion that improving this professional relationship could help both the police and other professionals to carry out their work better.

"They should be more informed…for instance mental health is becoming very common now…And even from our end we should involve the police more so we both grow in our work."

(Female, 38, Rabat, Tertiary Education)

With regards to communication with the public, several emphasized the importance for the police to improve police-public relations. This shared perspective largely entailed the belief that the police should focus more on portraying a better image of themselves. For instance, one participant felt that the police look sloppy and because of that people do not believe that they can carry out their duties well. Another participant recalled an experience where they were left feeling dissatisfied with the service of the police due to the way they behaved. As illustrated in Figure 20, this suggests that the image given to the police is deemed an important area to invest in due to prevalent negative perceptions.

"These things should be emphasized because if you're an authority figure you must present yourself in a certain way and not like a sack of potatoes…you need to show that you are a figure of respect."

(Female, 59, Marsaxlokk, Tertiary Education)

Figure 20

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Trust, Image, and Attributed Mentality', and 'Investment'
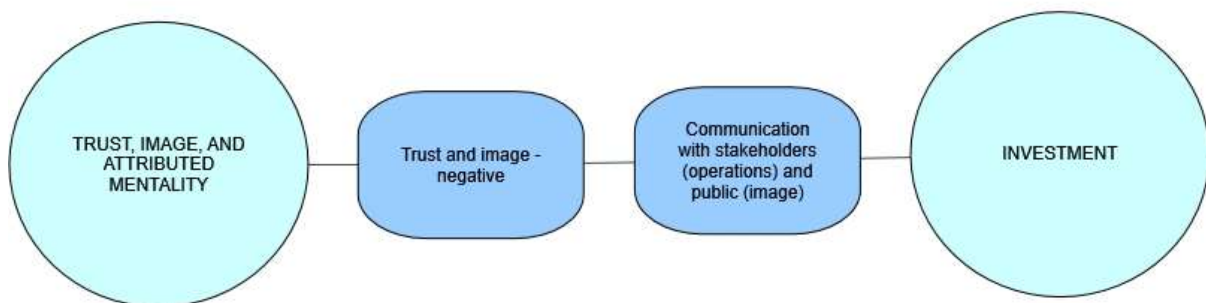
3.5.4 Police stations

As showing in Figure 21, the reasons related to whether there should be more police in stations were relatively contested. Arguments in favour largely centred around the perception that there are not enough police in stations. Particularly, this appeared to be based on recollection of experiences where citizens claimed to have not been served well by the police, such as no one available to answer calls or no police available to leave the station and go on site where help is needed. Some also felt that rather than increasing the number of police in stations, effort should be made to keep stations open in every locality. For instance, various participants pointed out that certain police stations (e.g., Gudja, Ħal Għaxaq, Swieqi, Marsaxlokk, Bormla, Żebbuġ) are hardly ever open such that citizens residing in these localities must seek assistance from police elsewhere. This inconvenience was perceived to be especially concerning for vulnerable individuals or those who do not have their own means of transport.

"If you find yourself in an unpleasant situation, it would be easier to go to the police station
in your own locality…. You have to understand that people might not have their own means
of transport."

(Male, 23, Mosta, Tertiary Education)

Figure 21

Basic theme of 'Police Stations' and associated categories
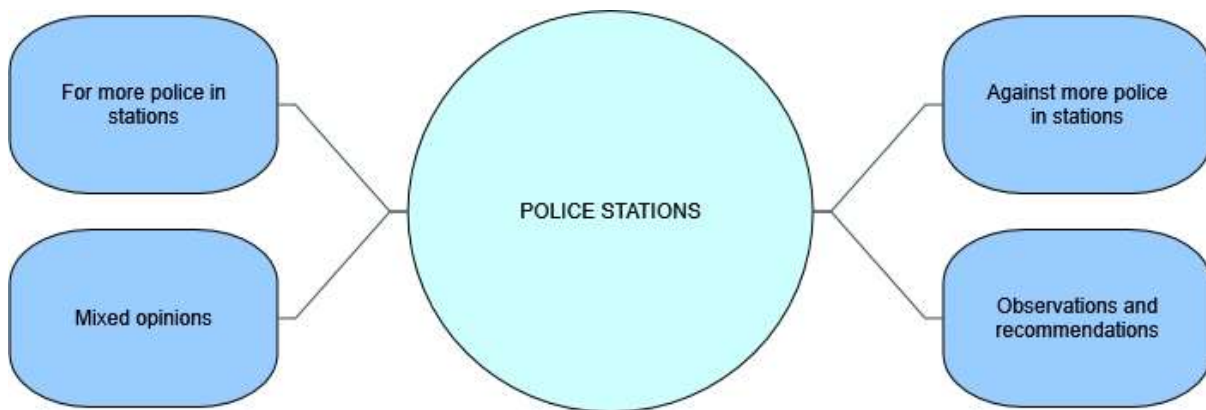
Nonetheless, others felt it was more important to increase the number of police in stations in larger localities frequented by many people (e.g., Sliema, St Julians, Valletta, Birkirkara) as opposed to localities inhabited by a smaller population (e.g., Ħal Kirkop, Kalkara). Additionally, some also expressed the need to increase the presence of police in stations in those localities where the crime rate is higher or those that tend to be inhabited by people of a lower socio-economic background.

"I believe it must be in proportion to the number of incidents that happen or according to the
number of the population. I don't imagine that the police station of Ħal Kirkop should have
the same amount of police as found in stations in San Ġiljan and Birkirkara."

(Female, 44, Valletta, Post-Secondary Education)

Other contestations entailed the belief that it is more important to first address the work culture in police stations prior to increasing the number of police in stations. For

instance, one participant recalled an experience where they entered a police station only to find police officers wasting their time. Another participant recalled an experience where they received rude treatment from police officers at the station.

"It is disgraceful! Many times I am discussing this with other people and they tell me that they enter the police station....one of them [police] *is asleep and the other is on their phone not knowing what is happening."*

(Male, 25, Valletta, Tertiary Education)

In contrast, there were those expressing preference for police on the streets rather than in stations. The shared understanding entailed the belief that this may provide better opportunities for the police to be more accessible and for the people to feel safer. Nevertheless, some participants argued in favour of police in stations over police on the beat. They claimed that there are enough police in stations and one should focus on ensuring that they carry out their duty. For instance, one participant stated that police should not be increased in stations but should increase overall by number as there are too little recruits. Another participant expressed that police in stations are only wasting time and therefore resources should be used elsewhere. As shown in Figure 22, this suggests that police on the beat may be preferred over police in stations due to the perception that police in stations waste time carrying out administrative duties.

[On having police in stations] *"It depends, I think it's more important to have organisation and that the police carry out their duties....You go into a police station for example and you find the police eating, playing, and talking, and you're just there waiting."*

(Male, 55, Żejtun, Tertiary Education)

Figure 22

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Beyond Police Duties' and the Basic theme of 'Police Stations'
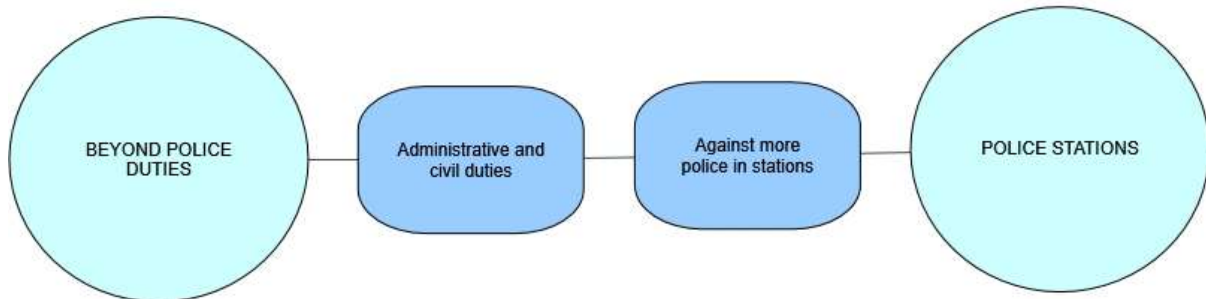
3.5.5 Social media as a communication tool

This theme largely involves views related to social media use by people and police (see Figure 23). When asked about social media use by people, opinions were grouped under four sub-themes: arguments against social media use by people, arguments in favour of social media use by people, mixed views, and observations and recommendations. Conversely, when asked about social media use by police, opinions were grouped under three sub-themes: arguments in favour of social media use by police, mixed views, and observations and recommendations. The main difference between opinions relating to social media use by people and those to social media use by police, is that the latter did not involve any arguments against the idea. Therefore, this demonstrates a unanimous positive perception of social media use by police, but not quite so in relation to social media use by people.

Figure 23

Basic theme of 'Social Media as a Communication Tool' and associated categories
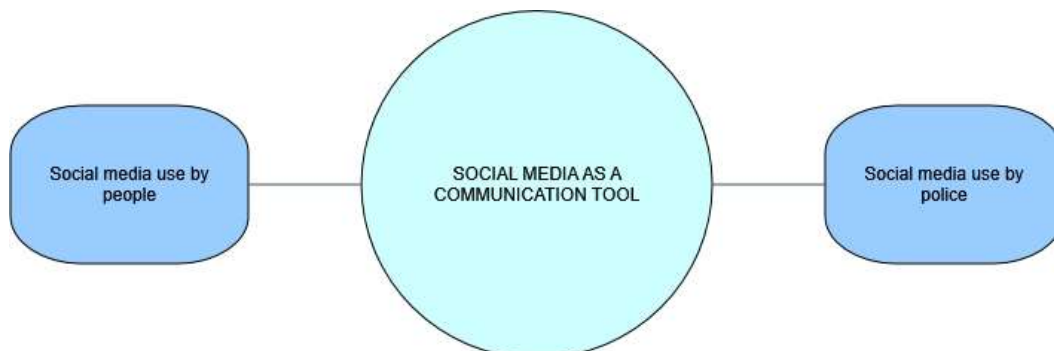
Freedom of speech vs. control. A predominant consensual understanding of social media use by police and people entailed the dichotomy between a monitored and controlled platform versus an open forum allowing unfiltered communication. Regarding the former, the shared perception was largely positive, entailing the belief that if social media content is monitored it may prove to be beneficial because it increases opportunities for communication between the people and police. Conversely, regarding the latter, the shared perception was largely negative, entailing the belief that non-monitored use of social media can lead to various issues. This primarily appeared to emerge out of a shared concern that individuals may abuse of social media by making fake claims and scapegoating. For instance, some felt that content derived from social media is not a reliable primary source of information. Others highlighted the importance that people should be careful what they post online due to data protection issues, censorship, and hate speech laws.

"I feel that if you think there is something wrong, you should directly take it up with the police and not post on social media in order to inform the police…. It doesn't make sense."

(Male, 41, Mosta, Secondary Education)

Particularly, with reference to social media use by police, the shared belief entailed the notion that social media use by police can provide an opportunity for fast and effective communication. The reasons for these benefits, however, were relatively contested. For instance, some stated that social media could be used by police in order to educate the public whereas others felt that social media could also be used by the police to deter people from crime.

"If someone is thinking about involving themselves in something criminal, if they see these messages or posts [from police], it might make them think twice about doing it."

(Male, 25, Valletta, Tertiary Education)

Another consensual understanding of social media use by police entailed the belief that the police can help boost their own image and foster trust from the public. The ways in which the police can do this were also contested. Some argued that the police can use social media to show the public that they are dedicated in carrying out their duties well. Others claimed that social media could be used to keep people updated on various issues (e.g., road closures, accidents, drug raids, etc.). Overall, this demonstrates that the use of social media is perceived to be instrumental and that the police can make use of it in helping change the public's perception of them (see Figure 24).

"It's a good thing because you know that there are people in society that are safeguarding the citizen…mentally a person can feel better knowing that there are people working in favour of justice."

(Female, 20, Rabat, Tertiary Education)

Figure 24

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Trust, Image, and Attributed Mentality' and the Category of 'Social Media Use by Police' associated with the Basic theme of 'Social Media as a Communication Tool'
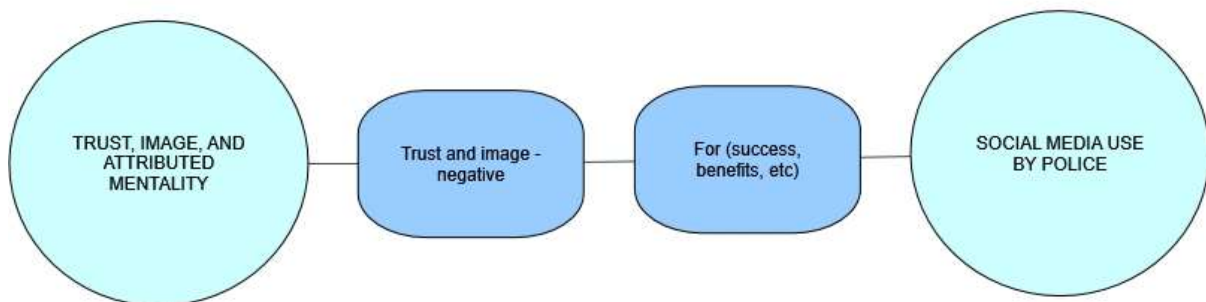
A further shared understanding of social media use by the police was elicited from the increased feelings of safety arising from a faster and more easily accessible online reporting platform. A reason for this included the ability to keep up to date with happenings in their surroundings whilst also being of assistance to the police. As illustrated in Figure 25, this indicates that social media is perceived as a means through which someone can help the

police by fulfilling their duty of reporting illegalities, especially those illegalities that tend to be overlooked for reporting (e.g., vandalism).

"You feel as if you are playing a role. You're helping the police who are helping you. It's this two-way."

(Male, 23, Mosta, Tertiary Education)

Figure 25

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Help Police' and the Category of 'Social Media Use by People' associated with the Basic theme of 'Social Media as a Communication Tool'
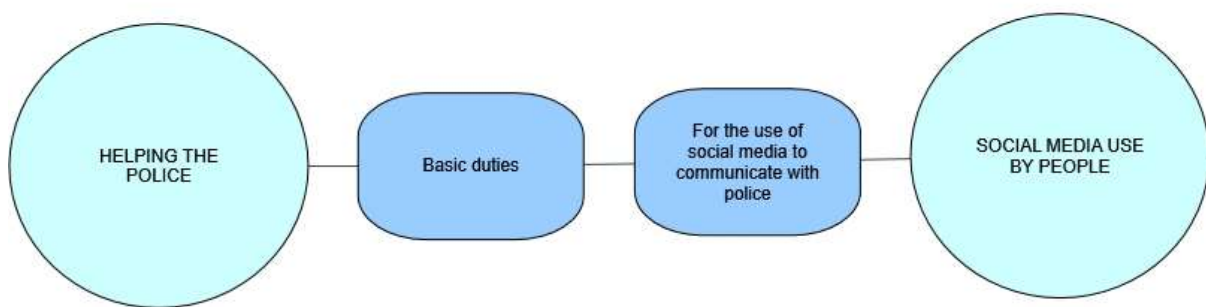
Nevertheless, other benefits of monitored use of social media were contested. For instance, some felt that social media is a good platform to ask for help or get the attention of the police. Additionally, some regarded social media as a more accessible and modern platform for individuals to make a report. Yet others believed it to be particularly beneficial and vitally important for vulnerable people, such as victims of domestic violence who might not have the opportunity of a face-to-face, physical encounter with police. Lastly, some stated that social media may allow anonymised reporting, thus leading to more reporting by individuals who might be apprehensive to go to the police station and file a report in person.

"Whatever gets your cry of help across, so be it. I have no problem with it being social media. It is widely accessible and very easing to reach, so why not have that extra line of communication?"

(Female, 21, Swieqi, Tertiary Education)

In summary, the use of social media by people and the police with respect to policing was welcomed. Nonetheless, the perceived benefits were still relatively contested. Some felt that social media use by people cannot replace official reporting. In addition, others perceived social media to only be useful if one has assurance that it is being constantly monitored. Lastly there was consensual agreement that police should make more use of social media in order to keep the public engaged.

3.5.6 Helping the police

This theme maps participants' suggestions of the various ways they could help the police in their work. These suggestions were categorised into five groups: basic duties; case-by-case; research and education; setbacks to helping the police; and taking initiative (see Figure 26). The predominant recommendations of helping the police entailed those grouped under basic duties. In particular, these duties were characterized by responsibilities including reporting whenever there is an illegality, collaborating with the police as much as possible (e.g., avoiding needless reports, giving accurate testimonies, etc.), and living morally by observing the law. Overall, the perception that helping the police is a civic duty and necessary to safeguard the public's own interest was relatively consensual.

"I always try to help the police do their job. When I am out and about, if I see something or know something which is not one hundred percent right, I have no problem...stop the police on the beat "Listen, there's something going on over there"."

(Male, 46, Sliema, Tertiary Education)

Figure 26

Basic theme of 'Helping the Police' and associated categories
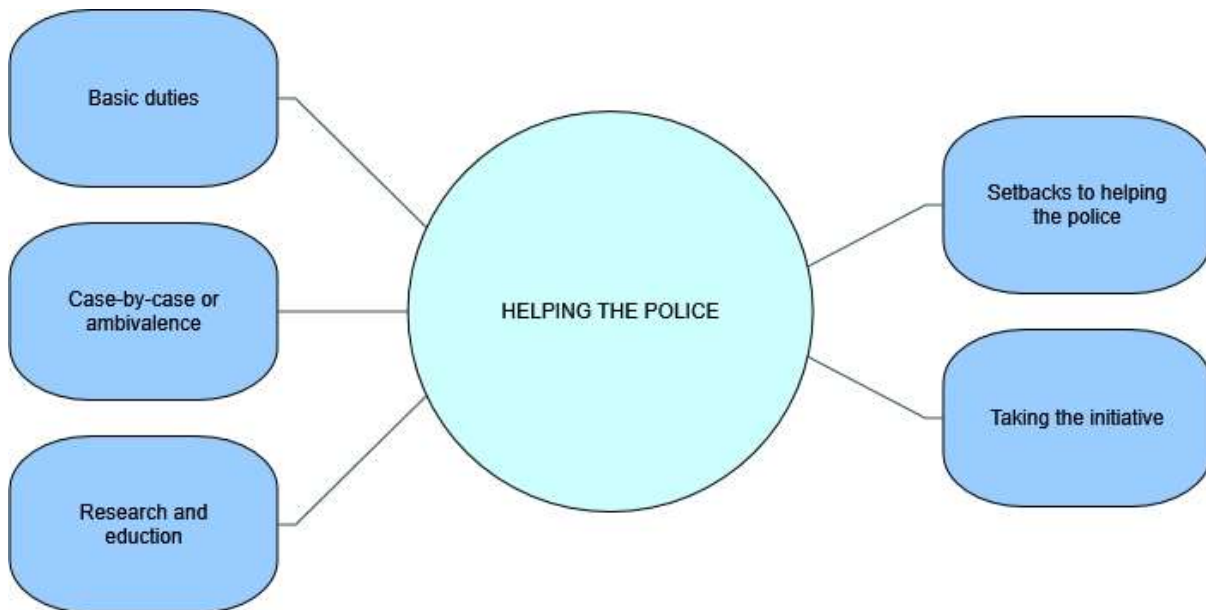
Besides basic duties, suggestions concerning initiative were also expressed (e.g., neighbourhood watch). Such suggestions emerged from a shared understanding of the need to alleviate the burden on police work, staying vigilant on issues that may arise, and establishing a sense of a community and a culture of participation (see Figure 27).

Figure 27

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Community Policing' and the Basic theme of 'Helping the Police'
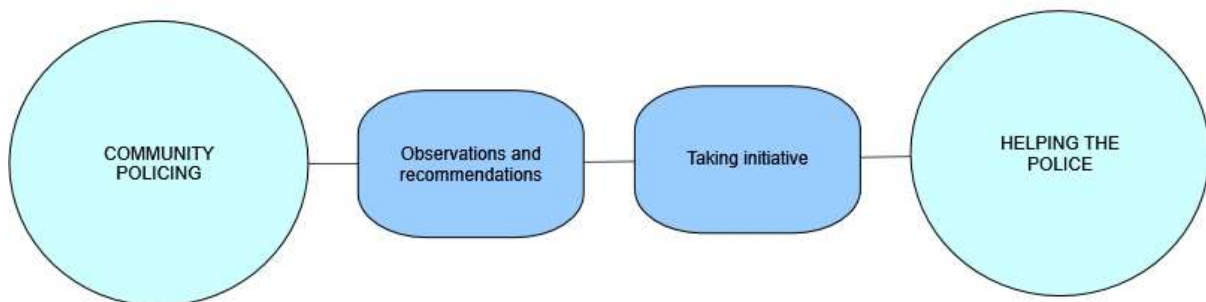
A third means of helping the police put forth by some participants included focus on research and education. For instance, such participants emphasized teaching both adults and children the importance of respecting the police. Indeed, these emerged out of a shared representation of the police that entailed seeing the police as an ally rather than an enemy. This was somewhat contested by others who highlighted the importance of research put in action and those who recommend teaching the public what constitutes a report and what does not (see Figure 28).

"That is the best thing that we can do, that you constantly inform and educate society."

(Male, 41, Mosta, Secondary Education)

Figure 28

The relationship between the Basic theme of 'Investment' and the Basic theme of 'Helping the Police'
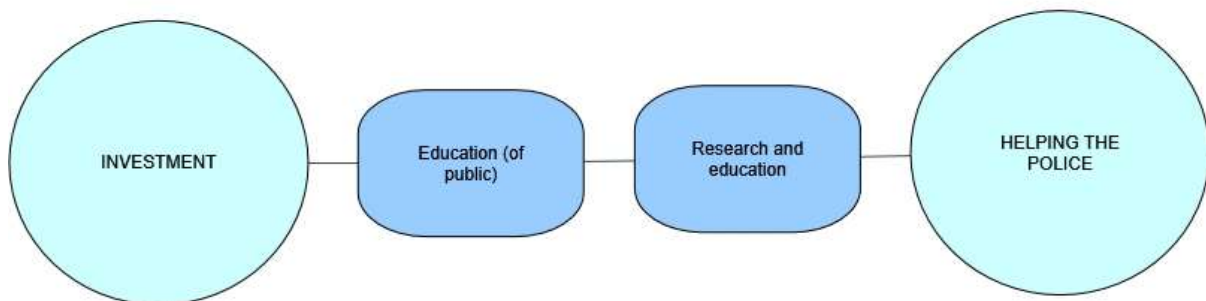
On the other hand, others expressed ambivalence with regards to helping the police. A case-by-case approach characterised these opinions such that a commonly held perception entailed seeking help from the police in serious cases (e.g., rape, vandalism) but not in those that touched upon moral and personal issues (e.g., abortion, drug use, censorship). Furthermore, the notion of seeking help from the police was contested by those arguing that even if help from the police is sought, it is done so only with distrust and futility, assuming that help would not be genuinely provided.

"When I phone, and they ignore me…what's the point? I am trying to help them and the victim."

(Female, 56, Sliema, Post-Secondary Education)

Lastly, some views noted setbacks to helping the police such as concerns regarding anonymity and the inconvenience of being called to court as witness. Indeed, one participant emphasized the importance of protection by the police in the case of people offering help.

STUDY 2
4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The second study was a large-scale national survey that investigated attitudes and opinions regarding the debatable issues raised in Study 1. Notably, by adopting a quantitative approach, this study explores how these debatable issues, relating to policing and the police, are distributed across the national population in Malta.

4.2 SAMPLE

The sample for this study consisted of 1000 participants (481 males; 516 females), who identified as being of Maltese nationality, were over the age of 16 (M = 45.04, SD = 16.98), and varied in level of education; primary (n = 51), secondary (n =414), post-secondary (n = 211), and tertiary (n=319) (see Appendix E for full demographics). The sample was recruited using random telephone number generating software. The administration of the questionnaire was scheduled for a date and time convenient to respondents and was carried out through another phone call. All respondents who agreed to participate gave their consent by choosing to opt-in to the survey.

4.3 RESEARCH TOOLS AND PROCEDURE

The questionnaire comprised of 29 statements that were extracted from the qualitative interviews carried out in Study 1 (see Table 1 for example statements and Appendix F for full list). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with these statements relating to policing using a scale from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). The aim of this study was to further investigate the findings regarding the police and community policing that emerged from Study 1. The order of the statements was randomized for each participant to avoid the confounding influence of order effects.

Table 1
An example of statements used in the questionnaire. These statements were extracted from the qualitative interviews carried out in Study 1.
The police should not be allowed to use force, unless it is absolutely necessary.
There should be a greater presence of police in the streets.
If the police build closer ties with the community, people would feel safer.
The police should be given 'body cameras' for the protection of themselves and the people.

The questionnaire was provided in either Maltese or English depending on the participant's preference. As a reward for participation, respondents were provided with the opportunity to enter a lottery for one out of fifty €100 vouchers. The questionnaire was piloted in advance to ensure comprehension. Data collected from the pilot was not used for analysis.

5.0 RESULTS

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and tests for normality (for full output see Appendix G). This chapter details the findings of the survey by reporting the results related to each individual statement. Note that for each statement, participants were required to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement from a scale of 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree). Skewness greater than +/- 0.5 but less than +/- 1 was considered to indicate slight tendency towards disagreement or agreement, respectively, whereas skewness greater than +/-1 was considered to indicate a high tendency towards disagreement or agreement, respectively.

5.1 ROLE OF THE POLICE OFFICER

Overall, participants' responses tended towards agreement. The mean indicated strong agreement with the statement, along with a slightly skewed distribution when asked whether the police should go beyond their call of duty (skewness = -.83, $M = 4.17$, $SD = .90$) (see Figure 29). When asked whether police should stick to their job description, participants' responses tended to be normally distributed with the mean tending towards agreement (skewness = -.24, $M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.19$). As illustrated in Figure 30, participants neither tended to totally agree or disagree with this statement.

Figure 29

Going beyond call of duty
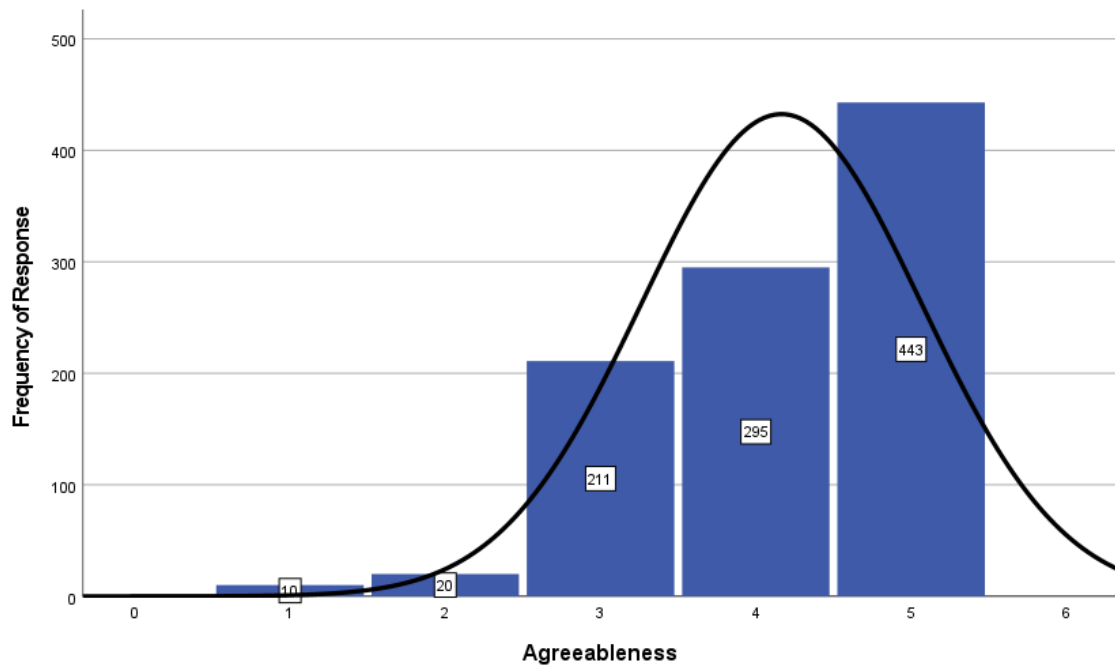
Figure 30

Sticking to job description
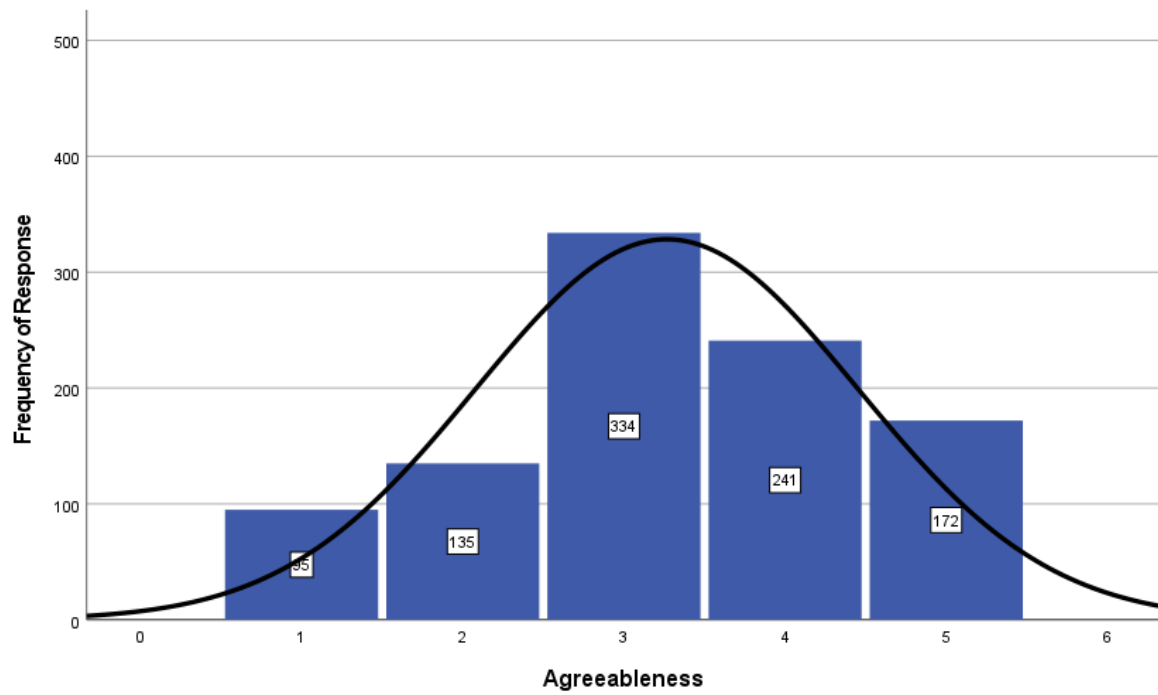
5.3 APPREHENSION VS. PREVENTION

Participants tended to slightly agree that apprehension is more important than prevention (skewness = -.49, *M* = 3.78, *SD* = .98) (see Figure 31). However, they also tended to agree that prevention of crime should be given priority (skewness = -.58, *M* = 4.00, *SD* = .92) (see Figure 32). Overall, these findings suggest that both catching the criminal as well as preventing crime are believed to be important.

Figure 31

Catching criminals is most important
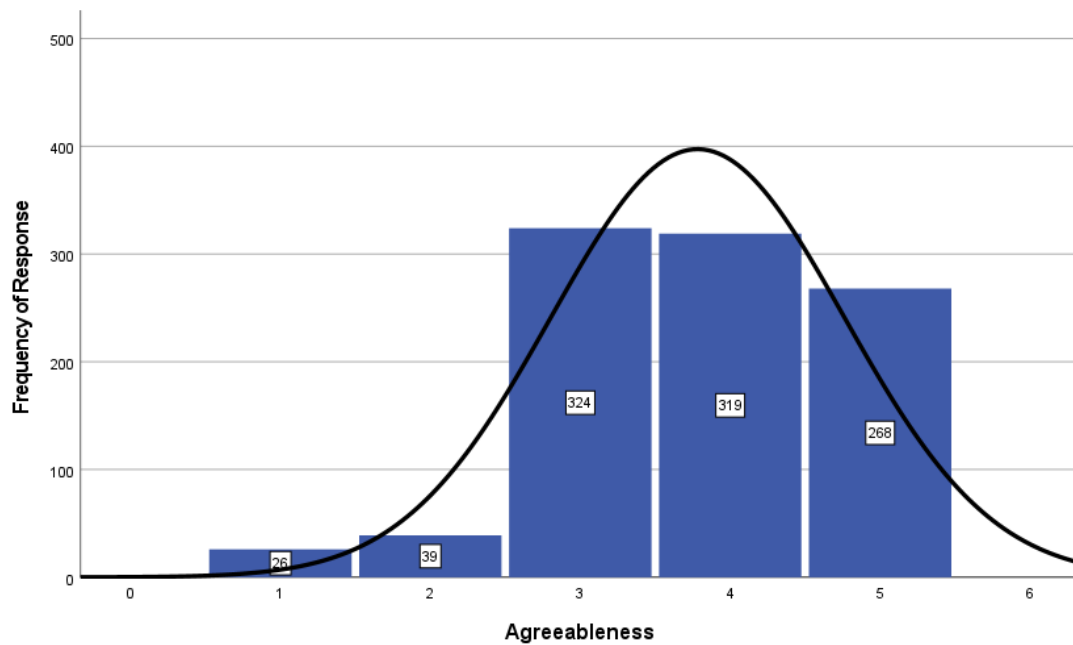
Figure 32

Prevention of crime should be priority
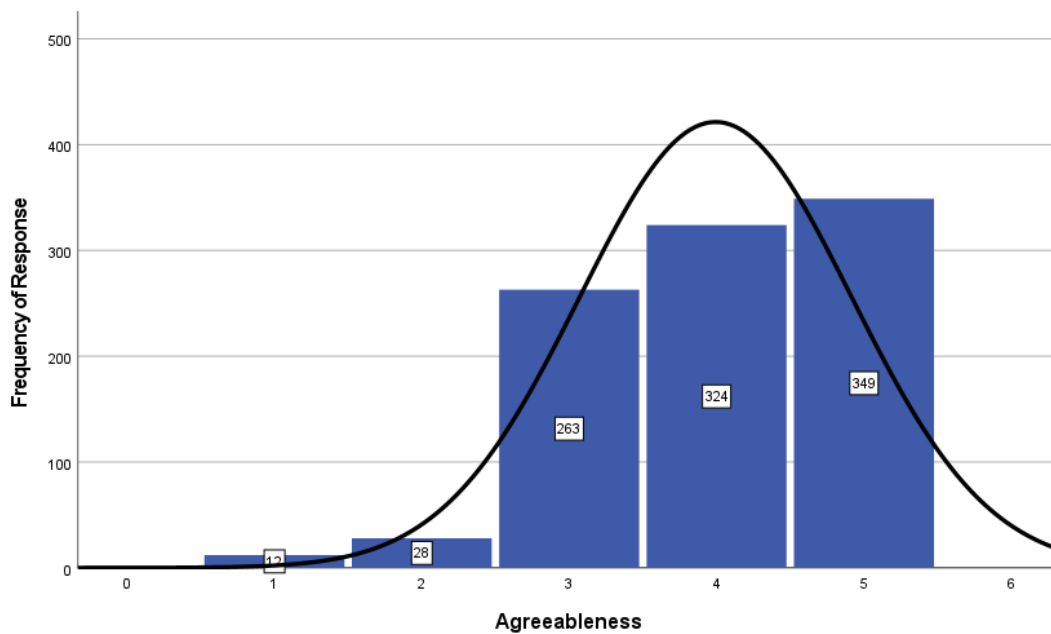
5.4 STOP AND SEARCH, AND USE OF FORCE

When asked whether police should be free to stop and search, participants' responses tended to be skewed towards agreement (skewness = -.53, M = 3.54, SD = 1.21) (see Figure 33). Participants' responses also tended to be skewed towards agreement when asked whether they believe that stop and search may be abusive (skewness = -.57, M = 3.60, SD = 1.16) (see Figure 34). In line with this, they further tended to slightly agree that police should not be allowed to use force unless it is absolutely necessary (skewness = -.57, M = 3.90, SD = .97) (see Figure 35).

Figure 33

Police should be free to stop and search
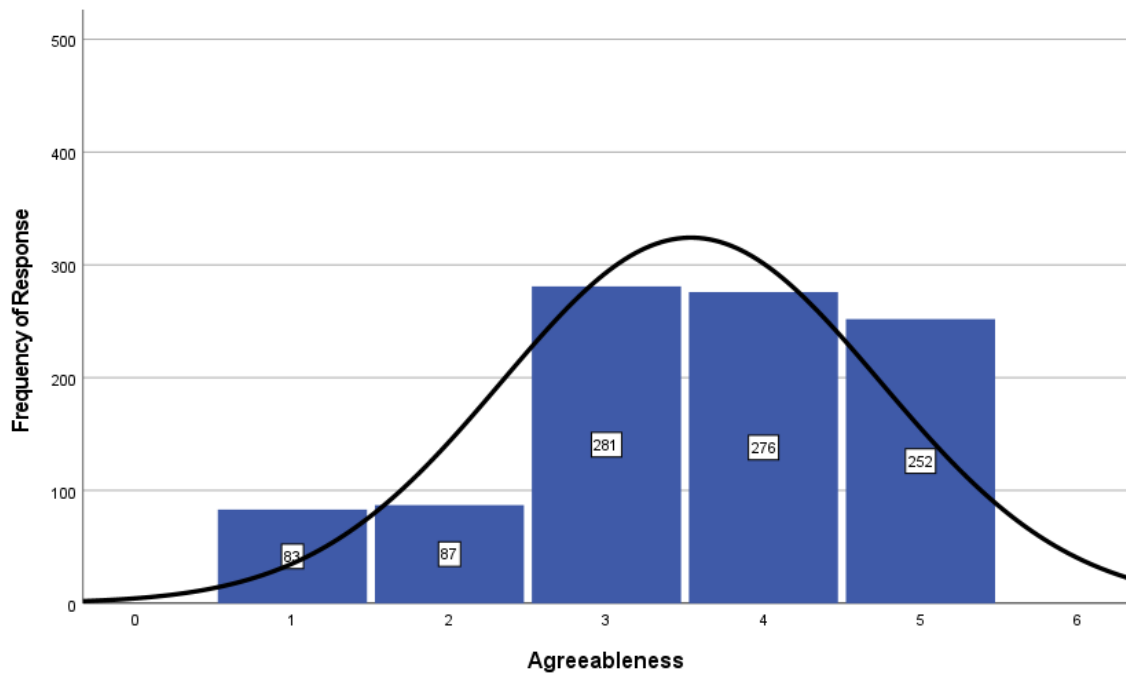
Figure 34

Police stop and search is abusive
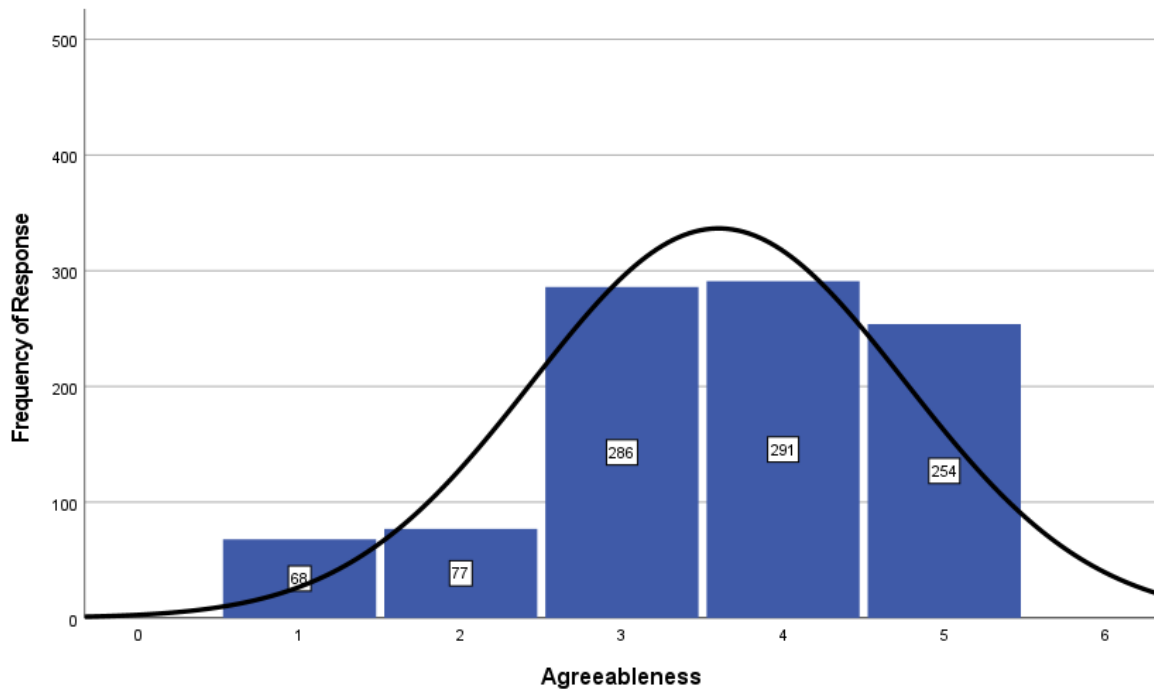
Figure 35

Police should not be allowed to use force unless absolutely necessary
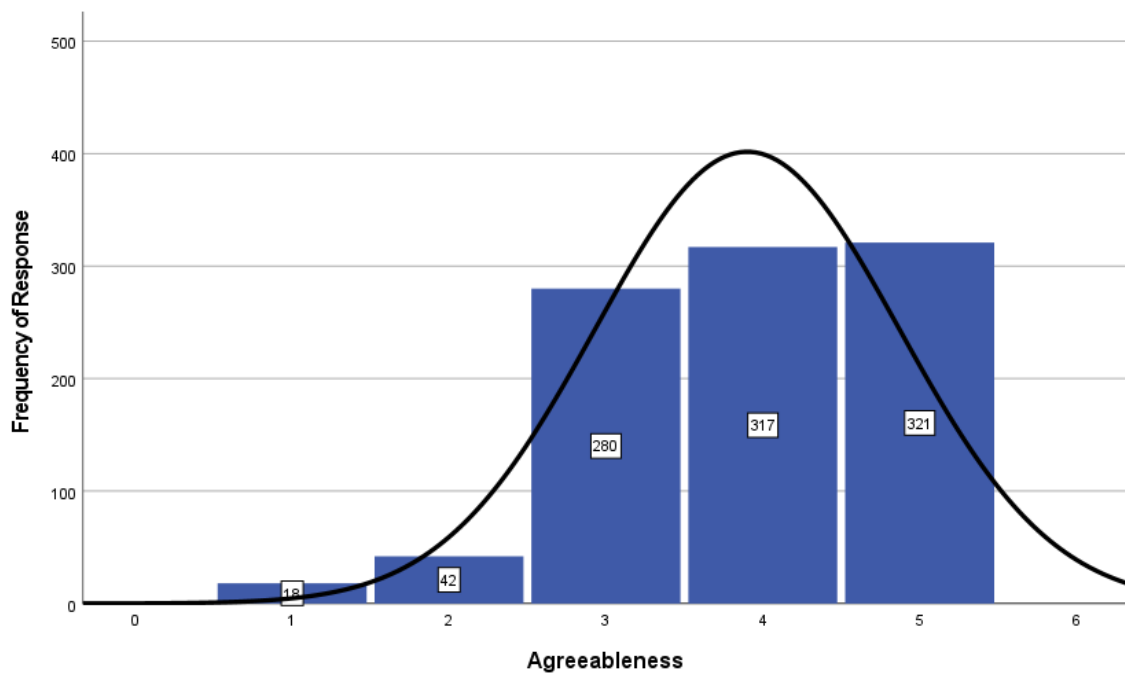
5.5 BODY CAMS

When asked whether police should be given body cams, participants' responses tended to be highly skewed towards agreement (skewness = -1.05, $M = 4.20$, $SD = .962$) (see Figure 36). However, when asked whether they believe that body cams violate privacy, participants' responses tended to be normally distributed with the mean falling slightly below the neutral midpoint indicating slight disagreement (skewness = -.05, $M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.25$) (see Figure 37).

Figure 36

Police should be given body cams
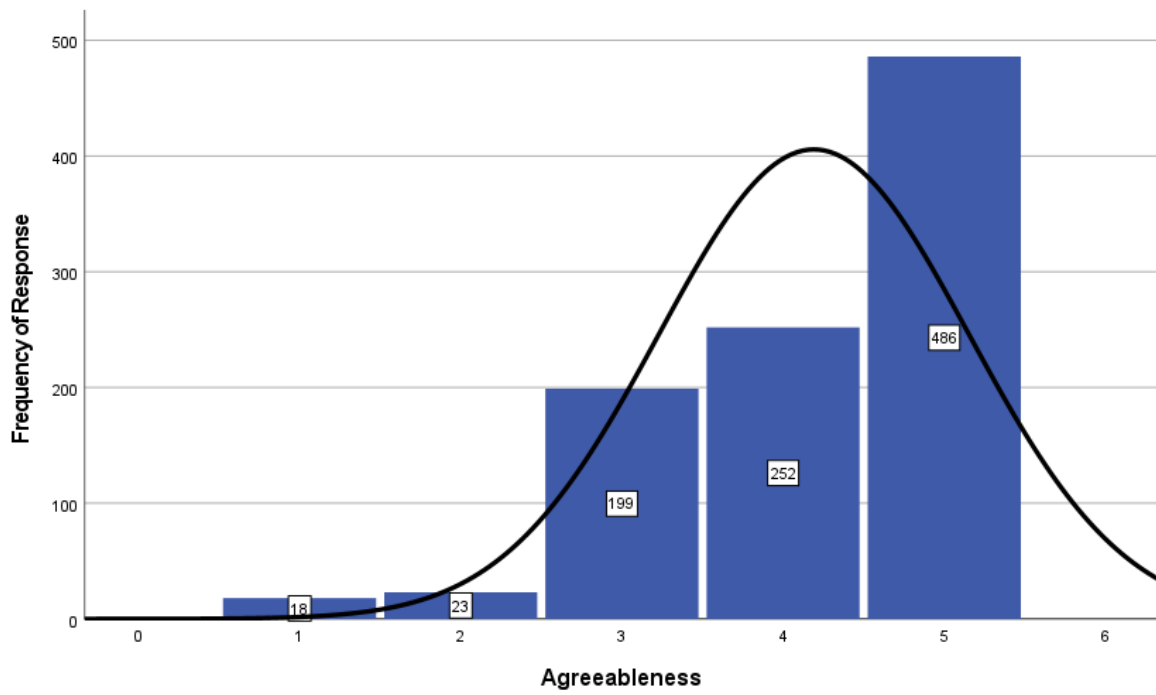
Figure 37

Body cams violate privacy
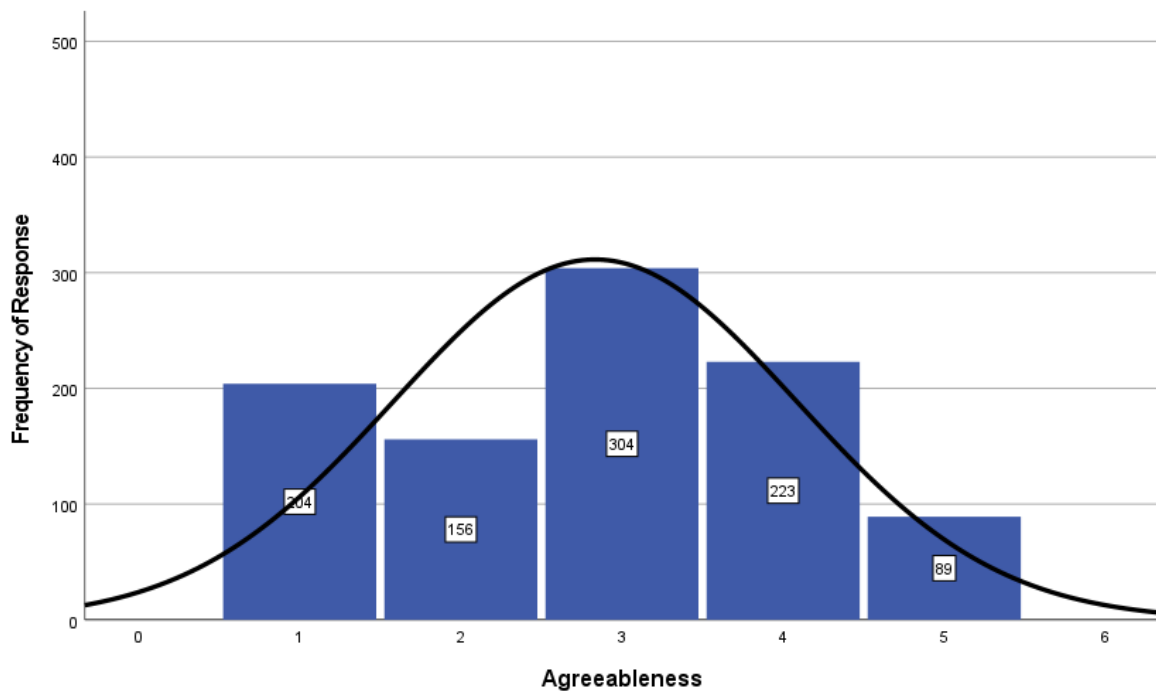
5.6 CCTVS

Overall, participants' responses tended to be slightly skewed towards agreement when asked whether the use of CCTVs may be helpful in catching criminals (skewness = -.59, *M* = 4.10, *SD* = .92) (see Figure 38). However, when asked whether CCTVs violate privacy, participants' responses tended to be normally distributed with the mean falling slightly below the neutral midpoint indicating slight disagreement (*M* = 2.8, *SD* = 1.20) (see Figure 39). Similarly, participants' responses tended to be normally distributed when asked whether CCTVs can be misused, with the mean falling slightly above the midpoint indicated slight agreement (*M* = 3.32, *SD* = 1.13) (see Figure 40)..

Figure 38

CCTVs help to catch criminals
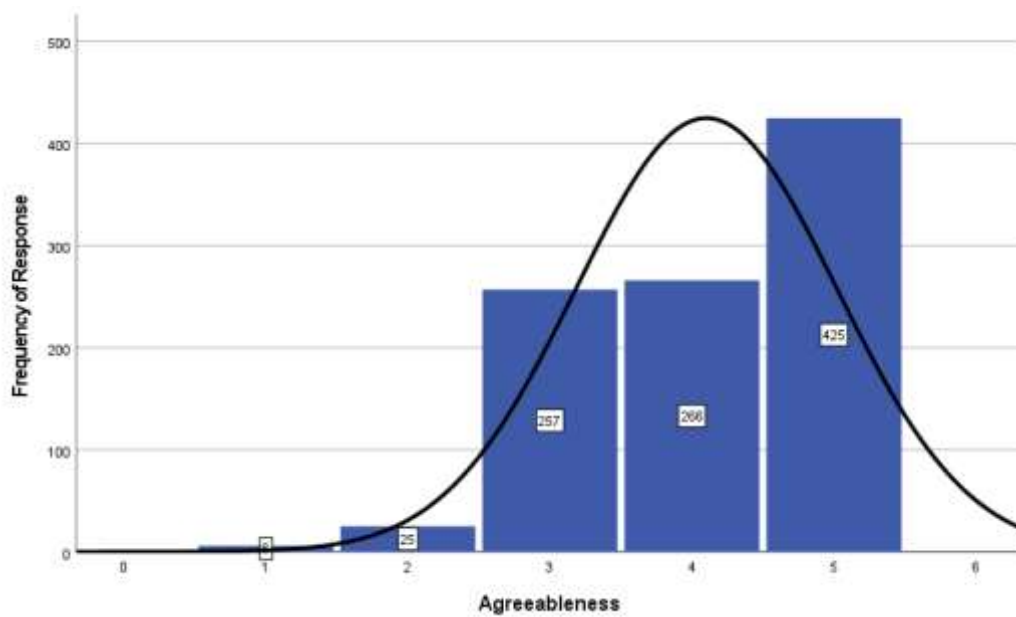
Figure 39

CCTVs violate privacy
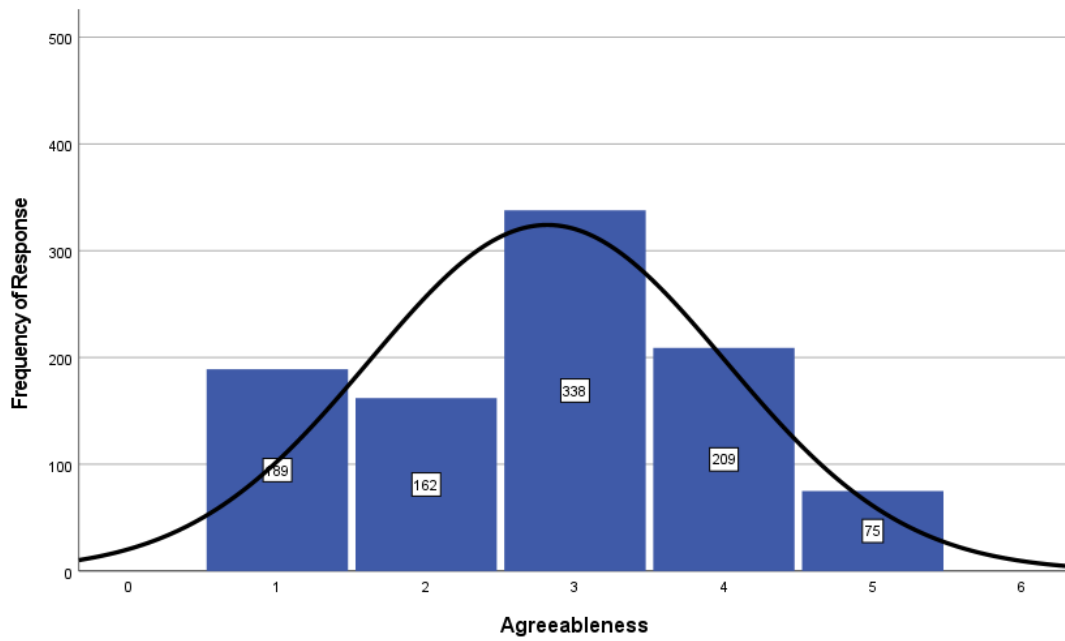
Figure 40

CCTVs can be misused
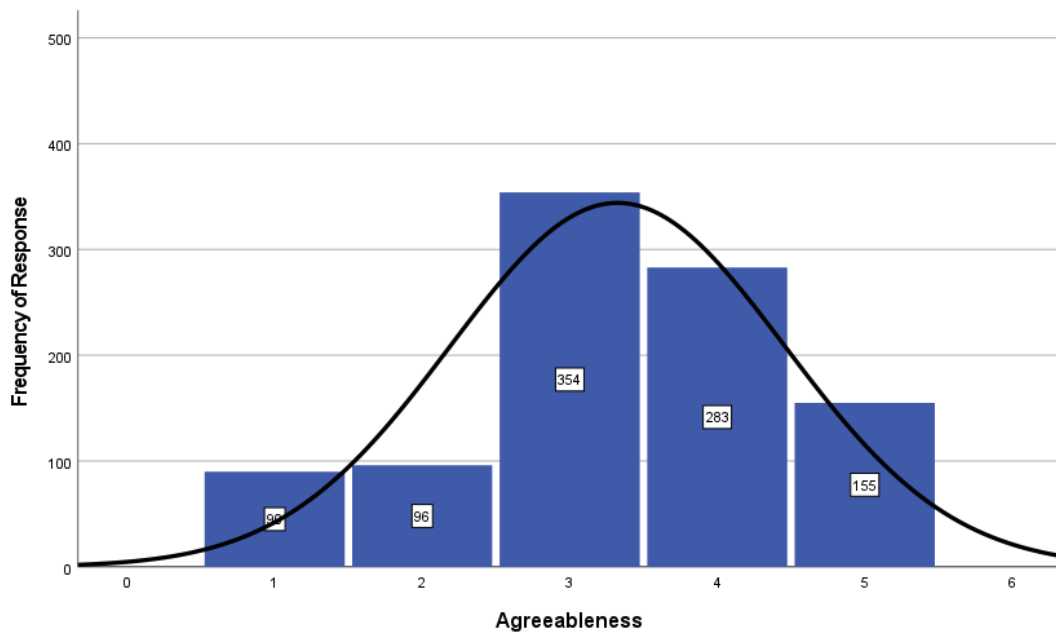
5.7 POLICE EFFECTIVENESS

In general, participants' responses as to whether only a few police are laid back tended to be normally distributed, with the mean tipping towards agreement (skewness, -.28, $M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.02$) (see Figure 41). In addition, responses also tended towards agreement in a normally distributed manner when asked whether the police are effective in their work (skewness, -2.3, $M = 3.62$, $SD = .90$) (see Figure 42). Coversely, responses tended towards disagreement when asked whether the police hardly ever solve cases (skewness = -.03, $M = 2.69$, $SD = 1.14$) (see Figure 43). In essence, respondents generally perceived the police positively, tending to agree that the police are effective with their work, and tending to disagree that they hardly ever solve cases and that they are laid back.

Figure 41

Only few police are laid back
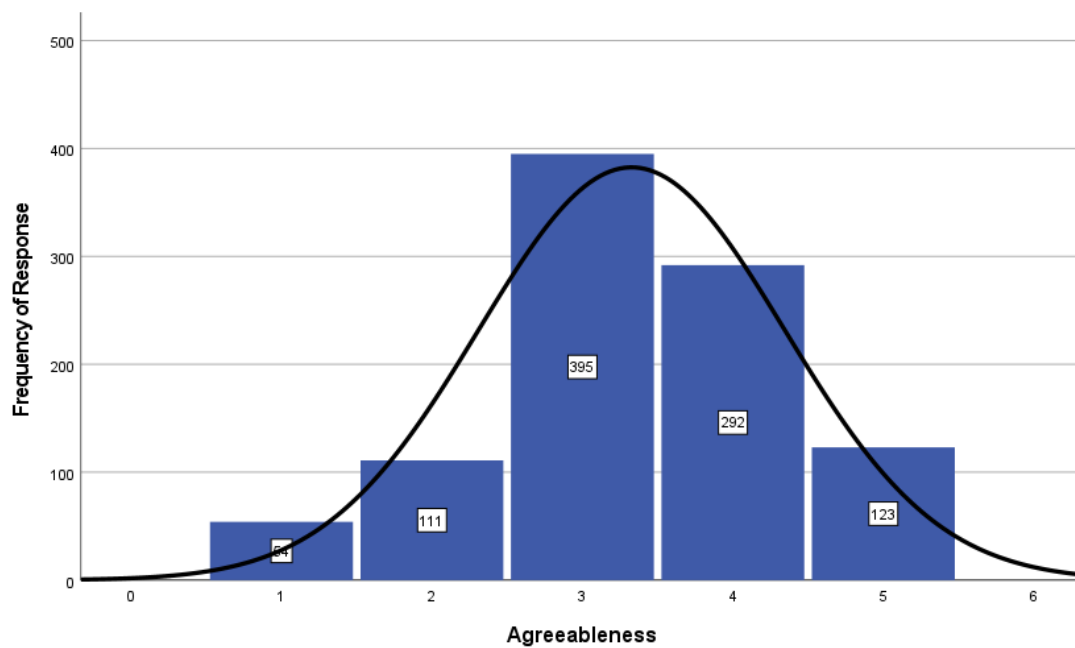
Figure 42

Police are very effective
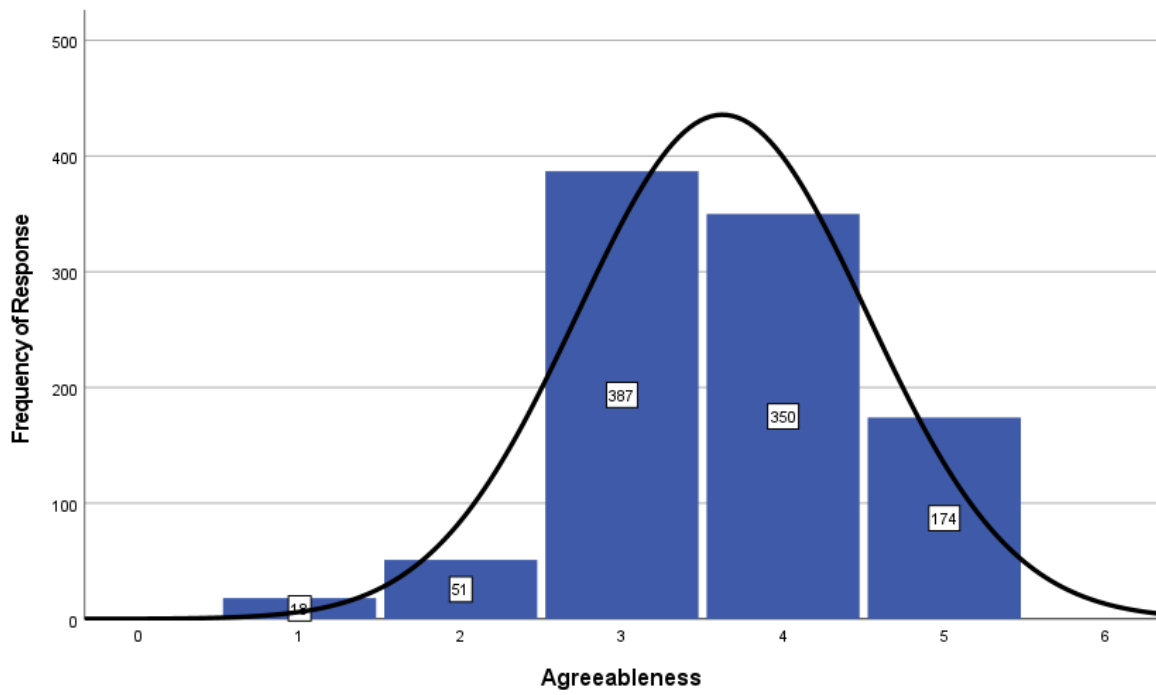
Figure 43

Police hardly ever solve cases
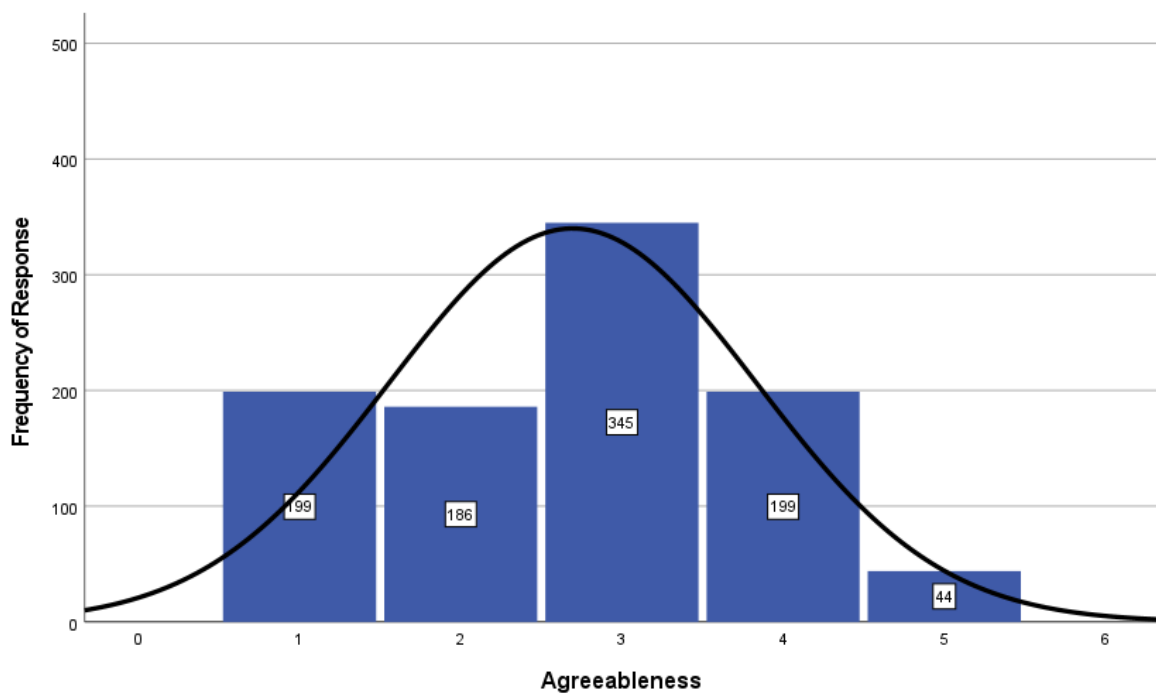
5.8 POLICING AS A VOCATION VS. AS A CAREER

Participants' responses tended to be slightly skewed towards agreement when asked whether they think that policing is more of a vocation than a career (skewness = -.62, M = 3.76, SD = 1.00) (see Figure 44). Conversely, responses tended to be normally distributed but in agreement when asked whether the police are motivated by a sense of duty (skewness = -.33, M = 3.67, SD = 1.02) (see Figure 45). As both means tend to be greater than the mid-point, this suggests that respondents are generally more likely to think of policing as a vocation and that the police are motivated by a sense of duty.

Figure 44

Police work is more of a vocation
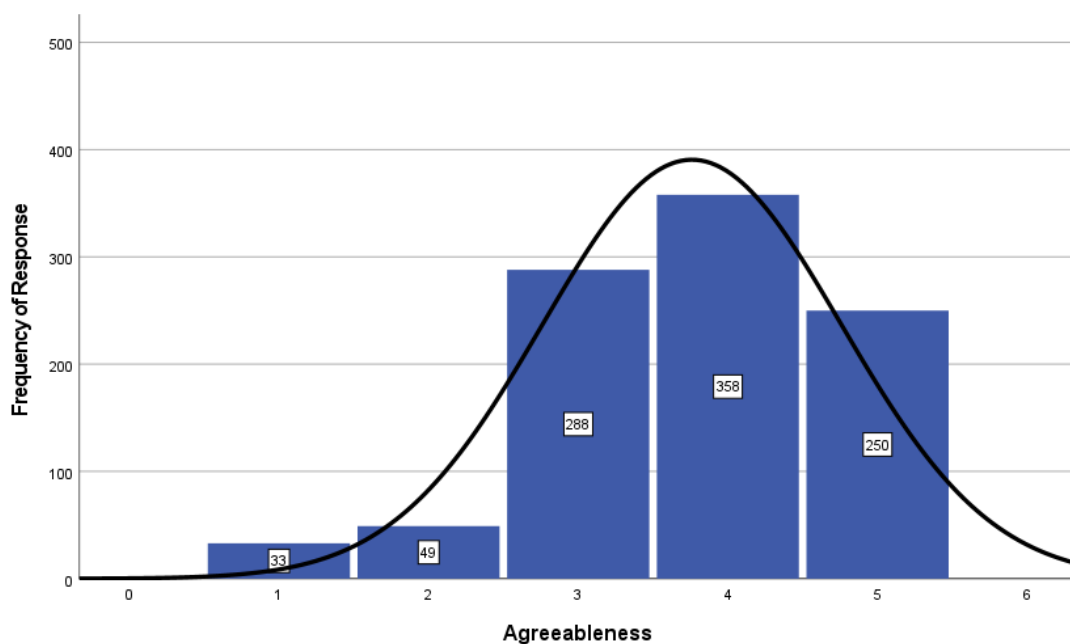
Figure 45

Police are motivated by a sense of duty
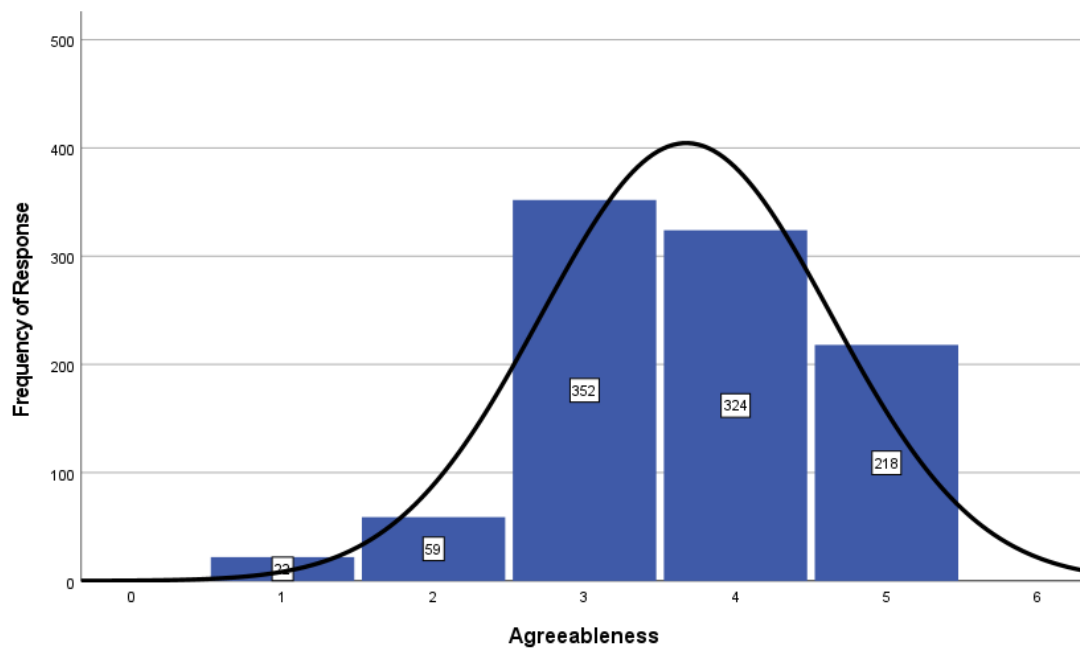
5.9 PHYSICAL PRESENCE OF THE POLICE

Overall, participants' responses tended to be slightly skewed towards agreement when asked whether there should be a greater physical presence of the police on the streets (skewness = -.56, M = 3.92, SD = .97) (Figure 46). Furthermore, responses also tended to be slightly skewed towards agreement when asked whether a greater physical presence may prevent crime (skewness = -.54, M = 4.05, SD = .90) (see Figure 47). When asked whether more police in the street may make them feel under surveillance, responses tended to be normally distributed but tending slightly towards disagreement (skewness = -.10, M = 2.87, SD = 1.23) (see Figure 48). Findings were also normally distributed and in slight disagreement when asked whether there should be more emphasis on having police in stations rather than out patrolling the streets (skewness = -.11, M = 2.89, SD = 1.15) (see Figure 49).

Figure 46

There should be greater police presence on the streets
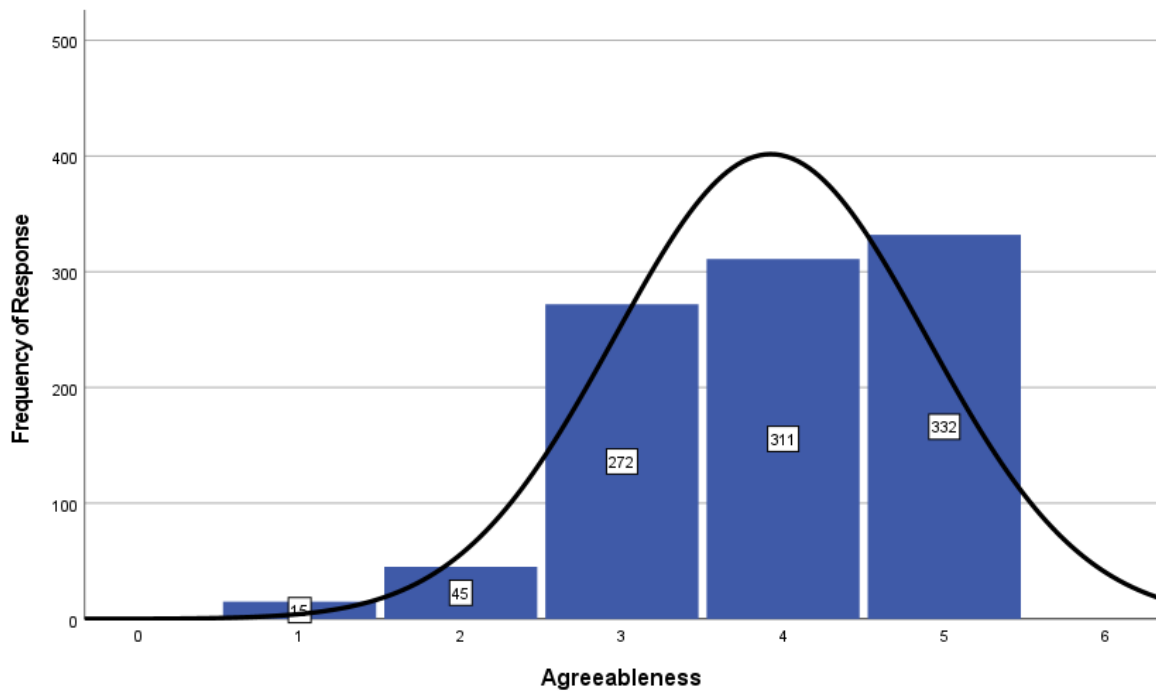
Figure 47

More police on streets prevents crime
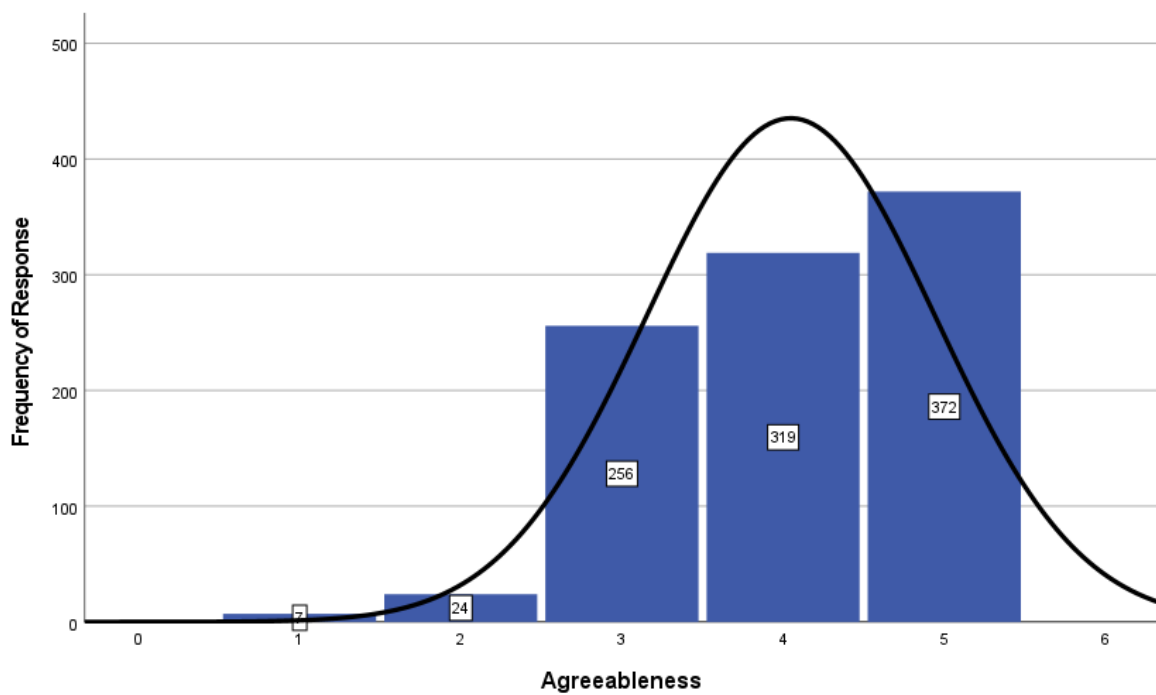
Figure 48

Too many police on the streets makes me feel under surveillance
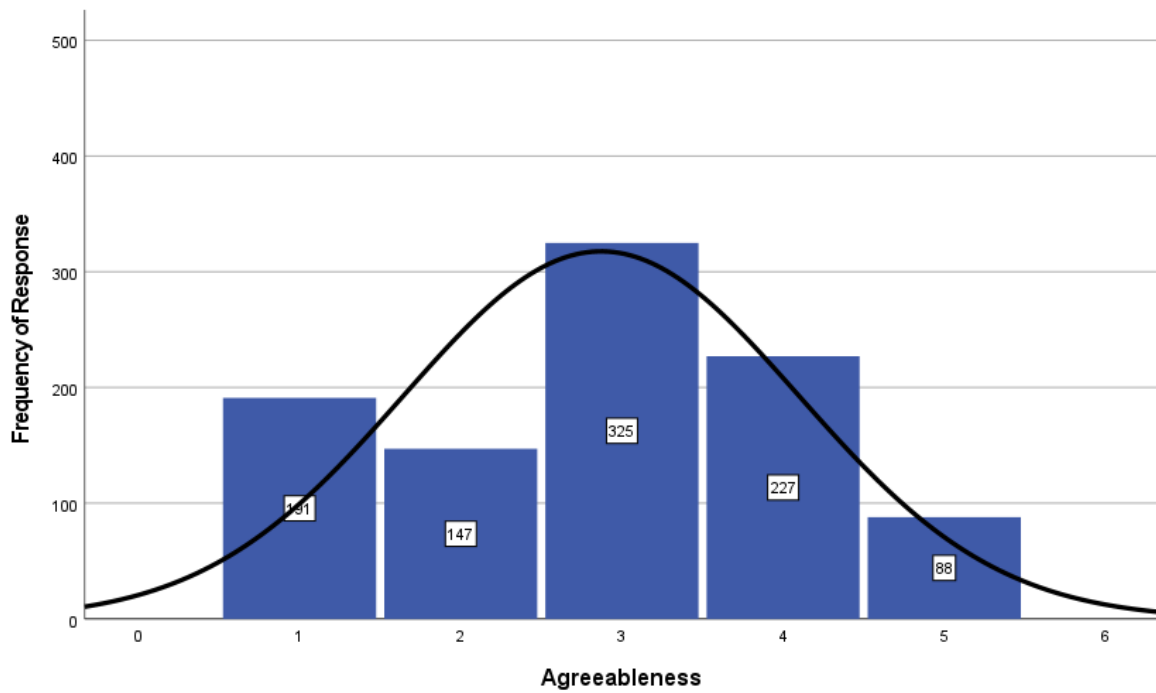
Figure 49

It is better to have more police in stations rather than on the streets
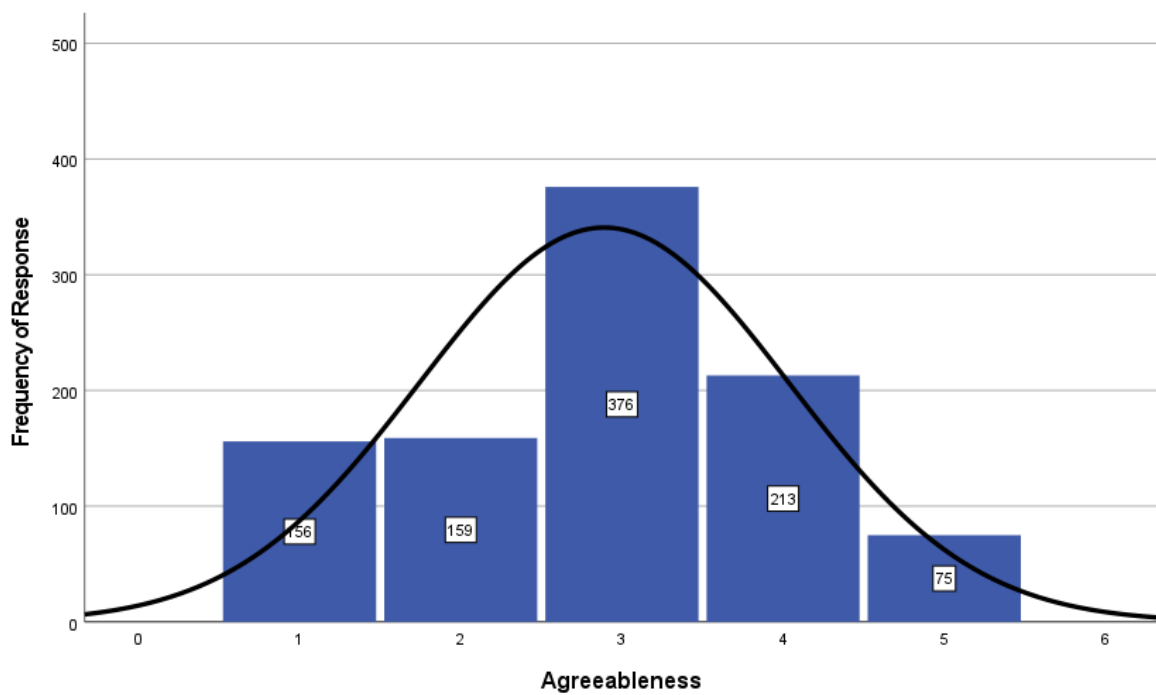
5.10 COMMUNITY POLICING

When asked whether closer police ties with the community may result in corruption, responses generally tended to be normally distributed and tending towards disagreement (skewness = -.02, M = 2.71, SD = 1.13) (see Figure 50). However, responses tended to be slightly skewed towards agreements when asked whether police ties with the community may result in people feeling safer (skewness = -.59, M = 4.0, SD = .90) (see Figure 51). These findings suggest that respondents are generally in favour of community policing and that the belief that it may lead to corruption is not all too concerning.

Figure 50

Closer police ties with the community leads to corruption
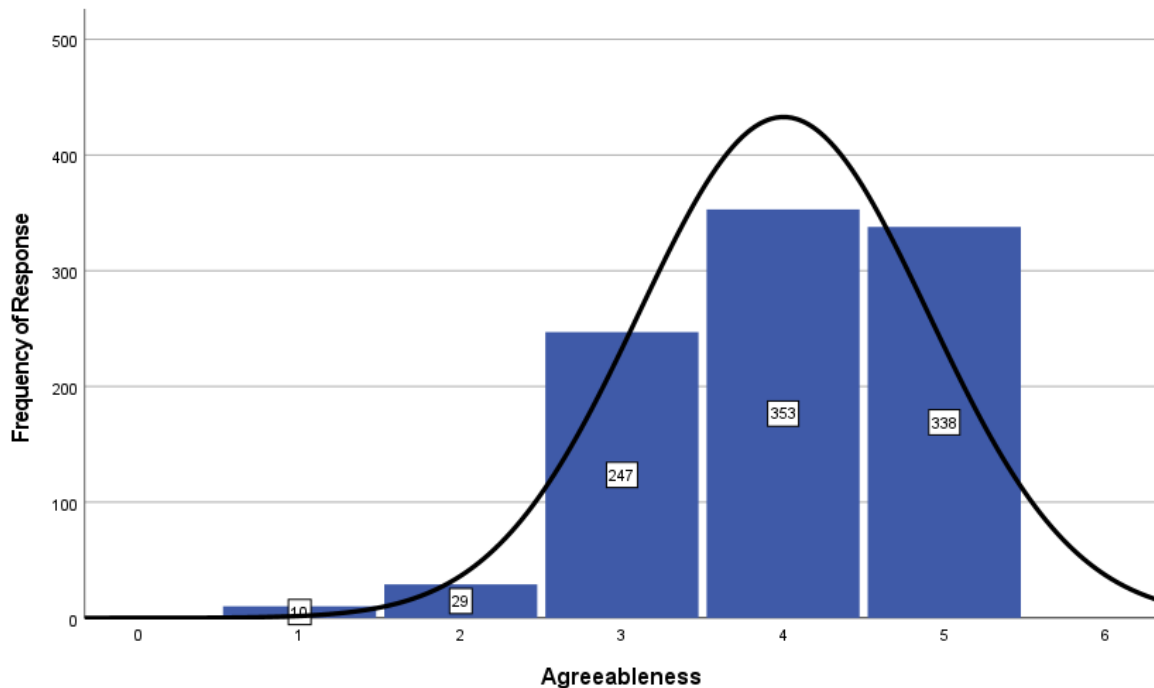
Figure 51

Closer police ties with the community leads to feelings of safety
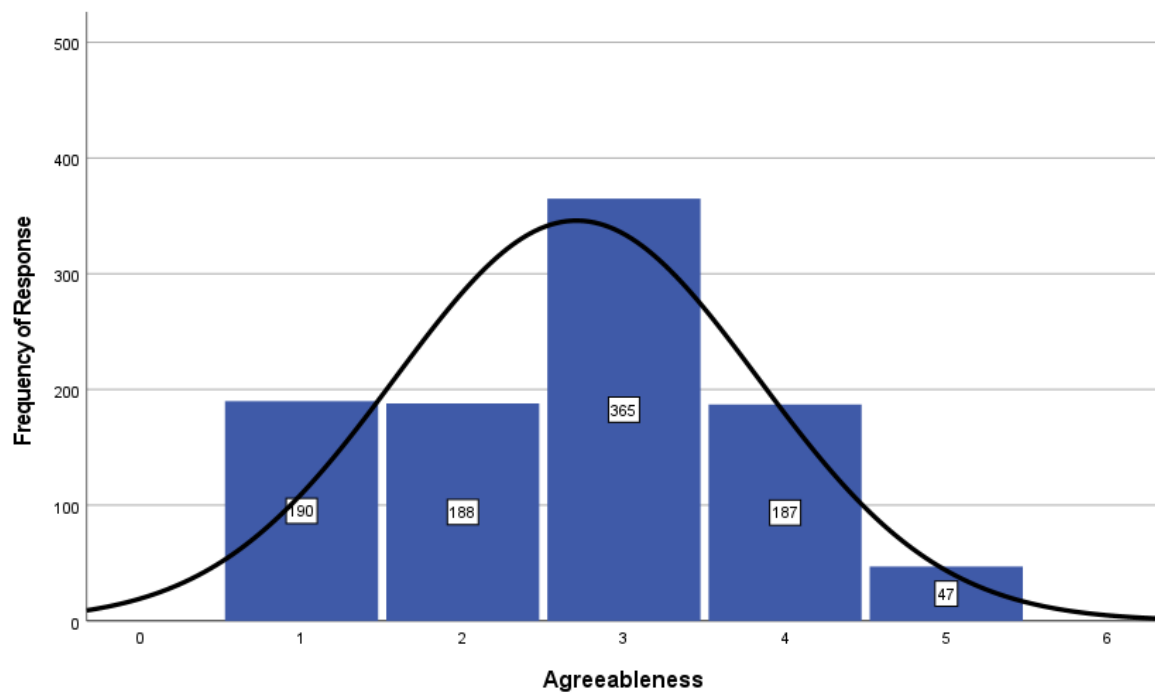
5.11 The use of social media

Generally, participants' responses tended to be normally distributed and in agreement when asked whether it is better to report crime personally to the police rather than through social media (skewness = -.40M = 3.73, SD = 1.05) (see Figure 52). Responses also tended to be normally distributed and in agreement when asked whether the use of social media results in better communication with people, (skewness = -.34, M = 3.59, SD = 1.01) (see Figure 53), and whether the use of social media by the police (to report crime) may waste police's time (skewness = -.36, M = 3.18, SD = .96) (see Figure 54). Taken together, and considering that all means are greater than the mid-point, these findings indicate that participants are generally in favour of the use of social media to improve communication but would rather report crime in person as they are concerned that social media may waste police time.

Figure 52

It is better to report crime personally rather than on social media
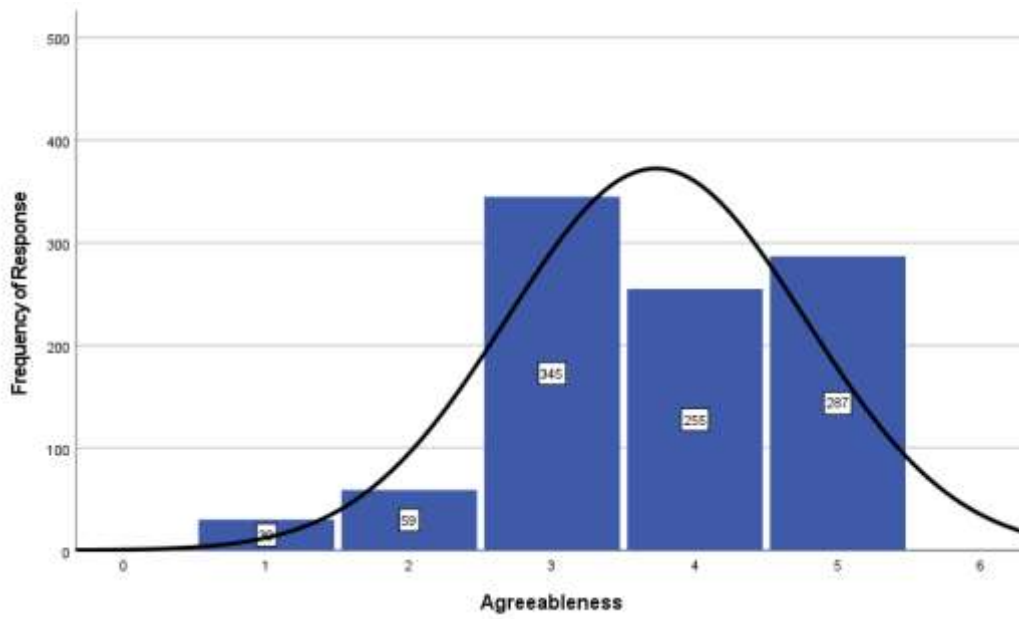
Figure 53

Social media use by police leads to better communication with the people
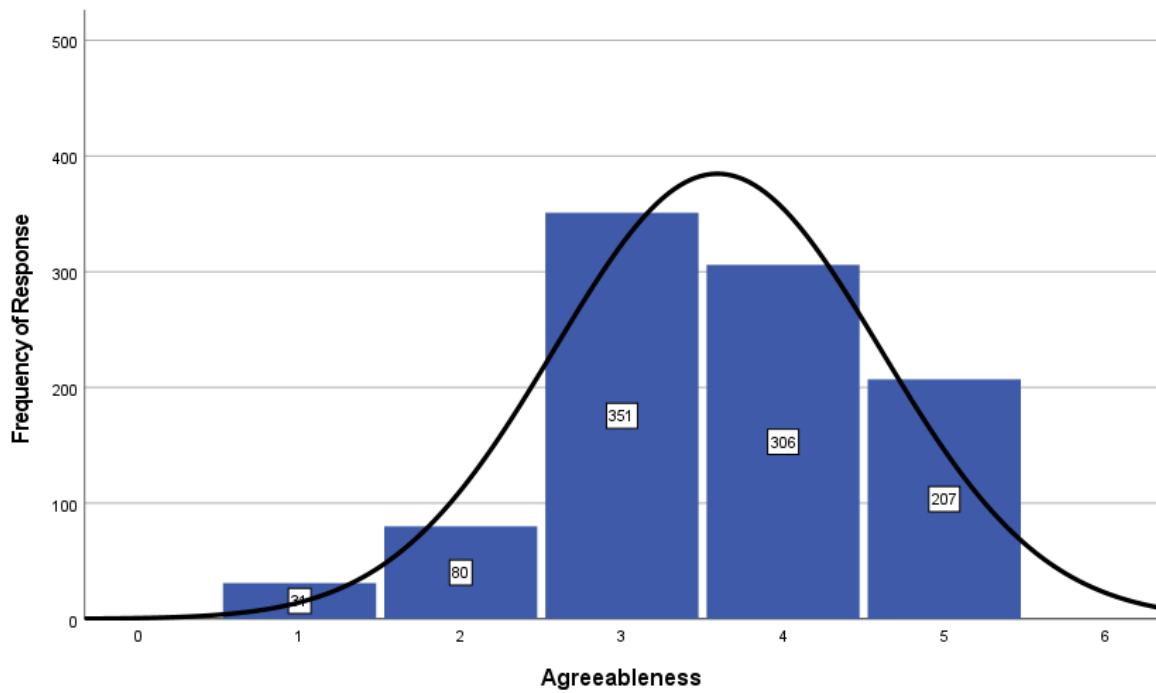
Figure 54

Social media use by the people results in a waste of police time
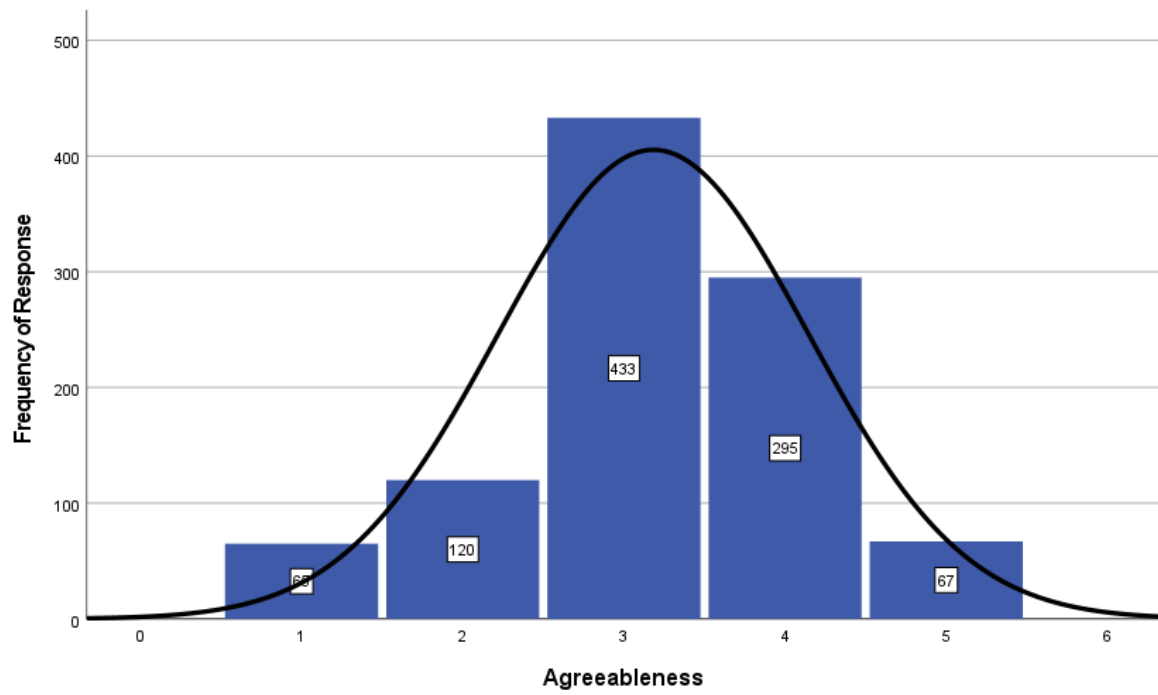
6.0 DISCUSSION

The aim of this project was to develop an understanding of the public's views on policing in Malta. Two studies were conducted for the purpose of this exercise. The first study adopted a qualitative approach (one-to-one interviews) and allowed us to explore what and why individuals think about the police and policing, especially in relation to certain contentious issues such as the use of force, CCTV, an increase in police officers on the streets, and developing closer ties with the community. Conversely, the second study adopted a quantitative approach and allowed us to investigate the prevalence of these opinions across a large national probability sample. The following will discuss the findings from each of these studies.

6.1 SHARED REPRESENTATIONS VS. CONTESTED REPRESENTATIONS OF THE POLICE AND POLICING

The global theme that emerged from the analysis of the first study concerned a social representation of 'The Police Officer'. This subsumed three organizing themes, namely 'Police Duties and Responsibilities', 'Public Perception', and 'Improving the Force'. A primary feature from the findings of Study 1 was that some claims advanced during the course of the interviews were largely consensual, whereas others attracted controversy and were disputed. In essence, this dichotomy presents a number of shared aspects of the representation of policing as well as contested aspects. Particularly, participants consensually described the prototypical police officer as one who 'serves and protects', by enforcing the law, protecting the citizen, and maintaining order. Generally, the police officer is also expected to stick to their job description but go beyond her call of duty. This presents a contradiction in that whilst the police officer is expected to stick to the duties within their remit, they are also expected to go above and beyond the expectations of their role and potentially exceed them for the purpose of helping out no matter what the issue might be. This expectation is paradoxical as a police officer who goes beyond their call of duty is clearly not limiting herself to his formal duties alone.

Another key consensual aspect of the representation was that the typical officer is, on the one hand, perceived as having as well as needing a macho mentality for the purpose of executing her job due to the potentially dangerous demands entailed in policing, which is not for the faint hearted. This was the basis on which many excluded themselves from the

prospect of ever joining the force. On the other hand, respondents argued that police officers are also expected to be passionate about their work, trustworthy, and empathetic in their relations with the public in the manner of providing a good service and a level of care that befits a valued customer. Over generalisation when describing the police officer was scarce with both negative and positive attributions featuring in participants' arguments. Contested representations included whether police are effective in their work, as participants recalled mixed experiences about how they were treated and served. Indeed, participants also divergently thought of policing as either a vocation or career.

Participants also expressed shared and contested perceptions of specific policing activities. Namely, participants consensually agreed that both apprehension and prevention are important. Participants also consensually agreed that community policing is a good opportunity for the police to develop relationships with citizens. However, they expressed concern that this can lead to corruption if both police and citizens alike take advantage of their relationship. Besides community policing, participants also expressed favourability towards the use of social media by the police. In particular, social media was viewed as a good platform for the police to improve their image and to reach out to citizens. Nonetheless, participants also expressed concern that citizens end up wasting valuable police time. This suggests that participants trust the police using social media but do not quite trust fellow citizens. Participants noted that citizens might reach out for police assistance even in very minor situations that could otherwise not necessitate police intervention.

Lastly, participants consensually agreed that there should be more investment in various areas of policing. Specifically, the need for more communication, further specialised units, the increase of physical presence on the streets, and better management of human resources and material resources were identified by participants as domains requiring further resources. Views on technological surveillance like CCTV were less shared. CCTVs were perceived positively by those citing that it is good for prevention and apprehension. Conversely, they were perceived negatively by others warning of data protection issues and issues of misuse.

6.2 BROADER REPRESENTATIONS OF THE POLICE AND POLICING

Attitudes and opinions explored in the first study were then investigated quantitatively in the second study to determine the extent to which contentious beliefs about the police were widespread amongst the general population of Malta. Regarding perceptions of the police, the expectation that the police officer should go beyond her call of duty was held more strongly than the expectation that the police should stick exclusively to their job description. This suggests that whilst the public expects the police to adhere to their duties, they also expect the police to exercise discretion and good judgment in exceeding them should the need arise. Another key finding regarding perceptions of the police was that the police were generally perceived positively. Whereas in Study 1 the police officer was typically represented in both positive and negative terms, in Study 2, the police officer was seen perceived positively both when describing their attitude and mentality as well as in their work. Furthermore, policing was also more likely to be thought of as a vocation, characterised by a sense of duty, rather than a career.

With reference to community policing, this was viewed positively such that it was more likely to be thought of as an opportunity to make people feel safer rather than as an opportunity that potentially leads to corruption. This contrasts somewhat with the findings of Study 1 were more participants expressed concern regarding the over familiarity of relationships with the police. Indeed, in Study 2, participants were not too phased by this concern and were more likely to disagree that closer police-community ties lead to corruption. It is worth noting, however, that the first study was a qualitative exercise aimed at noting general concerns not their quantitative distribution. Likewise, the notions of community policing and the use of social media by the police were also perceived positively. Comparable to the findings of Study 1, participants were open and in favour of the use of social media by the police, but were concerned that this may wasteful of the police's time. On a similar note, participants were more likely to agree that it is better to report crime personally to the police than through social media. As for other policing activities, such as apprehension and prevention, the use of force, and the right to stop and search, views tended to also be less divided than expected. With respect to apprehension and prevention, even though participants strongly agreed with the importance of both, they were more likely to believe that prevention should hold higher priority than apprehension. As for the right of police to stop and search, participants were also more likely to think of this as important to police work. The notion of only using force if absolutely necessary was also deemed to be

very important by participants. This especially falls in line with the findings of Study 1 where participants expressed favourability for the use of force only as an option of last resort.

Finally, regarding areas of investment, participants generally viewed the use of body cams and CCTVs positively. Participants agreed with the use of body cams and were not concerned as to whether this violates privacy. This was not the case for perceptions of CCTV. Even though participants overwhelmingly agreed with the use of CCTV, they still recognised that this may be misused. Views relating to an increase in police officers on the streets were relatively divided. Overall, participants were undecided as to whether priority should be given to increase police on the streets as opposed to increasing police in stations, as both were deemed desirable. As identified in the opinions in Study 1, various justifications supported both of these options. Specifically, the ability to prevent more crime was identified as a key reason to increase physical surveillance, whereas the ability to always have a police officer available and ready to help was identified as a key reason to increase police in stations.

6.3 CONCLUSION

In summary this study has explored perceptions surrounding the police and policing activities. Generally, the public holds positive perceptions of the police and recommends increased investment. Overall, the public is inclined to want more, not less, policing, be it on the streets or in stations. The notion of community policing was regarded favourably, albeit with a note of caution. Findings from these two studies provide insight into how effective police-community relations may be achieved and maintained. Furthermore, findings also highlight the importance of understanding what and how people think of the police and police work, as ultimately this understanding may prove to be a beneficial tool in combatting crime both directly and indirectly by enlisting citizen support

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APPENDIX A

Demographics Study 1

Table A				
Demographics for Interviews carried out in Study 1				
Locality	Age	Gender	Highest Educational Attainment	Occupation
Fgura	27	M	Tertiary	Lawyer
	28	F	Tertiary	Lawyer
	29	F	Secondary	Machine Operator
	22	F	Tertiary	Student
Żabbar	24	F	Tertiary	HR Co-ordinator
	28	M	Tertiary	Odd Jobs (a little bit of everything)
	29	F	Tertiary	Marketing Executive
	36	M	Secondary	Shop Owner
Rabat	20	F	Post-Secondary	Student
	29	M	Tertiary	Manager
	36	M	Tertiary	Nurse
	38	F	Tertiary	Social Worker
Mosta	23	M	Tertiary	Unemployed
	38	F	Tertiary	Teacher
	40	F	Tertiary	Teacher
	41	M	Secondary	Administrator
Swieqi	21	F	Tertiary	Support Worker
	26	M	Tertiary	Unemployed
	35	M	Post-Secondary	Small Business Owner
	47	F	Tertiary	Student
Sliema	22	M	Tertiary	Mental Health Recovery Officer

	46	F	Tertiary	Teacher
	46	M	Tertiary	Property Consultant/Company Director
	56	F	Post-Secondary	Unemployed
M'Xlokk & B'Buġia	34	M	Tertiary	Councillor
	44	F	Tertiary	Service Sector
	49	M	Tertiary	Teacher
	59	F	Tertiary	LSE II
Żejtun	20	F	Post-Secondary	Student
	49	F	Tertiary	Head of Department within Ministry
	52	M	Tertiary	Assistant Director
	55	M	Tertiary	Bank Manager
Valletta & Floriana	25	F	Tertiary	I.T.
	25	M	Tertiary	Proof-reader
	28	M	Post-Secondary	Self Employed
	36	M	Tertiary	Lawyer
	44	F	Post-Secondary	Office Administrator
Cottonera	26	M	Tertiary	Doctor
	31	M	Tertiary	Administrator
	36	F	Tertiary	PA to MEP
	49	F	Secondary	Executive Visitors Service

APPENDIX B

Topic Guide

Objectives:

To chart the social representation of policing in the Maltese islands.

To document beliefs concerning

(a) the role of police officers in society;

(b) the (i) justifications for use and (ii) limits to their authoritative powers;

(c) their perceived core duties concerning (i) crime prevention, (ii) enforcement vs (iii) crime resolution;

(d) other duties associated with policing, in terms of what it is (i) they should be helping out with and (ii) what they should refuse to help out with;

(e) their extended duties concerning (i) enforcement, (ii) protection, (iii) public order, (iv) private needs), (v) quality of life issues;

(f) their function in (i) surveillance, (ii) stations, (iii) on the beat.

Interview questions:

Objective	Interview guide
Audio recorder ON	Audio recorder ON
Consent	Audio-recorded declaration of consent
Participant Characteristics	Audio-recorded statement of characteristics: Age Locality Highest Education Level
	Have you ever had any contact with the police, for example, reported a crime at a police station or met the police at the site of an accident?

Have you ever considered a career in policing? What would it take for you to join the police? If a close relative told you they wanted to join the force, what would your reaction be?

a, c,

What do you consider to be the key roles and duties of police officers?

Probe:

What other sorts of things should the police be helping out with?

And what sort of things should they be refusing to help out with?

a, c, d, e, f

If it were up to you, what should the police be investing in?

Should the police focus more on preventing crime or finding out who committed crimes?

What do you think about police in stations, and police on the streets – do we need all of them?

Why/why not?

Is there anything else you think the police should focus on that we haven't yet mentioned?

b

What do you think about policing powers and the use of force?

When is it right and when not right for the police to use force?

The police are allowed, by law, to use force, if necessary.

Do you agree with this?

Probe, if appropriate (e.g., if interviewee is against the use of force by the police): Would it make a difference if the police wear cameras

How do you think you could help the police do their job?

On the internet, social media pages are sometimes used to keep a line of communication between the public and the police (e.g.,

people posting about incidents, asking for help, etc.). What do you think about this?

f(i)   What do you think about surveillance systems that could help the police be on the lookout for people breaking the law, like CCTV cameras?
Why/why not?

Have you heard about the Community Policing pilot project carried out in Mellieha? Do you know what Community Policing is? What do you think about the police building closer ties with the community?

APPENDIX C

Coding Framework

Beyond police duties - Administrative and Civil Duties

Beyond police duties - Administrative and non-police work (telephone, paperwork, office work) should be outsourced to civilians (under oath) so police can do policing work

Beyond police duties - In certain minor cases, they can advise you to act civilly but then it's up to you (e.g., fights with neighbours, issues between married couple)

Beyond police duties - It is not priority for police to help civilly (e.g., woman crossing road, etc.)

Beyond police duties - Depending on case

Beyond police duties - Case-by-case (e.g., ok to refuse police help, some people are more open than others to police help; e.g., blurred as in threat cases, etc.)

Beyond police duties - Cases which expose them to disease, or puts their health.safety at risk, where they are mistreated, abused (e.g., hospital duties, violent situations, unless they must intervene to protect, etc.)

Beyond police duties - Police can only take an issue to court (e.g., can only stop at restraining orders, etc.)

Beyond police duties - Police should not focus on catching drug users

Beyond police duties - Police should refuse to obey in cases where order is immoral, or people call for unfair reasons (e.g., being told to remove a person from praying publicly, or someone calling on someone else needlessly, etc.)

Beyond police duties - Going beyond call of duty

Beyond police duties - Difficult question - sense of community, helpful vs territories that are not your concern (e.g, family disputes, duty calls after work hours, they end up social workers, sometimes cannot say no, dealing with humans, expertise, etc.)

Beyond police duties - Leave space for public participation to create culture of participation, whilst police focus on more pressing issues

Beyond police duties - Nothing or very little (e.g., policing goes beyond official duties, keeping order is very vast; best to add more duties and for them to do their duty, like doctors always on call, refer to competent authority, cannot refuse)

Beyond police duties - Police should not be used to fill in the gaps of other authority figures' jobs (e.g., by giving legal or other advice, etc.)

Beyond police duties - Whilst police should stick to their duties, when possible they should also help people in need (e.g., old woman crossing road)

Beyond police duties - Yes police work should have boundaries, because not fair that employees are burdened with duties tenfold their job description

Beyond police duties - Outsourcing to other public entities

Beyond police duties - Dangerous and serious jobs should be given to the AFM.Europol, etc. (e.g., physical requirements, terrorism, migrant smuggling, etc.)

Beyond police duties - Outsource minor tasks (e.g., littering, bay watching, crane in the road can be overseen by warden, clerical work, setting up a neighbourhood watch, etc.) and focus on serious issues (theft, drug busts, executive decisions, etc.)

Beyond police duties - Police work should not be outsourced to private companies like in UK, but in order to better serve community

Beyond police duties - Security in banks should be outsourced to private companies

Beyond police duties - Some outsourcing re cybercrime, etc., to have more police focused on locality

Beyond police duties - Things related to advice.education should be outsourced to government entities (e.g., transport regulations to Transport Malta; littering to cleaning sector, etc.)

Beyond police duties - Traffic management (e.g., better for them to do other more important duties, duty could be transfered to other entities, not necessarily police, etc.)

Beyond police duties - When other entities can do a better job or not within police remit.expertise (e.g., social work, in domestic violence, other entities work better, even if still under police supervision, etc.)

Body cam - Against

Body cam - Data protection issues involved

Body cam - No (e.g., that would lead to police state, it's best to have camera on only in case of incidents, we have enough techno-surveillance, more physical presence more important, etc.)

Body cam - For

Body cam - Educational, teaching tool for police force

Body cam - Good source of evidence.witness (incl. dash cams)

Body cam - Makes police more accountable, duty-bound to act (e.g., can serve as a tool for higher ranks.management to monitor police, etc.)

Body cam - No data protection issues involved

Body cam - People protection (e.g., excessive police force)

Body cam - Police protection (e.g., false accusations, violence against police, etc.)

Body cam - Protection for both (e.g., avoids false accusations from both sides, feelings of safety among citizens, deters criminals, etc.)

Body cam - Mixed

Body cam - Good, but ... depends on how it is being used (should be used as needed not on all the time, should be informed beforehand, solid legal framework, etc., depends on case.police section, because of data protection issues)

Body cam - Legislative framework should be there for body cams and dashcams to count as evidence

Career - Mixed

Career - No, but (e.g., depends, definitely not police in stations but maybe in internal offices, policing.criminology interesting, pension and early retirement are good incentive, etc.)

Career - Yes, but (e.g., depends on which devision, other interests, police as facing tough realities like in forensics, there needs to be a reform of the police force, everyone knows everyone, offered more physical protection)

Career - No

Career - No (e.g., difficult to be impartial, vendetta by people, never considered career, other vocations, requires guts, poor pay, no career progression, trouble, bad image of them, have to be cut out, even when unemployed, height, corruption, etc.)

Career - Yes

Career - Yes (e.g., I like discipline, inspired by others, time in depot as a kid, many different aspects in policing, I will do a better job, etc.)

Career - Yes, if (what would have to happen ...)

Career - Yes, if ... I change job, if incentivised, if privatised, if restructured (accountability), degrees, age, height, specific sector [criminology], etc.

CCTV - Against

CCTV - Against (slippery slope, fallibility of technology, abuse, data protection, privacy, GDPR, China, CCTV, or too much CCTV, is bad, police state, big brother, we end up like London, abuse simply inevitable, etc.)

CCTV - Against CCTV, in favour of private cameras and speed cameras

CCTV - Body cams better than CCTV because localised and not generalised surveillance

CCTV - Could be abused. Purpose, location and responsible person should be made crystal clear. What worries me is if they start being used for another purpose not originally intended (e.g., what happens to recordings, people snooping on others, etc.)

CCTV - It is not fair to have people being monitored all the time (e.g., in streets where we live, discomfort despite inevitability, etc.)

CCTV - Random searches better than CCTV because it is random, not following people around constantly

CCTV - Sometimes, CCTVs go overboard (e.g., wrong citations given, wrong vision by camera in parking, etc.)

CCTV - We risk political repercussions like police becoming an arm of government (ministers having access to footage, future administrations may be untrustworthy, etc.)

CCTV - For

CCTV - An increase could help with current understaffing of police (e.g., saves police work like traffic fines, etc.)

CCTV - Catching criminals more important than privacy issues (e.g., guidelines can ensure that privacy and data are protected, ideally no interference in police work, etc.)

CCTV - CCTV is better than body cams (e.g., less risk of police state, less DP issues, they're fixed, more control over CCTV use, less invasive, etc.). Not police state, because the intention is to maintain order

CCTV - Effective for crime hotspots (e.g., green wardens)

CCTV - Fear of abuse may be unfounded

CCTV - Good as a means of prevention (e.g., both CCTV, and even private cameras with homes, etc.)

CCTV - Good because they serve as evidence (e.g., hotspots, traffic accidents, etc.)

CCTV - In favour (e.g., feeling safer, catching criminals, if nothing to hide, use can be targetted depending on particular report, evidence can be used after event, more needed, etc.)

CCTV - Mixed

CCTV - Better legislative framework needed as Maltese law still immature here (e.g., private citizen cameras must be given to police upon request, better regulation, etc.)

CCTV - Double-edged sword - Privacy and big brother issues vs. Allows you to reach certain criminal realities. Ok if general surveillance not targetted, etc.

CCTV - In Malta, unless CCTV footage is requested, police do not look at it (e.g., Police do not always investigate footage, CCTV neutral - good but unused, etc)

CCTV - Not everywhere, but where needed (e.g., urban areas like Paceville, etc., not villages, etc.)

CCTV - Should be used for specific reasons like events, certain locations (e.g., littering) with public notified. Limits are needed (e.g., not having CCTV everywhere, necessitating warrants for police, etc.)

CCTV - Whether people want CCTV or not depends on their image of police and trust in police

CCTV - Yes, but (Depends on how and where it is being used; only useful after the fact; must provide evidence that they're being used; Catching criminals is good; Privacy issues are bad; e.g., technology always increasing; Education over punishment, etc.)

Community policing - Against

Community policing - Bad because of issues with corruption, people taking advantage, ties too close

Community policing - Bad because police need to be able to cut off from work

Community policing - Must not go overboard in policing minor details (police state)

Community policing - Negative because role of police is not a social one, to give life advice like a friend, etc. Police should be given more respect than this.

Community policing - There's no point in community policing, will still call local police stations if in need of the police

Community policing - Yes to police presence but no to community policing

Community policing - For

Community policing - Better to have community police than have police doing nothing in stations

Community policing - Good and needed, because police would educate, inform; and not punish and discipline (e.g., whether to punish or give a second chance for a better outcome, seeing whole picture, disadvantaged people, etc.)

Community policing - Good as it combats bureaucracy, police more likely to act as you already spoke to them

Community policing - Good because if you do something wrong, you have to own up to it because they know you

Community policing - Good because it increases presence of police that in turn decreases criminality

Community policing - Good because needs of specific areas can be targetted

Community policing - Good because of better police-people relations (e.g., rapport, police integrated more in society, consistency breeds reassurance among people and more reporting, people point out hotspots)

Community policing - Good because of feelings of reassurance and trust amongst people. You feel you can speak to police (e.g., same cop like same doctor, etc.)

Community policing - Good because police would know how to deal with people (e.g., (il)literate, (un)educated, sufferring from addiction or mental illness, new demographics, foreigners, etc.)

Community policing - Good to invest in and other localities may benefit too

Community policing - Helps prevent certain illegalities, increase civic sense in a locality

Community policing - Improves police image and people's mentality and respect toward police

Community policing - It is great that they are dedicated to doing civil duties (e.g., helping people cross streets, unblocking pavements, etc.)

Community policing - May be better for sensitive.abuse-related crime

Community policing - More knowledge, more active, better for protection and prevention purposes (e.g., knowing who's who, recognising outsiders, better for mental health, less vandalism, etc.)

Community policing - Online reporting facilities are a good idea

Community policing - There are too many construction sites breaking the law right now - Community police can help here by pointing out illegality or fining (e.g., unblocking roads, etc.)

Community policing - True that there is risk of extra confidence between people, but in reality we're already extremely bad in that as a country. Things can only improve (e.g., educate police)

Community policing - Mixed

Community policing - Double-edged sword. Good but police should still be seen as professional, as authority figure (e.g., depends on individual view of friendliness v. authority, etc.)

Community policing - Good as long as there are resources (human) and good allocation of police (e.g., to avoid reducing police from stations)

Community policing - Good if there is a good structural system where all roles are clear, good legislation backing both sides, without grey areas (avoids abuse, etc.)

Community policing - May be better for some localities than others (e.g., popular tourist localities, disadvantaged communities, people who prefer closer ties, space, traffic, size of locality, foreigners vs locals; how large locality is; familiarity,etc.)

Community policing - Overall good, but police officers should be rotated because of corruption, and criminals might be on the look out for police officers after becoming acquainted with them (e.g., knowing their route, their phone number, etc.)

Community policing - Police becoming part of community is good, as long as there is no extra familiarity (e.g., leads to preferential treatment, we are all human, etc.)

Community policing - Sounds nice, but you have to see results, not necessarily effective (e.g., many times we hear 'was known by police', etc.)

Community policing - Observations and recommendations

Community policing - Electing volunteers or citizens of the locality may improve benefits of community policing

Community policing - For this to work, police need to project a professional and caring image

Community policing - Mellieha was a good pilot study because you have core of locals but also foreigners there

Community policing - Only criminals will not agree and will not want to build relationship with police (good people view police as good; bad as bad)

Community policing - Police need to be selected carefully (workload, people skills)

Community policing - Second chances sometimes work if people do the right thing the second time; sometimes, they fail because people still disobey - in this case, fine the person.

Community policing - There should be awareness about this. The fruits of CP only appreciable over time

Community policing - Prior conceptions

Community policing - Misunderstood as neighbourhood watch

Community policing - No idea what CP may be

Community policing - No knowledge on community policing initiative in Mellieha

Community policing - Preconception of CP - I see it as police being localised in zone, being in stations, communicating, informing people if they have difficulties, etc.

Community policing - Previous knowledge of CP - I know there are community police in Mellieha

Contact with police - No

Contact with police - No (descriptive)

Contact with police - Yes

Contact with police - Bad experiences

Contact with police - Good experiences

Contact with police - Mixed experiences (e.g., personal life, good experience in others (professional life e.g., mental health worker)

Contact with police - Yes (descriptive)

Coronavirus

Coronavirus - Law enforcement during this period is good

Go to police for help - Mixed

Go to police for help - In some cases, yes (e.g., car accidents, lost child, professional life); in other cases, no (e.g., environmental issues, personal issues like family issues, personal life, etc.)

Go to police for help - Not necessarily first point of contact (e.g., first call family member then police, etc.)

Go to police for help - Won't seek police help for minor incoveniences (e.g., won't arrive on time, vandalism, small fight, waster their resources, etc.)

Go to police for help - Yes but, issues with distrust of police, and issues with futility, lack of organisation (e.g., anonymity not being respected, one report after another, only in professional life, would still have Plan B, etc.)

Go to police for help - Yes, but only.mostly for pragmatic purposes (e.g., insurance purposes)

Go to police for help - No

Go to police for help - No due to their superior attitude

Go to police for help - No privacy when reporting (e.g., station full of officers not a private room, female reporting to 4 males, etc.)

Go to police for help - Yes

Go to police for help - Yes I would go to police for help (e.g., best to go immediately instead of wait till too late, grave cases, sometimes they do help, crisis,1st point of contact,if one not helpful find another, trust, only authority accessible, etc.)

Help police - Basic duties

Help police - By not interfering in police work (this holds for individual people and for the media; e.g., only negative reporting re George Floyd, Furjana case, neglecting siren, etc.)

Help police - By obeying laws and orders, living morally (e.g., driving, parking, living well and respecting others, etc.) - this reduces police work

Help police - By paying taxes to help increase their pay

Help police - By reporting wherever there is an illegality and collaborating, in a correct and detailed manner (but people do not speak up to avoid going to court) (e.g., environmental or other, illegality that happened or about to happen, etc.)

Help police - Cooperate with police (e.g., when people get citations, they should simply obey and pay)

Help police - Not much beyond reporting when needed, because it depends on one's role.job

Help police - Reporting when needed, but avoiding needless reports (e.g., to Emergency section, minor inconveniences)

Help police - Case-by-case, or Ambivalence

Help police - I would help by reporting in serious cases (drug selling to children, rape, vandalism, etc.) but not in moral.personal issues (e.g., abortion, drug use, censorship, etc.)

Help police - Willing to help police but with a certain level of distrust and futility (ccempel u jinjorawk)

Help police - Research and education

Help police - A collective issue, not a matter of individuals (e.g., keep on educating ourselves as a society re laws, prevention, etc.)

Help police - Educate people and children to respect police and not to see them as something to be feared

Help police - Research (e.g., more research and education and translate into action)

Help police - Setbacks to helping the police

Help police - Often, reporting does not take place (e.g. people want their anonymity, avoiding court and being witness, etc.)

Help police - People should not be afraid to report people they know and police protection may be needed in such cases

Help police - People should not go overboard (e.g., be vigilantes, etc.)

Help police - Taking initiative

Help police - By being an ally to them (e.g., asking people to have more charitable or different perspective on social media, etc.)

Help police - By doing something yourself or things as a community - culture of participation (e.g., voluntary work with older people, re digital literacy, etc.)

Help police - Dash cam, footage submission by civilians (e.g., of speeding cars) - avoids many problems, helps prevention

Help police - Stay vigilant concerning issues around you (e.g. domestic violence), Call their attention to people in need (e.g., old people) - this helps their image too

Help police - Using neighbourhood watch, citizens with licences to help, part-time, etc. (e.g., alleviate the burden on police work to use their resources elsewhere)

Investment - Communication with stakeholders (operations) and public (image)

Investment - Better communication with other professions (e.g., keeping up to date with work of mental health workers, NGOs, local councils, any key players within society)

Investment - In improving police-public relations, communication and police image, and resources to look better and more powerful (e.g., society more laissez-faire, bad acts by police, loss of trust, way they present themselves, etc.)

Investment - Different sections and specialisations

Investment - Community policing, or more presence in, or sense of, community

Investment - Criminal investigations - Sophisticated crimes not investigated of followed up (e.g., DCG), due to lack of resources, and Police should communicate with the rest of Europe (e.g., crime involving multiple nationalities, etc.)

Investment - Environmental issues (e.g., equipment, centralise environment.animal protection section [ALE, etc.], training, enforcement, animals, sea, ALE staff, better collab with env. entities, environmental wardens, spills, pollution, etc.)

Investment - In fighting organised crime (e.g., catching drug traffickers, human trafficking like prostitution, fraud)

Investment - Need for more specialised police (e.g., domestic violence is too common, police in court vs in community, even within same level like station itself, in streets, detectives, etc.)

Investment - Need for training and resources for combatting cybercrime

Investment - Traffic policing (e.g., even small things like use of indicators, resources, etc.)

Investment - Education (of public)

Investment - Campaign needed for people to respect police (e.g., during roadblocks)

Investment - Educate public (e.g., about what is a crime, emergency, and what is not to be reported, traffic laws and ethics, tackle cynical mentality, etc.)

Investment - Education as a means of prevention should be adapted accordingly (e.g., continuous campaigns, adapted to age groups, etc.)

Investment - Human resources

Investment - Better human resource management (e.g., between station and on beat, too many police in peaceful protests, managing police time on duties, training, police allocation, nonpolice duties, cybercrime vs stations, hotspots, bank vs locality, etc.)

Investment - Encourage children to get into policing

Investment - Entry requirements of police (e.g., personality testing, tougher educational requirements for entry, dealing with power, psychology, academically, in law, etc.)

Investment - Human resources. Increase number of police to be able to enforce law and reduce burden on police work (e.g., recruitment, in stations, behind the scenes like cybercrime, loosen trivial restrictions, etc.)

Investment - Invest in solid recruitment. Make police more aware of what they are really getting into, reality of day-to-day job, more accountable, more observant of law

Investment - Improve policing and conditions for officers

Investment - Better job descriptions, better break down of duties within police sections, better organisational structures (e.g., even logbooks for reporting, etc.)

Investment - Better police protection - both legal and need for more protective equipment (e.g., bullet proof vests, non-lethal weapons, arms, self-defense, etc.) and give more rights to police (e.g., due to violence against police, etc.)

Investment - Better police salary and career progression to attract more recruits, increase respect toward police, and be able to demand more of police

Investment - Material resources, logistics and upgrades

Investment - Body cams

Investment - Invest in police stations (e.g., renovation, not only that which meets the eye, better work environment in stations, technology, environment affects mood, etc.)

Investment - Investment should be for needed things, not for show. Doing duty it is what counts (this applies to all professions). Hard decisions not necessarily popular ones.

Investment - Material resources (e.g., police cars, other forms of transport, better uniforms, etc.)

Investment - Upgrading I.T. infrastructure, websites and online public info

Investment - Whilst investment should be for needed things, it is understandable that police want to give a good impression (e.g., new uniforms, etc.)

Investment - Physical surveillance, crime prevention and enforcement

Investment - Active rehabilitation of criminals

Investment - Facilitate online.alternative.easier reporting, especially for certain crimes (e.g., domestic violence, sms, etc.)

Investment - Increase physical presence of police. Police should be more present in the community and more patrolling (e.g., for law enforcement, education purposes, people get good example, prevention, construction, driving, etc.)

Investment - Invest in stopping abuses of social benefits by public

Investment - Stronger law enforcement needed (all too often, known people related to drugs roaming streets, spot checks, etc.)

Investment - To understand the individual and society to prevent crime (e.g., reckless teens from causing accidents, drug overdoses, etc.)

Investment - Tackling job culture and corruption

Investment - Equal treatment of people; remove double standards; less preferential treatment of powerful people (e.g., stricter rules about this, during protests)

Investment - Make police do their duties and help citizens more, as they are not helpful (no need for more equipment, they know their duties)

Investment - More policing autonomy extremely needed, to be able to police politicians and big business. Police should have liberty to do so not fear repercussions

Investment - Police should want to help vulnerable road users (e.g., daily cyclists, etc.). More will needed

Investment - See where issue is (e.g., top management vs lower levels) and solve organisational issues accordingly

Investment - Some form of internal affairs team to overwatch and make sure there is no corruption, and whistleblower mechanisms

Investment - Training

Investment - Educate police officers to be ambassadors of the force, better public officers, representatives

Investment - First aid training for police (physical and mental first aid for dealing with mentally ill as well)

Investment - Police people skills need great improvement (e.g., customer service, when duty calls, rough vs reasonable speech and demeanour, less unnecessary force, etc.)

Investment - Police should undergo physical training and be healthy to ensure they can carry out their job well (e.g., including prospective police, they're role models, etc.)

Investment - Police training (e.g., experienced police working together is essential, more police discipline, dangerous people, fire, simulations, more serious crimes, health & safety, CPD, career progression, law, tension diffusion, etc.)

Investment - Police training in sensitive issues, as they do not have skills to deal with them (e.g., domestic violence, mental health)

Investment - Police training on the use of force

Investment - Training on how to deal with foreigners or culturally different others

Investment - Training outsourced entities

Investment - Training.education on police wellbeing - how to go along with others, deal with traumatic incidents, etc.

Physical surveillance - Against

Physical surveillance - Better to have police in stations ready for action upon receiving calls, or to have police in training sessions

Physical surveillance - No need for more (e.g., too much presence is bad, police state, feelings of constant surveillance, traffic police are enough, etc.)

Physical surveillance - Police presence, or too much, might incite fear (e.g., because of their attitude, having police undercover may lessen fear, etc.)

Physical surveillance - For

Physical surveillance - Because of increase in criminality (e.g., more violence, more multiculturalism therefore more within-group conflict, between Maltese and foreigners, etc.)

Physical surveillance - Good because leads to serious, organised environment (e.g., police in banks)

Physical surveillance - Having more police in street means you catch crimes that would not have been caught otherwise (vs. police in stations, etc.)

Physical surveillance - Helps police image (because currently, people fear police coming to them)

Physical surveillance - Helps to maintain public order (e.g., when people see police, they say 'what happened', etc.)

Physical surveillance - No downsides here, you will find police in case of need

Physical surveillance - Physical presence leads to quicker response and more preparedness (in events and everywhere not only hotspots, and all sections [RIU, drugs, etc.] should be present, easier to report, no need to report, etc.)

Physical surveillance - Physical surveillance very important, more presence needed (control, help vulnerable, theft, feelings of security, we are undisciplined people - presence means some things are cut out (e.g., car seat issues, littering, d&d, pavement

Physical surveillance - Police boxes also good. Keep police in stations but also spread them in hotspots, across localities and in streets (deterrent)

Physical surveillance - Police on the beat are more important and readily available than in stations, and police on beat get more knowledge on locality (e.g., get on site quicker, be of help sooner, etc.)

Physical surveillance - Provides sense of reassurance, security and trust, police closer to people (e.g., not just an authority figure 'up there', in action not lost in paperwork, etc.)

Physical surveillance - Serves as a deterrent and is thus a form of prevention (e.g. criminals, police on the beat are a reminder to obey laws)

Physical surveillance - Very good and needed always, as long as pattern is varied (so that people do not get used to where police are)

Physical surveillance - Mixed

Physical surveillance - Good as long as they know they're there to help

Physical surveillance - The decisions of police in the streets should be binding and patrolling works if police take action (e.g., not on mobile, mhux mort inkellem lil Cikku u rrangali, etc.)

Physical surveillance - Observations and recommendations

Physical surveillance - Environmental wardens, with enforcement powers and who are strategically positioned, would solve the issue concerning people's fear to report (because of court, etc.) because it would be their job.

Physical surveillance - Foot patrols sometimes more possible or relevant (e.g., Birgu easier than larger Bormla, demographics make a difference, older feel more secure, if too much traffic impossible, cities vs villages, etc.)

Physical surveillance - In Valletta, patrols are visible on most streets, this is good

Physical surveillance - Might be reassuring for some people, but better to have them linked with particular activities (e.g. hunting, markets, etc.) instead of just out

Physical surveillance - Some areas, certain zones, popular places, events, certain times of day (e.g., paceville, feasts, Marsaxlokk pjazza, etc.) need it more than others

Police duties - Authority figures, role models

Police duties - They are public officers, authority figures, and should be role models (e.g., integrity, accountability, treating people equally, all humans should help, uniform means something, obey own rules, etc.)

Police duties - Civil duties, and Work on locality

Police duties - Civil duties (e.g., help when needed, errands, helping old people, helping the disabled, everyone has these duties not just police, improves their image, etc.)

Police duties - Ensure that people's rights are respected and not violated (e.g., homeless deserve better, etc.)

Police duties - Patrols (e.g., foot, car, segway; the good police you can speak to; in localities; etc.)

Police duties - Police should be close to people (e.g., in streets, not stuck in an office or with telephone)

Police duties - Police should start by helping locality (local emphasis, charity begins at home)

Police duties - Investigative work

Police duties - Investigative work (e.g., gathering evidence, acting on reports, serious crimes like fraud, theft, murder, etc.)

Police duties - See that justice is served (e.g., providing unbiased evidence from interrogations in courts, regardless of one's personal beliefs, etc.)

Police duties - Law enforcement

Police duties - Fight against drug trafficking and drug use

Police duties - Law enforcement (e.g. traffic, environmental, animal protection, patrols, emergencies, drinking & driving, construction, daily things, drugs, no preferential treatment, we suffer when laws broken, smoking, bigger cases like murder, etc.)

Police duties - More diligence needed

Police duties - Police should take every report seriously, both local and large scale (both local and national; e.g., money laundering; if it's someone they know)

Police duties - They should do their job not evade it

Police duties - Protection

Police duties - Protection (e.g., police as first port of call, mental health, investigate reports, threats, accidents, security, domestic violence, abuse, hotspots, missing persons, good people get protection and bad people get enforcement, etc.)

Police duties - Protection more salient and important than enforcement

Police duties - To serve and protect (e.g., it is their ethos; they have the 'serve' mentalities here more than abroad which is good, etc.)

Police duties - Public order

Police duties - Give you advice on what is right and what is wrong (e.g., legally, in terms of permits, guidance re events, how to proceed, etc.)

Police duties - Maintain public order, national security, public peace and smooth functioning of society (e.g., Paceville, at local level, conflict avoidance, feasts, crowd control, traffic, stability, incoming people, important events, etc.)

Police duties - Police as first line of contact in professional work (e.g., local council)

Police duties - Specialised work

Police duties - Many sections - CID, Drugs, Abuse, Cybercrime, etc. - Many roles to play in society

Police duties - Some police work visible, other work not visible. Much police work involves paper work (papers for court, admin, etc.)

Police duties - Strict application vs Practicality

Police duties - No room for leniency. If you did something wrong, you should face the police.

Police duties - Rehabilitating and understanding the criminal or victim (e.g., not just filing a report or catching the criminal, no excessive penalties, better to understand, judicious use of second chances, etc.)

Police duties - To educate people (e.g., intervention, culture change, punishment alone does not work to improve people, explain consequences, etc.)

Police mentality - Mixed

Police mentality - Cannot generalize (i.e., police treat people how people treat them, each individual is different)

Police mentality - If something is not routine, and is serious (e.g., murder reports, etc.) I would expect attitude to be better than for routine stuff

Police mentality - Mixed (e.g., lenient, lazy, bad apples vs, all right, diligent, rule-based, etc.; also depends on situation, persons, etc.; Visible from body language - some love doing their job, helping society; others too proud, untouchables, etc.)

Police mentality - More experienced police have better way of dealing with people

Police mentality - Perhaps old female police are not as bad as old male police

Police mentality - Some police avoid overtime, leading to issues with human resources. Others very diligent and end up compensating for them

Police mentality - Younger police are less disciplined, have worse presentation, than older ones (general global phenomenon)

Police mentality - Younger police more reasonable, diligent, than older rougher, work averse, old-fashioned ones

Police mentality - Negative

Police mentality - Aggression and police brutality (e.g., violence toward mentally ill, etc.)

Police mentality - Attitude of police may worsen over time, getting used to job, receiving banal cases, monotony, etc., as with every other job

Police mentality - In Malta, everyone knows each other, so police police not wanting to 'interfere' (because X is so and so; e.g., police informing hunters of reports, in domestic violence knowing the male, etc.). Police need more discipline.

Police mentality - Long shifts, situation, etc., affect police mentality

Police mentality - Police as prejudiced (e.g., racist, misogynistic, economic background, stereotypes, tattoos,etc.)

Police mentality - Police defensive because of understaffing and media and people's perception

Police mentality - Police do not believe victims of domestic violence, and many women fear reporting because police will blame them (Male police's attitudes toward women are debasing (e.g., victim blaming, etc.))

Police mentality - Police do the bare minimum and do not take action (e.g., all vs some, certain localities like Valletta, parking in Rabat, discourage reporting, not following up, due to feeling misunderstood, treat their job like doing a favour, etc.)

Police mentality - Police lack people skills (e.g., when duty calls, rough vs reasonable speech and demeanour, emotionally distant, etc.), mutual respect goes a long way

Police mentality - Police machismo, fearsome, arrogance, power-tripping and unethical (e.g., the idea that because you are police, you have power, 'if I know you I help you, if not I make it difficult', provocation, escalation, etc.)

Police mentality - Some police are too laid back, lazy, undisciplined, sloppy presentation, not alert (e.g., mitluqin, xkora patata, mobile phone, avoiding duty to protect children in street, 25 years service, etc.)

Police mentality - Taking advantage of certain individuals (e.g., those with mental health problems or lesser education)

Police mentality - They think everyone is a criminal, either big criminal or at least small criminal

Police mentality - Things have worsened over time - police behaviour has worsened

Police mentality - Observations and recommendations

Police mentality - It depends on how you behave yourself with them. Respectful people get respectful treamtent, and vice versa.

Police mentality - Police should have to change sections after a while so they grow as police and get better picture of force (e.g., more job satisfaction, motivation, etc.)

Police mentality - Police should use stereotypes wisely, e.g., during roadblocks, not succumb to tentation to typify.profile for nothing or in abusive manner (e.g., racism)

Police mentality - Positive

Police mentality - Good and.or nice, want to carry out their duty and do a good job. Policing is something you get into to do a good job, they work well together (e.g., give advice, speak to perpetrator, etc.)

Police mentality - I would imagine that the majority are police because they love their job, are authentic, otherwise they would not remain there, even though job difficult

Police mentality - Police people skills are ok on a human level

Police mentality - Those who do not want to work or are lazy are Exceptions

Police stations - Against

Police stations - Better increase physical surveillance in streets than in stations (e.g., better work in action than get lost in paperwork, police closer to people, patrols can come after calling, even for reporting (more efficient, privacy), etc.)

Police stations - No need for more police (e.g., there are enough, question of doing their job and being more organized [e.g., economies of scale, organisational work, discipline, relegating duties, etc.], Valletta, more recruitment in general, etc.)

Police stations - There are enough police, and I was always served whenever I went, they make sure locality is organised, etc. (e.g., Rabat, Valletta)

Police stations - For

Police stations - Need for more police available in stations (e.g., calling and no one answering, at night, in general, to balance shifts, not having police to send, etc.)

Police stations - Yes because sometimes justice has to be seen to be done

Police stations - Mixed

Police stations - At least effort should be made to keep stations opened in every locality, even if not many police there (e.g., easier for people to report in own locality, old people, better if manned 24 hours, etc.)

Police stations - Certain areas need more police (e.g., South, Marsaxlokk, St Julian's, Sliema, Valletta, domestic violence, lack of education)

Police stations - Police should first report in station, then if one has 'the luxury' (i.e., enough police) to send out police in streets, that's great

Police stations - Observations and recommendations

Police stations - Consistency needed in terms of how police deal with reports, logs, who answers phone, etc. Familiarity is good (but not extra familiarity)

Police stations - For now we need more police in stations, for balance between prevention and apprehension, because we have not yet cultivated a culture of participation among people

Police stations - It is disgraceful to enter police station and see officers asleep, on mobile, in space, etc.

Police stations - Some local police stations (e.g., Gudja, Marsaxlokk, Swieqi, Ghaxaq, Bormla, Zebbug) tend to be.are always closed or empty, or else locality does not have station (e.g., that's ok I can go to nearest one) or police there but unhelpful

Police stations - Some police stations have a bad reputation for laughing off or downplaying people's concerns (e.g., vulnerable road users' concerns, etc.)

Police stopping people - Against random checks

Police stopping people - Can be too much.fascistic (e.g., New Zealand), or slippery slope - This leads to police powers escalating needlessly (e.g., first they search you, then your car, then your house, etc.)

Police stopping people - Risk of abuse of power or profiling (e.g., gender, race, use stereotypes wisely instead, we give them our trust, etc.)

Police stopping people - Ethics, valid reasons, and police attitude

Police stopping people - Police attitude matters when stopping people (e.g., compliance depends on police attitude, etc.)

Police stopping people - Police need a good reason to stop someone - in this case, it's good to do so. If there is no suspicion, I disagree (similar to 'innocent until proven guilty')

Police stopping people - Random checks are fine if aimed at educating, and without abuse of power (e.g., police language, attitude, empathy not power-tripping, no inappropriate searching, etc.)

Police stopping people - Random checks should be random, ethical, follow guidelines, and without profiling (e.g., based on skin colour, village, etc., people who lookin innocent or high up stopped as well, ministers, etc.)

Police stopping people - For random checks

Police stopping people - No issue even if stereotypical; s.he who seeks shall find, etc. Usually they do have some form of minor suspicion at least, otherwise harassment.

Police stopping people - Random checks are good, more needed (e.g., crime prevention, catching people with drugs, safeguarding community; if you did nothing, you have nothing to hide, more security, no need for suspicion, speeding, etc.)

Police stopping people - Yes they need this right as it allows them to carry out their job. Over time, it can become norm and people won't mind

Police stopping people - Obeying police

Police stopping people - If police stopped me, I would obey (e.g., if they provide ID, immediately, one should obey authority, still afraid, if people don't stop police should intervene, still ask why, I am not above the law, if my fault I pay fine, etc.)

Police stopping people - Uncomfortable if stopped by police, but will obey not to escalate things

Police stopping people - Specifying utility of checks

Police stopping people - Good for situations where you know there will be certain things (e.g., high alcohol content, etc.)

Police stopping people - In localities that are hotspots, especially needed, and should really be random

Police stopping people - Random checks good for certain things but not for others (e.g., finding drugs, pistols, etc., but not money laundering policing)

Police stopping people - Roadblocks are fine, but stopping people in street frightens people for nothing

Prevention - Benefits of prevention

Prevention - Crime prevention is cost and resource effective

Prevention - Difficulty of prevention

Prevention - Difficult because certain upbringing and situations push people toward crime

Prevention - Prevention is very difficult but progress has indeed been made over the years (e.g., in Valletta, violence and theft decreased, etc.)

Prevention - Education as a means

Prevention - Education and training of police is paramount for prevention

Prevention - Education as a means (e.g., prevent people from turning to crime, educate on minor things, in schools, all ages, educate even when punishing, disadvantage env, drug users, police roles, authority, uniform, etc.)

Prevention - Education very useful for preventing cybercrime (e.g., TV ads on cybercrime by police)

Prevention - Other means of prevention

Prevention - Image of police plays an important role here (e.g., better police stations, more welcoming and improved, etc.)

Prevention - Integrate marginalised communities (e.g., immigrants, people who do small crimes continuously, drug users, disenfranchised Maltese, etc.) for better prevention

Prevention - Keeping an eye for criminal hotspots

Prevention - More technology and better use of I.T. can help with this

Prevention - Physical presence of police and checks serves this purpose (e.g., patrols in streets, roadblocks, more fines, night patrols esp in certain localities, etc.)

Prevention - Police need to understand crime to be able to prevent it (e.g., study few cases, look at patterns and causes, etc.)

Prevention - Prevention by taking every report seriously and working on available evidence

Prevention - Should be more systemic and not just depend on police (e.g., government officials, education by teachers, family, church, etc.)

Prevention - The use of deterrents is needed (e.g., the only way the Maltese learn, fines, parking tickets, etc.). Enforce small crimes to make people think. Highly needed because of Maltese mentality ('do what you want but don't get caught', etc.)

Prevention and Apprehension - Apprehension more important

Prevention and Apprehension - Apprehension is more important (there is a limit to prevention, more realistic to apprehend, etc.)

Prevention and Apprehension - Limits of prevention

Prevention and Apprehension - Ideally prevention, but (e.g., people who commit crime must be addressed, loss of respect if no apprehension, police cannot be watchdogs of society either, etc.)

Prevention and Apprehension - Prevention does not work as well in certain cases - an issue of case-by-case basis (e.g., domestic violence, robberies, etc.)

Prevention and Apprehension - Prevention and Apprehension both important and complementary

Prevention and Apprehension - Both important (e.g., prevention not always possible, legal loopholes, understaffing, intertwined, education and being in community, etc.)

Prevention and Apprehension - Catching the criminal is a way of preventing future crime (e.g., can serve as a deterrant for potential criminals)

Prevention and Apprehension - This goes beyond policing and one should look at systemic sociological elements (e.g., understanding background of certain people, drugs in open in cottonera, vicious circles, etc.)

Prevention and Apprehension - Prevention more important

Prevention and Apprehension - Prevention is more important (e.g., if possible, image of police plays a big role here, avoids high criminality rate, prevention better than cure, etc.)

Relatives joining police

Relatives joining police - Neutral, their choice

Relatives joining police - No or as a last resort (e.g., you can do more with your life, bad pay, no real career progression, police not respected, etc.)

Relatives joining police - OK with relative joining police (e.g., would encourage, leave it up to them, etc.)

Relatives joining police - Yes, but - if not taking easy way, if they know what they're getting into and should not be weak (e.g., certain police ranks - e.g. RIU - face more risks, precarious situations, lack of protection, politics, bad pay, etc.)

Social media use by people - Against

Social media use by people - Against. Better to go direct to source instead of wasting time complaining and asking online (e.g., just go and report, role confusion, etc.)

Social media use by people - Demeaning language by people against the police bothers me (but this is because of lack of trust)

Social media use by people - One has to be careful there is no scapegoating (e.g., one's neighbour, racial hatred, hate speech, better a confidential website because of these things, etc.)

Social media use by people - For

Social media use by people - A good way to improve police image (e.g., Police officer x helped me with y)

Social media use by people - Good to be able to ask for help, and police should reply (DP issues, but in reality, you make yourself known yourself)

Social media use by people - Good use of internet content by police to catch criminals (e.g., police can do research, etc.)

Social media use by people - Good vis-a-vis issues of common good, public heritage, etc.

Social media use by people - In favour, as it is a good manner of communicating (e.g., asking for help, etc.)

Social media use by people - People can use to report missing or wanted person (e.g., preferred over calling nowadays, etc.)

Social media use by people - Posting in public forum to get police attention (e.g., otherwise no action taken, etc.)

Social media use by people - The use of an app can be beneficial (e.g., can increase feelings of safety, people in need, directly authorised by the police, can deter information leaks, etc.)

Social media use by people - Mixed

Social media use by people - Care should be taken re what is posted (e.g., respect, prudence). Sometimes, some posting by people is extra (e.g., certain shocking footage, disrespect to family members, Data protection, etc.)

Social media use by people - Censorship.hate speech laws are double-edged sword (e.g., hate speech should be codified fairly, but certain ideologies must be spoken about (e.g., gender segregation), freedom, all should be criticised, law is law, etc.)

Social media use by people - Double-edged sword - advantages and disadvantages (e.g., fake profiles, jokes, vs good info, etc.)

Social media use by people - Good to facilitate quick response. But does not replace official reports (real live, emotions seen by police, detail given, etc.)

Social media use by people - Information is good but should not be primary source for police and should be fact-checked by them. Police should be careful about social media info

Social media use by people - Observations and recommendations

Social media use by people - If anonymised, you would get more reporting and more reliable information than if people show their face and name. Less intimidating than face-to-face

Social media use by people - Moderators needed, have a safe space and structure like forums and monitor. This acts as official central point of contact. Formalise (e.g., make official, or prevent shocking videos, etc.)

Social media use by police - For (Successes, benefits, etc.)

Social media use by police - As a way of improving police image, removing prejudice, and building trust, facilitating collaboration with the public (e.g., you know they exist, feelings of safety, by being transparent and honest, etc.)

Social media use by police - In favour, as it is a fast, effective manner of communicating (e.g., more holistic reach, more public education, avoid this or that road, better than traditional news, allows for clarification, etc.)

Social media use by police - Official page avoids a lot of issues vis-a-vis unofficial posting, etc.

Social media use by police - On the whole, posts are tactful and avoid mistakes (e.g., racial bias)

Social media use by police - Successful use of social media by police (e.g., solving rape cases, wanted, missing people, etc.)

Social media use by police - Very good, especially by means of PRO, for consistency

Social media use by police - Mixed

Social media use by police - Good as long as they're careful and post responsibly (e.g., not posting unintentionally racist or wrong stuff, must be managed, sensitive images, violent crimes, relation with journalists, etc.)

Social media use by police - In favour, but privacy must be maintained

Social media use by police - Private and police accounts should be kept separate

Social media use by police - Observations and recommendations

Social media use by police - If an app is developed it should be monitored by the police all the time (also better re privacy)

Social media use by police - More engagement needed (e.g., participate not censor, hate speech example, etc.)

Social media use by police - Police should be monitoring social media all the time

Social media use by police - Police should offer follow up of reports

Social media use by police - Police should use social media to celebrate certain things, become closer to people, show human side (e.g., reverse of the Tiktok incident)

Social media use by police - Use of social media by the police as an education tool, to remove misconceptions (e.g., deterring people from crime, showing how you will be caught if you transgress, etc.

Surveillance - Physical and technological are complementary

Surveillance - Both physical and technological can elicit fear (m'iniex safe hawn mela)

Surveillance - CCTV better for prevention, physical for catching criminal when people not aware of their presence and commit crime anyway

Surveillance - Physical and technological complement each other - balance (e.g., CCTV in main areas and Physical mobile, evidence vs

prevention.communication.reassurance, uniforms, CCTV where physical limited, bodycams, resources limited so CCTV, etc.)

Surveillance - Physical better for protection of people, who actually see the police; and technological better for police work

Surveillance - Physical for prevention, technological for catching the criminal

Surveillance - Physical better than technological

Surveillance - Physical better than technological (more reasonable, more preventative, faster, people feel safer, less automatic, money better spent, human contact, people get used to cameras, Physical mobile and CCTV static, roadblocks effective, etc.)

Surveillance - Physical presence leads to prevention whereas CCTV is ignored

Surveillance - Technological only better than physical because 24 hours. But not in other things

Surveillance - Technological better than physical

Surveillance - CCTV better to avoid breaking of traffic rules (e.g., bad parking, etc.), whereas police ignored or threatened

Surveillance - Technological better than physical (e.g., decreases human error, no corruption, less obvious)

Trust and Image - Communication and police-public relations

Trust and Image - Communication between the public and the police has improved along the years

Trust and Image - Education needed to improve image of, and knowledge about, the police

Trust and Image - It is great that police now have their PRO - this consistency improves trust and image if there is more communication

Trust and Image - Police are not seen as first contact in education outreach

Trust and Image - Police seen as representing the state

Trust and Image - Police should listen more to people, listen more to their superiors

Trust and Image - Things that happen, like no figurehead, public knowlege that commissioner not good, etc., tarnish image. With new commissioner image may improve slowly.

Trust and Image - Improvements (past and potential)

Trust and Image - If police do their work consistently and with discipline, they will gain people's respect.

Trust and Image - Nowadays there is more enforcement by police than there was two years ago

Trust and Image - Overlapping roles, e.g., between LEZA, Transport Malta and Police, create confusion. Always better to have a central point (e.g., 112 and then army.ambulance comes if necessary, etc.)

Trust and Image - Police have a hard job.get bad image due to lack of resources and training, and understaffing (e.g., from cars to understaffing)

Trust and Image - Police work increased in certain sectors lately (e.g., court cases being settled quicker, etc.)

Trust and Image - The mentality that because policing falls under public sector therefore it's obviously bad, must change by investing more

Trust and Image - There is scope.space for people to work and improve well

Trust and Image - Unfortunately, in Malta, everything is done irregularly (e.g., education.prevention campaign starting and stopping, etc.)

Trust and Image - Mixed, Inconsistencies, Case-by-case

Trust and Image - Normal policing work like keeping order, work in stations, etc., is good, but policing of politicians, big business, etc., is bad

Trust and Image - Police do good job for serious crimes (e.g., violence), but not for everyday disputes

Trust and Image - Sometimes, first time offenders get harsh penalties whereas long-time offenders are liberated, etc.

Trust and Image - Negative image and mistrust

Trust and Image - Difficult to regulate police, as you would have to report them to their own friends

Trust and Image - General mistrust because police fail to do their duties well (e.g., prejudice [racism, misogynism], no faith they'll catch criminals, reporting for nothing, surprised when they answer, etc.)

Trust and Image - Higher crime rates due to lack of trust in the police

Trust and Image - In Malta police are corrupt and haven't improved in their image (e.g., corrupt police tarnish image, etc.)

Trust and Image - In Malta police are not as caring and patient (e.g., as abroad)

Trust and Image - Other entities do better work than police (e.g., Transport Malta in managing traffic vs police, etc.)

Trust and Image - People see policing as dead-end, no career progression, look down upon policing for this reason (as opposed to looking up to architects, lawyers, etc.)

Trust and Image - Police are backwards and not keeping up with the current times (e.g., organisation)

Trust and Image - Police as less intimidating.imposing.authoritative nowadays (e.g., physical stature, height, obesity, etc.)

Trust and Image - Police dismiss cases of domestic violence and abuse, like marital rape; they should help more instead of telling you to solve problems (e.g., due to conservative views, can be life-or-death, etc.)

Trust and Image - Police do not make use of their resources

Trust and Image - Police do the bare minimum, neglect duties and relegate duties to other entities (don't discipline, don't solve crimes without help, because understaffed, etc.)

Trust and Image - Police in Malta are not as good as in other countries

Trust and Image - Police lost their power; People lost their respect and fear of police; (e.g., no longer saying 'sir' or seen as authority, seeing them as taking their tax money, their duties relegated to other entities, etc.)

Trust and Image - Police need to be fit to do their job well and be taken seriously

Trust and Image - Police need to have discipline, integrity and empathy, and need to seriously act on reports (e.g., rape, domestic violence) not keep things quiet

Trust and Image - Police paid for by our taxes - therefore should respect us, money to good use (e.g., they are not over us, they should know this, etc.)

Trust and Image - Police take long to take action, and they don't do a good job for serious cases (e.g., DCG murder)

Trust and Image - Public perception of police is very bad (e.g., because police behave horribly, fear of police, not understood by public, etc.)

Trust and Image - Some police officers do not have the right demeanour or are not knowledgable (e.g., passing unnecessary comments, constables ignorant of the law)

Trust and Image - Sometimes, police themselves afraid of perpetrator (e.g., man beating wife, etc.)

Trust and Image - Positive image and respect for police

Trust and Image - Abroad there is racial profiling (e.g., Nordic countries, USA, etc.). Malta there isn't as much, despite all our defects

Trust and Image - I do not think people in Malta have a bad image of police

Trust and Image - Many police departments do their work well (administrative, fire, etc.)

Trust and Image - Negative attitude toward police is more common abroad than in Malta (here only those who do crime dislike the police)

Trust and Image - Police are catching a lot of drug-related crime. This is good, they should invest more in fight against organised crime

Trust and Image - Policing is a difficult profession as it deals with humans, who may view the police as enemies due to having difficult lives (e.g., difficult socio-economic circumstances, background, etc.)

Trust and Image - Policing is a prestigious and important job

Trust and Image - Policing is a vocation requiring courage and patience - they are first to go on scenes of accidents, crime, etc.

Trust and Image - Respect to police and their work, they are underpaid, not recognised, job is difficult, and they do not have any protection

Trust and Image - Unfair and incomplete portrayals and.or treatment of police

Trust and Image - Lack of respect by people.institutions toward police (ma jistmawhomx f'xogholhom) leads to people not wanting to join police (e.g., courts dismissing evidence, known drug dealers liberated, etc.)

Trust and Image - Media depicting police badly, for political ends, movies, etc.

Trust and Image - On the whole, police do a good job, despite suspicions arising from what we read, etc. Most are good, just a few bad apples

Trust and Image - People's view of police is not formed due to direct experience but due to messages they received from everywhere (e.g., television, cases they hear about like traffic abuse, social media, info being repeated, unfair reporting, etc.)

Trust and Image - Police cannot do their job well because they are hindered by higher management and senseless internal policies

Trust and Image - Police do hard work and then everything comes to nothing at court (e.g., criminals set free, drug cases, Bormla, etc.). This worsens image that people have of police

Trust and Image - Police falsely accused at times

Trust and Image - Police need to defend themselves from public opinion and watch their step (e.g., better PR, careful re videos by citizens)

Trust and Image - Police should be respected more. Many people in Malta see police negatively and a lot of chatter (e.g., on social media) against police. Policing is job with great responsibility

Trust and Image - Problems are institutional, high up, in laws, in not protecting police who take action, etc. and not individual police per se. People should be taught this

Trust and Image - Society changed such that police job became harder (e.g., people behave as if only their views.behaviour are good, less respect toward authority, in all spheres of life even kid's education, etc.)

Trust and Image - The government role in police tarnishes their image and leads to corruption

Use of force

Use of force - As a means of control (e.g., to teach people to be more law-abiding)

Use of force - Is acceptable for self-defence and protection (e.g., need good reasons, as last resort, non-lethal weapons, physical threats to police, etc.)

Use of force - Less use of force has made police less powerful and authoritative

Use of force - Police can use force if legitimate.necessary - but sometimes you hear of excessive needless violence

APPENDIX D

Thematic Analysis

Table D.1

Categorical dimensions for the Basic Themes of 'Police Duties', 'Beyond Police Duties', and 'Prevention vs. Apprehension' that are classified under the Organizing Theme 'Police Duties and Operations'.

Basic Theme	Category	Sub-category
Police Duties	Authority figures, role models	
	Civil duties and work on locality	
	Investigative work	
	Law enforcement	
	More diligence needed	
	Protection	
	Public order	
	Specialised work	
	Strict application vs practicality	
Beyond Police Duties	Administrative and civil duties	
	Depending on case	
	Going beyond call of duty	
	Outsourcing to other public entities	
Prevention Vs. Apprehension	Apprehension more important	
	Limits of prevention	
	Prevention and apprehension both important and complimentary	

	Prevention more important	Educations as a means of prevention
		Benefits of prevention
		Other means of prevention
	Random checks	For random checks
		Against random checks
		Obeying police
		Ethics, valid reasons, and police attitude matter

Table D.2

Categorical dimensions for the Basic Themes of 'Trust, Image, and Attributed Mentality', 'Effectiveness of Police Operations', and 'Career in Policing Vs. Policing as a Vocation' that are classified under the Organizing Theme 'Public Perception'.

Basic Theme	Category	Sub-Category
Trust, Image, and Attributed Mentality	Trust and image	Communication and police-public relations
		Mixed inconsistencies, case-by-case
		Improvements (past and potential)
		Negative image and mistrust
		Positive image and respect for police

		Unfair and incomplete portrayals and or treatment
	Police mentality	Positive
		Negative
		Mixed
		Observations and recommendations
Effectiveness of Police Operations	Bad experiences	
	Good experiences	
	Mixed experiences (e.g., bad experience in personal life, good experience in professional life)	
Career in Policing Vs. Policing as a Vocation	No for career with police (e.g., difficult to be impartial, vendetta by people, it's a vocation, no career progression, poor pay, bad image, requires guts).	
	Yes for career with police (e.g., I like discipline, inspired by other, I will do a better job, many different aspects of policing).	

	Mixed opinions	Yes but, (e.g., depends on which division, other interests, there needs to be a reform, everyone knows everyone, offers more physical protection).
		No but, (e.g., depends, definitely not police in stations, pension and early retirement as good incentive).

Table D.3

Categorical dimensions for the Basic Themes of 'Surveillance and Police Presence', 'Community Policing', 'Investment', 'Police Stations', 'Social Media as a Communication Tool', and 'Helping the Police' that are classified under the Organizing Theme of 'Improving the Force'.

Basic Theme	Category	
Surveillance and Police Presence	Technological surveillance	Physical and technological are complementary
		Physical better than technological
		Technological better than physical
	Physical surveillance and police presence	For more physical presence
		Against more physical presence

		Mixed opinions
		Observations and recommendations
	CCTV	For more CCTV
		Against more CCTV
		Mixed opinions
	Body cams	For the use of body cams by the police
		Against the use of body cams by the police
		Mixed opinions
Community Policing	For community policing	
	Against community policing	
	Mixed opinions	
	Observations and recommendations	
	Prior conceptions of community policing	
Investment	Communication with stakeholders (operations) and public (image)	
	Different sections and specialisations	
	Education (of public)	
	Human resources	

	Improve policing and conditions for officers	
	Material resources, logistics, and upgrades	
	Physical surveillance, crime prevention, and enforcement	
	Tackling job culture and corruption	
	Training	
Police Stations	For more police in stations	
	Against more police in stations	
	Mixed opinions	
	Observations and recommendations	
Social Media as a Communication Tool	Social media use by people	For the use of social media to communicate with police
		Against the use of social media to communicate with police
		Mixed opinions
		Observations and recommendations
	Social media use by police	For (successes, benefits, etc)
		Mixed opinions

		Observations and recommendations
Helping the Police	Basic duties	
	Case-by case or ambivalence	
	Research and education	
	Setbacks to helping the police	
	Taking the initiative	

APPENDIX E

Demographics Study 2

Table E			
Demographics for questionnaire carried out in Study 2			
Demographic		*n*	%
Gender	Female	516	51.6
	Male	481	48.1
Age Group	16-25	151	15.1
	26-35	203	20.3
	36-45	191	19.1
	46-55	149	14.9
	56-65	127	12.7
	66+	179	17.9
	Gozo and Comino	82	8.2
	Northern	130	13
District	Northern Harbour	259	25.9
	South Eastern	204	20.4
	Southern Harbour	191	19.1
	Western	134	13.4
Education	Primary	51	5.1
	Secondary	414	41.4
	Post-Secondary	211	21.1
	Tertiary	319	31.9
Relationship Status	Widow/er	37	3.7
	Not Married	310	31.0
	Married	556	55.6
	Sep/Div/Annul	87	8.7

APPENDIX F

Questionnaire

Questionnaire

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements, on a scale from 1 (Totally disagree) to 5 (Totally agree)?

[RANDOMISE]

    The police should go beyond their call of duty, for example, to help vulnerable people.

1	2	3	4	5

    The police should stick to their job description.

1	2	3	4	5

    To catch criminals is most important for police.

1	2	3	4	5

    The prevention of crime should be the principal priority of police.

1	2	3	4	5

    The police should not be allowed to use force, unless it is abosulutely necessary.

1	2	3	4	5

    The police should be given 'body cameras' for the protection of themselves and the people.

1	2	3	4	5

    'Body cameras' result in data protection issues and a lack of privacy.

1	2	3	4	5

    CCTV cameras are very good at catching criminals, because they are a source of evidence.

1	2	3	4	5

    CCTV cameras result in data protection issues and a lack of privacy.

1	2	3	4	5

CCTV cameras can be abused by powerful people (e.g., police, politicians, etc.)

1   2   3   4   5

The police should be free to stop and search anyone even for the slightest suspicion.

1   2   3   4   5

If the police carry out a search on peple for no reason, this results in an abuse of power.

1   2   3   4   5

Few police are 'laid back'.

1   2   3   4   5

Many police are motivated by a sense of duty.

1   2   3   4   5

The police are very effective in their work.

1   2   3   4   5

The police hardly ever solve cases.

1   2   3   4   5

I think the work of the police is more of a vocation than a career.

1   2   3   4   5

Carrer progression goals are necessary in the police sector.

1   2   3   4   5

There should be a greater presence of police in the streets.

1   2   3   4   5

If there are more police in the streets, more crime will be prevented.

1   2   3   4   5

Having too many police in the streets makes me feel like I am constantly under surveillance.

1	2	3	4	5

It would be better to have more police in stations rather than in the streets.

1	2	3	4	5

If the police build closer ties with the community, people would feel safer.

1	2	3	4	5

If the police builds closer ties with the community, the result will be corruption.

1	2	3	4	5

There is need for more police in stations.

1	2	3	4	5

It would be better if police officials spend more time in the streets, ready for action, rather than in stations.

1	2	3	4	5

The use of social media by the police results in better communication with the people.

1	2	3	4	5

If the police use social media, people will end up wasting their time with useless requests.

1	2	3	4	5

It would be better if people report criminal acts personally to the police, instead of sending messages to the police on social media.

1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX G

Descriptive Statistics Output

Table G

Descriptive statistics for questionnaire carried out in Study 2

	n	M	SD	Skewness		Kurtosis	
					Std.		Std.
				Statistic	Error	Statistic	Error
Go beyond call of duty	979	4.17	0.903	-0.833	0.078	0.162	0.156
Stick to their job description	977	3.27	1.187	-0.242	0.078	-0.682	0.156
Catch criminals is most important	976	3.78	0.980	-0.492	0.078	-0.026	0.156
Prevention of crime should be priority	976	3.99	0.924	-0.582	0.078	-0.145	0.156
Should not be allowed to use force unloess absolutely necessary	978	3.90	0.971	-0.567	0.078	-0.142	0.156
Should be given body cams	978	4.19	0.962	-1.048	0.078	0.613	0.156
Body cams violate privacy	976	2.83	1.250	-0.045	0.078	-1.000	0.156
CCTV catches criminals	979	4.10	0.919	-0.592	0.078	-0.557	0.156
CCTV violates privacy	973	2.81	1.197	-0.049	0.078	-0.871	0.157
CCTV can be abused	978	3.32	1.134	-0.385	0.078	-0.389	0.156

Police should be free to stop and search	979	3.54	1.205	-0.530	0.078	-0.509	0.156
Police stop and search is abusive	976	3.60	1.157	-0.570	0.078	-0.337	0.156
Only few police are laid back	975	3.33	1.017	-0.283	0.078	-0.151	0.156
Police motivated by sense of duty	975	3.67	0.961	-0.330	0.078	-0.182	0.156
Police very effective	980	3.62	0.897	-0.233	0.078	0.000	0.156
Police hardly ever solve cases	973	2.69	1.141	-0.028	0.078	-0.870	0.157
Police work more of a vocation	978	3.76	0.999	-0.623	0.078	0.171	0.156
There should be greater presence on the streets	975	3.92	0.968	-0.560	0.078	-0.242	0.156
More police on streets prevents crime	978	4.05	0.896	-0.539	0.078	-0.390	0.156
Too many police on streets make me feel under surveillance	978	2.87	1.228	-0.095	0.078	-0.926	0.156

Better to have more police in stations rather than streets	979	2.89	1.146	-0.114	0.078	-0.682	0.156
If police build closer community ties people will feel safer	977	4.00	0.900	-0.589	0.078	-0.083	0.156
If police build closer ties there will be corruption	977	2.71	1.127	-0.021	0.078	-0.779	0.156
Social media results in better communication with people	975	3.59	1.011	-0.338	0.078	-0.260	0.156
Social media means people will waste police time	980	3.18	0.964	-0.358	0.078	0.049	0.156
Better to report crime personally rather than on social media	976	3.73	1.045	-0.404	0.078	-0.386	0.156