UNICRI
United Nations
Interregional Crime and Justice
Research Institute

RESPONSIBLE
AI INNOVATION IN
LAW ENFORCEMENT
AI Toolkit

Not Just Another Tool

Public Perceptions on Police Use of Artificial Intelligence

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Foreword

Artificial intelligence (AI) holds transformative potential in reshaping how societies address complex challenges, including the realm of law enforcement. But the integration of AI in law enforcement is an issue that brings both great potential and significant responsibility. Its precisely for that reason that UNICRI, through its Centre for AI and Robotics, has championed the concept of responsible AI in law enforcement – in particular through our partnership with INTERPOL's Innovation Centre.

This report, *"Not Just Another Tool,"* emerges as a product of our commitment to understanding global public perceptions of AI in law enforcement. Its paramount that the law enforcement community is knowledgeable about and intimately aware of the opinions and concerns the public holds about AI – informed or uninformed, accurate or inaccurate. It is part of our broader efforts with INTERPOL and with the financial support of the European Union, for the development of the Toolkit for Responsible AI Innovation in Law Enforcement – a unique framework aimed at equipping law enforcement agencies with guidance they need to harness AI effectively and responsibly, while upholding public trust and safeguarding human rights.

As this report highlights, public views on AI in policing are multifaceted, revealing both optimism and valid concerns around transparency, accountability, and responsible use. Such insights are invaluable for informing policy and practice, ensuring that AI tools not only enhance police work but do so in alignment with public expectations and the values of justice and fairness.

This report, and our work on this topic, fundamentally underscores that while AI presents opportunities to bolster safety and efficiency, its responsible implementation requires an unwavering commitment to ethics, human rights, oversight, and, crucially, public engagement. It is our hope that this report, together with the AI Toolkit, will contribute to a path forward where innovation is coupled with integrity and trust.

Irakli Beridze
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Executive Summary

This report contains the findings of a comprehensive survey conducted by UNICRI and INTERPOL to better understand public perceptions of artificial intelligence (AI) use by the police. The survey, which ran from November 2022 to June 2023, gathered responses from 670 individuals across six continents, representing a diverse array of ages, genders, and educational backgrounds. The survey was designed as part of the development of the *Toolkit for Responsible AI Innovation in Law Enforcement* by UNICRI and INTERPOL. The goal was to solicit insights into how the public views AI's integration into policing and to leverage these insights to inform guidance for law enforcement agencies across the globe.

The quantitative and qualitative insights gleaned from the survey and presented in this report are intended to support, first and foremost, the law enforcement community in better understanding public opinions on AI. They are also intended to support policymakers in national institutions who play a key role in shaping and determining relevant legislation and policies. Finally, the findings are expected to inform the broader discourse around AI and its integration into policing and, by extension, the public sector at large. The findings contained herein should not be construed as the definitive statement on the public's perceptions on the use of AI in policing. Several limitations have been encountered concerning the survey and its outreach, which, combined with the evolving nature of the technology and the discourse around it, result in the findings in the report serving as a snapshot of the public's opinion on AI in policing at this point in time.

The survey revealed that while there is a high level of interest in AI, many respondents demonstrated a significant lack of awareness about its specific applications in policing. Only a small minority actively sought out information needed to support or adjust their convictions, highlighting a clear need for public education and greater transparency. Trust emerged as a critical factor influencing public acceptance of AI, with those who trust their local or national police being more likely to support AI's use. Interestingly, though, trust in AI can sometimes surpass trust in the police, indicating that public opinion on this topic is highly complex in nature.

Engaging more openly with citizens, and, once again, embracing transparency are critical next steps for the policing community. This could include public education campaigns and transparent communication about AI's use and the safeguards in place to protect individual rights.

Public support for AI in policing is generally positive, perhaps even more so than anticipated before this survey. However, this support is highly conditional, reflecting once again what can only be described as a nuanced and complex relationship between the public and police use of AI. For the public, the acceptability of AI in policing depends largely on its application, with greater support for its use in investigating serious crimes rather than in predictive policing or real-time decision-making scenarios. Ethical considerations, particularly concerning privacy and the potential for discrimination, are central and play a key role in shaping public concerns. The survey highlights that human oversight, legal and ethical training for police officers, and strict policies governing the use of AI in policing are crucial for improving public perceptions and increasing comfort with AI. In particular, legal frameworks were scrutinized extensively, with many respondents believing that current regulations are insufficient to protect individual rights in the context of AI use by police, underscoring the need for stronger regulations to prevent infringements of individual rights. Transparency and accountability emerged as critical themes, with a call for law enforcement agencies to adopt strict policies, perform regular audits, and set up independent oversight mechanisms to monitor AI's impact and ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards.

The findings from this survey underscore the complexity of public opinion regarding AI in law enforcement. While there is cautious optimism about AI's potential to enhance policing, significant concerns about ethics, transparency, and legal protections must be addressed if police forces aiming to leverage AI wish to maintain public trust. Collaborative efforts between law enforcement, policymakers, and the public are essential to ensure AI is used in a manner that upholds the values of justice, fairness, and public trust. At the same time, consistent with the findings in this report as a snapshot of the current landscape, continued attention to public opinion should be fostered, including through further surveys. This would allow tracking evolving public perceptions and inform AI integration into policing that aligns with public expectations.

Introduction

With the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) over the past decade, law enforcement agencies worldwide are increasingly exploring and adopting AI to aid in the prevention, detection and investigation of a wide range of crimes. While no established definition of AI exists, the term "AI" generally refers to the field of computer science dedicated to studying and creating technological systems that can imitate human abilities such as visual perception, decision-making, and problem-solving. The wide range of products from this field – the technological systems – are often called AI systems or AI tools. Given the vastness of this field, the law enforcement community's interest in AI is comparably diverse. Nonetheless, the primary AI systems used in law enforcement, often with increased regulatory scrutiny, include image, text and speech analysis, risk evaluation and predictive analytics, content generation, process optimization, and workflow automation.

At the same time, the rapid advancement in AI has propelled discussions regarding its use, and the advantages and pitfalls that it presents to the forefront of public debate, with calls from world leaders, business leaders, AI experts and the broader public to ensure safety, potentially halt innovation in the absence of safety measures, and enact stricter guardrails. Examples of this can be seen at the G7, through the Hiroshima AI Process,[1] or through the World Economic Forum's AI Governance Alliance.[2] Given particular sensitivities around the function of law enforcement, the application of AI in this context is coupled with concerns over the risks related to bias and discrimination, privacy infringements, lack of accountability, and the potential for misuse of AI technologies. It is thus not surprising that the public debate has culminated in calls for robust governance frameworks, compliance with legal and human rights standards, the building of public trust, and an equal prioritization of risk minimization alongside opportunity maximization.

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[1] G7 Leaders' Statement on the Hiroshima AI Process, 30 October 2023. Accessible at: https://g7g20-documents.org/fileadmin/G7G20_documents/2023/G7/Japan/Leaders/1%20Leaders'%20Language/G7%20Leaders%20Statement%20on%20the%20Hiroshima%20AI%20Process_30102023.pdf

[2] https://initiatives.weforum.org/ai-governance-alliance/home

Since 2018, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and INTERPOL have been working to build knowledge and understanding of the risks and opportunities of AI in law enforcement. In doing so, the two entities have championed the concept of responsible AI innovation in law enforcement. In 2023, UNICRI and INTERPOL released their Toolkit for Responsible Artificial Intelligence Innovation in Law Enforcement,[3] designed for the global law enforcement community with the aim of supporting agencies in benefiting from the positive potential of AI while navigating the associated challenges and risks. Throughout the development of the AI Toolkit, UNICRI and INTERPOL convened a series of consultation sessions with representatives of key stakeholder communities – namely, the law enforcement community, technology providers, members of the judiciary, and prosecutors. Recognizing that these communities possess a vested interest in the topic, UNICRI and INTERPOL launched a complementary process to collect more feedback from the general public. This process entailed two virtual focus group sessions in 2022 and an online global survey launched in November 2022. The goal of this process was to learn more about the public's perception, attitudes, and concerns, regarding law enforcement's use of AI. The feedback obtained through these processes was utilized to finalise the AI Toolkit.

This report is set within this overall context. It presents key insights from the survey, offering a unique analysis of public perceptions regarding the use of AI in law enforcement. It highlights the primary concerns, expectations, and recommendations from communities across the globe, making it a unique resource for law enforcement worldwide in building public trust, facilitating community engagement and advancing responsible AI innovation.

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[3]   Accessible at: https://ai-lawenforcement.org/toolkit/download.

Methodology

This report is based exclusively on an online public survey conducted by UNICRI and INTER-POL. The survey was launched in November 2022 and ran until June 2023, receiving a total of 670 responses. It was made available in the six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish) and promoted through various channels, including UNICRI's website, social media accounts (on Facebook,[4] LinkedIn,[5] Twitter/X[6] and YouTube[7]), and mailing lists.[8] Additionally, the survey was disseminated by UNICRI and INTERPOL project team members through professional networks, as well as by partners (individuals and institutions). While a precise figure for its reach cannot be determined, it is estimated to have reached an audience of over 20,000 people worldwide.[9] In this regard, consider that during the period alone, the UNICRI website was accessed approximately 85,000 times.

In terms of the scope of the survey, while UNICRI and INTERPOL's work concerns law enforcement, the survey explicitly focused on the use of AI by "police", rather than "law enforcement" more broadly. This decision was made because, when translated into other languages, there was no direct equivalent for the term "law enforcement" as it is understood in English. In this language, "law enforcement" encompasses a broad range of agencies and officers, including border security, immigration enforcement, and customs officials, responsible for enforcing laws and maintaining public order, while "police" specifically refers to the civil force of a state, responsible for preventing and investigating crimes and maintaining public safety. To ensure clarity and consistency across all translations and to guarantee that respondents in different

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4   Available here: https://www.facebook.com/unicri.it/posts/pfbid0uk4js3QNiXocAqHVu2oETBY1nQvgMEJkEdDjGeB-wAN58AR1QRqHDk36XmvVqVkxgl?rdid=D2Pk5ltRZRMDkd4n

5   Available here: https://www.linkedin.com/posts/unicri_artificialintelligence-lawenforcement-unicri-activi-ty-7003024767251308544-kxxF

6   Available here: https://x.com/UNICRI/status/1596124981586690048

7   Available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UG4Zd--Ewa

8   Available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4UG4Zd--EwA

9   This number is estimated based on the combined number of followers and connections of the UNICRI account and those of the team members and partners who shared the survey on their LinkedIn accounts.

linguistic and cultural contexts interpreted the questions uniformly, the survey concentrated specifically on police as a subset of law enforcement. This approach was taken to ensure that the results were coherent and comparable across the diverse range of respondents.

The survey included 29 questions, which can be categorized into four broad categories:

- Likert scale questions – seventeen questions
- Multiple-choice questions – nine questions, two of which contained an option to select "other" and provide a custom response
- Yes/no questions – two questions
- Open-ended questions – one question.

The use of different types of questions enabled UNICRI and INTERPOL to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The information the survey collected from the respondents included:

1. Demographic data (seven questions) covering age, gender, geographic origin,[10] and level of education. Two questions specifically gauged respondents' general familiarity with police work and AI, while one question sought to understand whether participants perceived themselves as belonging to a group that may be considered vulnerable to discrimination in any way.

2. Respondents' views on a variety of issues associated with the use of AI by police agencies (twenty-two questions), addressing issues such as utility, privacy, ethics, and legal framework.

Demographic information was used to segment responses to gain deeper insights and to consider potential effects of respondents' age, gender, or education on their perceptions.

Collected data was analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends and patterns in public perception. Qualitative responses were thematically analyzed to capture key concerns and suggestions. These insights were then synthesized to inform the findings and recommendations presented in this report, ensuring a comprehensive and balanced understanding of public opinion.

The following limitations of the survey have been observed:

1. The survey was available for a limited duration, open for seven and a half months, and attracting 670 submissions. A longer posting period may have generated greater attention and encouraged more people to participate, especially since the survey was only accessible online. Additionally, a longer duration could also have allowed UNICRI and its partners to further diversify communication and promotion channels inviting a more

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[10] The participants were asked to select a geographic region of origin based on the UN classification of countries or areas. The geographic groupings are organized for statistical convenience and do not imply any assumption regarding political or other affiliations of countries or territories by the UN. The classification and its methodology are available here.

heterogenous demographic representation.

2. The survey was exclusively conducted online. This required respondents to possess some level of confidence in using the Internet and to be familiar with platforms carrying information about the survey.

3. In conjunction with this, respondents were likely already familiar with UNICRI and/or INTERPOL and/or within their sphere of reach, allowing them to learn about the survey and have an opportunity to participate.

4. Participants were self-selected and had no incentive to participate. The selection process was not influenced by any pre-established criteria to target individuals from specific backgrounds, such as students, professors, legal professionals, security sector personnel, or government employees. Typically, survey methodologies target specific groups to facilitate their comparisons. However, this survey was open-ended, with no particular group targeted.

5. The survey was published in a limited number of languages – namely, the six official languages of the United Nations. An invitation to participate was shared in Italian, although the survey itself was not translated into Italian.[11] Responding required a solid command of at least one of these languages, inadvertently excluding people who did not speak any of them.

6. The survey requested information or inquired opinions on 29 issues, requiring a substantial time commitment to complete. The high number of questions likely led to respondent fatigue, which is evident as some participants began tapering off from question 14 onwards.[12]

7. The survey concerned a very specific and ostensibly complex topic. The specificity and perceived complexity of this subject – situated at the intersection of policing, information and communication technology – may have discouraged some potential respondents. It is plausible to assume that some individuals who were presented with the survey considered their views potentially irrelevant or not valuable.

8. The survey addressed a politically charged and emotive topic. The intersection of policing and technology touches on deeply held beliefs and values, which may have prompted some respondents to provide emotionally driven responses. This heightened sensitivity could have influenced the nature of feedback, reflecting strong opinions and potentially biasing certain survey results.

These limitations, while largely unavoidable, likely impacted the overall survey results, the interpretation of responses, as well as specific findings and recommendations in the report.

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[11]   Italian is the official language of the host country of UNICRI.

[12]   This issue is further discussed below and expanded upon on page 17.

Demographic profile of the respondents

A total of 670 participants contributed to the survey. Of these, 83.4 per cent completed the survey in its entirety, while the remaining 16.6 per cent responded only to the first 14 questions, leaving the remaining 15 questions unanswered.

The majority of the submissions, 89 per cent, were completed in English (594 individuals). The remaining 11 per cent were submitted in Spanish (28 individuals), French (23 individuals), Arabic (14 individuals), Russian (9 individuals), and Chinese (2 individuals).

Breakdown of the language of responses
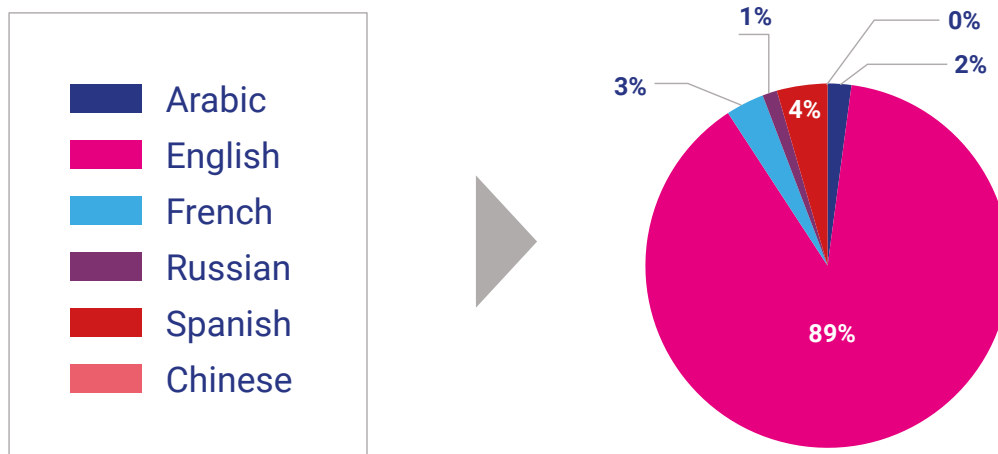
Figure 1

When it comes to age,[13] the distribution ranged from below 18 to above 65. **The majority were in the age group between 25 and 44** (54.9 per cent), with:

- Over one-fourth of individuals aged 25 to 34 (28.2 per cent); and
- Another one-fourth aged 35 to 44 (26.7 per cent).

One in five submissions (18.8 per cent) were made by the respondents in the age bracket of 45 to 54, and one in ten individuals were aged 18 to 24 (12.7 per cent), leaving the remainder who were younger than 18 and older than 55 as the least represented age group in the sample (0.9 per cent and 10.4 per cent, respectively).[14]

Over half of the respondents, 51 per cent, were male.[15] The majority of the remaining half were female (43.7 per cent), and a small portion identified themselves as "other" (1.5 per cent) or chose not to declare their gender identity (3.6 per cent).

Measures
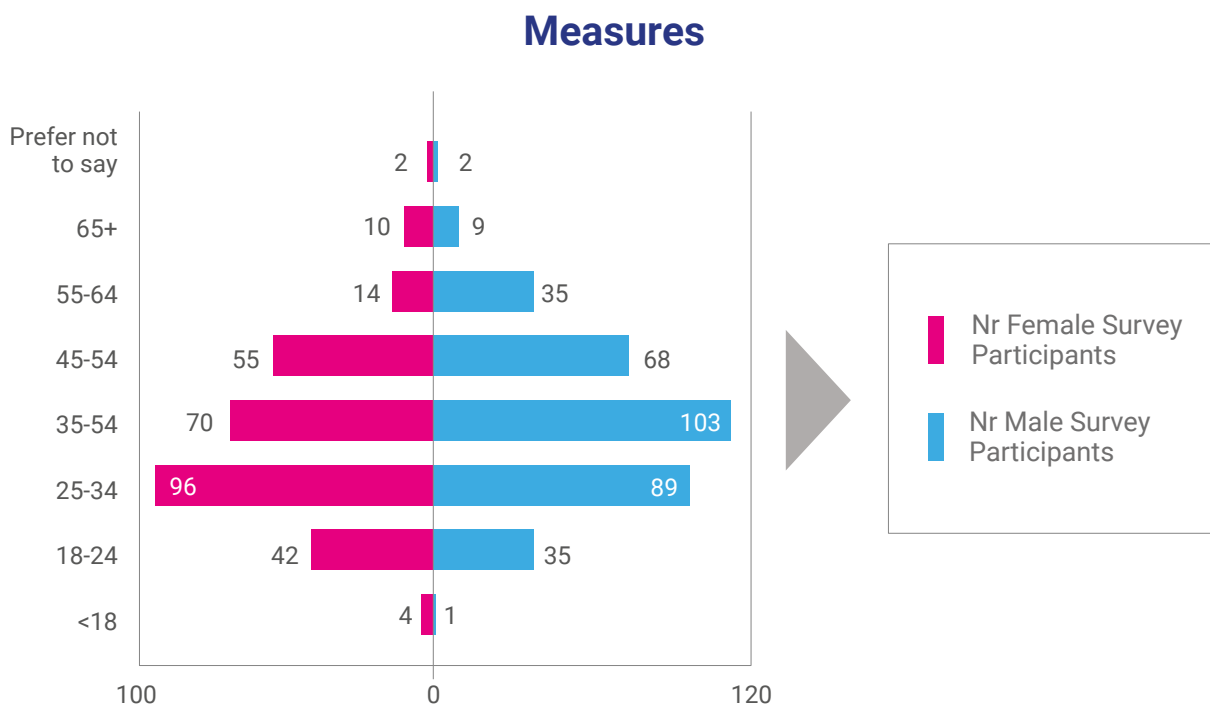
Figure 2

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13   Question 1 of the survey.

14   This includes 7.6 per cent of those aged 55 to 64 and 2.8 per cent of people over 65.

15   Question 2 of the survey.

As a globally conceived study, respondents came from all regions of the world:[16]

1. Europe - 50.8 per cent;
2. Asia - 16.5 per cent;
3. North America - 12 per cent;
4. Africa - 8.8 per cent;
5. Latin America and the Caribbean - 7.3 per cent; and
6. Oceania - 1.7 per cent.

In the case of four of these regions, the respondents could choose a sub-region of their origin, namely:

■   Australia and New Zealand, Melanesia, Micronesia, or Polynesia in Oceania;

■   Central, Eastern, South-Eastern, Southern, or Western Asia;

■   Eastern, Northern, Southern, or Western Europe;

■   North or Sub-Saharan Africa.

With the exception of Micronesia, all of the sub-regions were represented in the surveyed sample. The most represented region was Western Europe with one-fifth of the participants (20.9 per cent), and Southern Europe with one-sixth of the respondents (14.8 per cent). This could be a consequence of the currently rather active debate on these issues in Europe, or the fact that UNICRI and INTERPOL, having their headquarters in Europe, could more easily reach people from this region.

Geographical distribution of respondents (value in percentages)

50.8
16.5
12.4
8.8
7.3
1.7
n/a 2.4

Figure 3

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[16]   Question 3 of the survey.

Geographical distribution in percentages of total
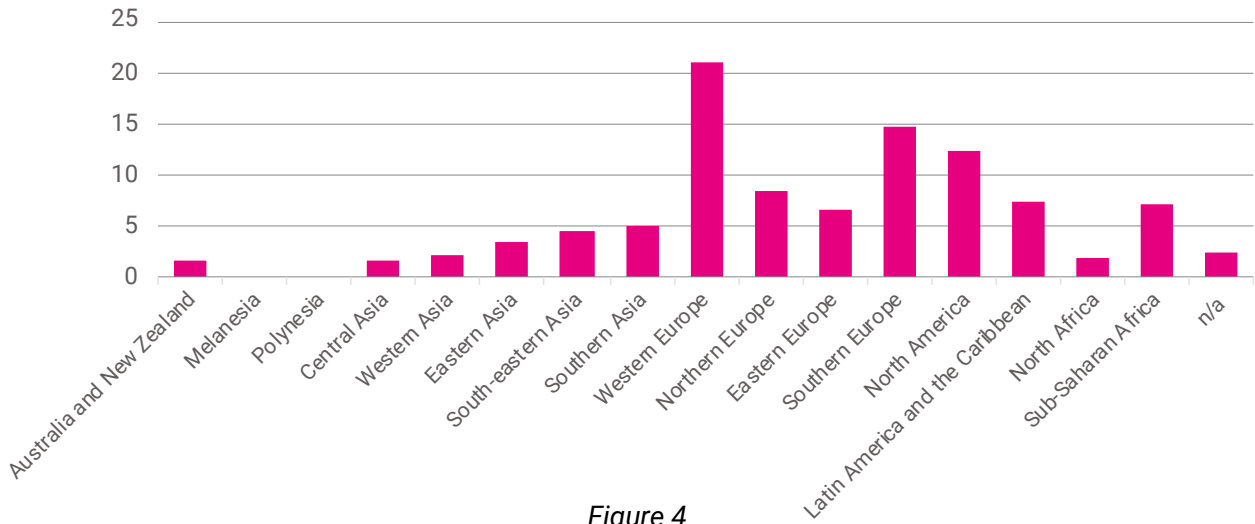
Figure 4

Percentage of the total number of respondents, focus on Europe
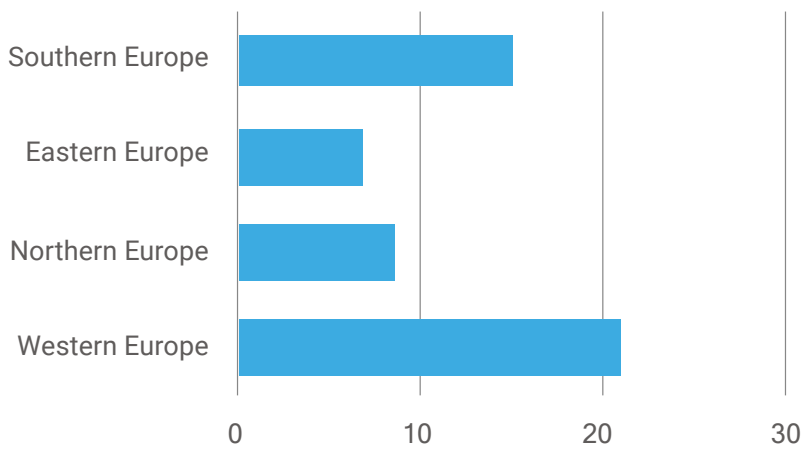
Figure 5

Looking at broad categorizations, the data indicates that **the most significant groups of respondents were men with a good enough command of English and aged between 35 and 44 (15.4 per cent), and women with a good enough command of English and aged 25 to 35 (14.3 per cent)**. This marginally higher male participation could be partially explained by the limitations concerning the methods of dissemination of the survey outlined in the previous chapter. Most notably, the survey was hosted on platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twit-

ter, and YouTube, which tend to have a higher prevalence of male users.[17] The age distribution of the most frequent visitors to these platforms, however, did not fully align with the age demographics of the survey respondents. In fact, the most frequent visitors to these platforms are between 18 and 29 years of age (34 for Facebook), whereas the average survey respondent was somewhat older. This would suggest that the topic or its association with UNICRI and INTERPOL may have had an additional influence.

The participants were also asked to indicate whether they considered themselves as belonging to a group or a community that may face an elevated risk of discrimination.[18] **One third of respondents answered affirmatively (31.8 per cent)**. Respondents who indicated they felt they may face an increased risk of discrimination came from practically all regions participating in the survey, with the largest groups coming from Europe (41 per cent), Asia (20 per cent) and North America (17 per cent). As 60 per cent of individuals who considered themselves potentially vulnerable to discrimination were aged 25 to 44 and had higher education,[19] it could be inferred that the age group and high education level might have heightened their awareness of their position of vulnerability in society.

In terms of educational backgrounds, **over three-fourths of respondents had tertiary education**, with as much as 43.9 per cent of the total number of participants holding master's degrees.[20] The breakdown across levels of education is as follows:

- 85.4 per cent had tertiary education (university level and higher);

- 5.7 per cent had secondary education; and

- 0.6 per cent had elementary education.

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[17]   Based on different sources, including the London School of Economics, Kepios and Statistica. For instance, globally, the share of users is considered to be as follows:
-    Facebook and LinkedIn - around 56 per cent male and around 44 per cent female;
-    YouTube – 55 per cent male and 45 per cent female users;
-    Instagram – 68 per cent female and 32 per cent male.

[18]   Question 4 of the survey.

[19]   In this group, 87 per cent held a bachelor's degree (25 per cent), a master's degree (44 per cent), or a PhD (18 per cent).

[20]   Question 5 of the survey.

Educational background, in percentages
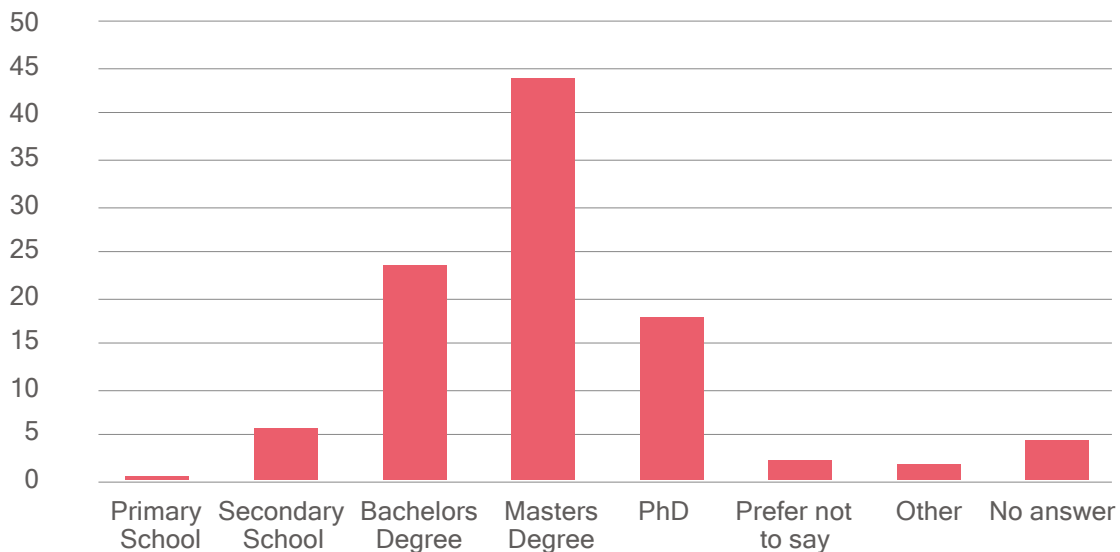
Figure 6

The survey additionally sought to ascertain if participants worked in or with the police.[21] This was considered important, in light of the potential for bias, personal experience or insights impacting perceptions and responses. A total of **25 per cent of people reported to be working in or with the police**. The majority of these respondents were male (63 per cent), from Europe (51 per cent), almost exclusively with higher education (91 per cent).[22] One in four came from Asia (24 per cent).

A similar approach was adopted with respect to AI, due to the potential for bias or knowledge and understanding of AI impacting the outcomes.[23] A total of **81 per cent of the survey respondents reported that they were either broadly familiar with AI (58.5 per cent) or had extensive knowledge of the topic (22.7 per cent)**. This high percentage indicates that the survey predominantly reached individuals who already have an interest and a considerable level of knowledge in AI. Among the respondents who reported having extensive knowledge of artificial knowledge (22.7 per cent), nearly all had third-level education: 48 per cent held a master's degree, 28.9 per cent held a PhD and 19.7 per cent held a bachelor's degree. One in ten respondents (13 per cent) indicated that they were not sure what exactly AI is or had never heard of it.

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21   Question 6 of the survey.

22   Among them, 49 per cent hold a master's degree, 26 per cent a bachelor's degree, and 16 per cent a PhD.

23   Question 7 of the survey.

Respondents' familiarity with AI, in percentages of total
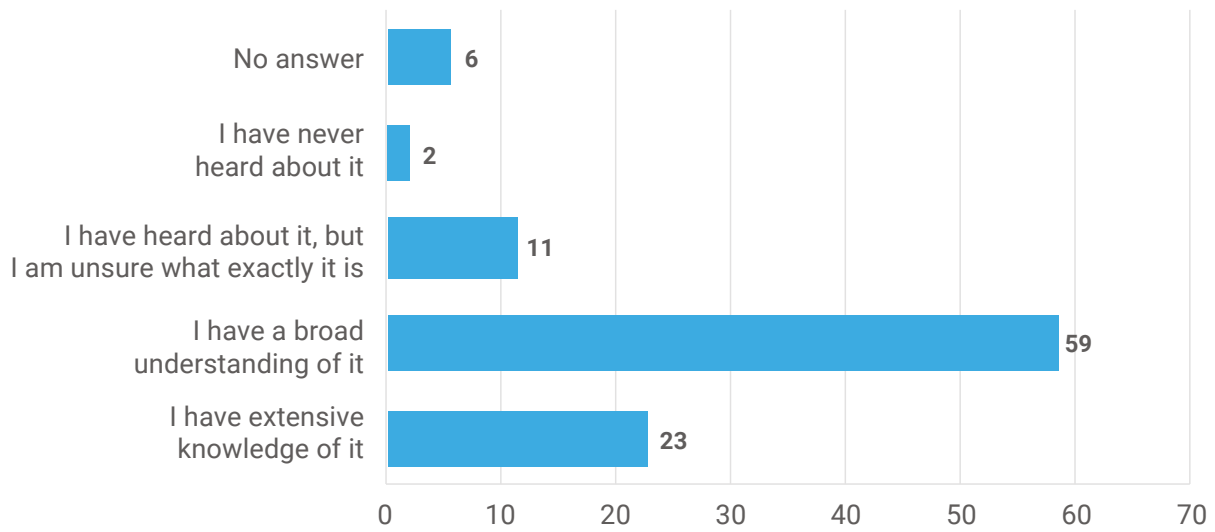
Figure 7

Representation of correlation between educational background and familiarity with AI, in numbers of respondents
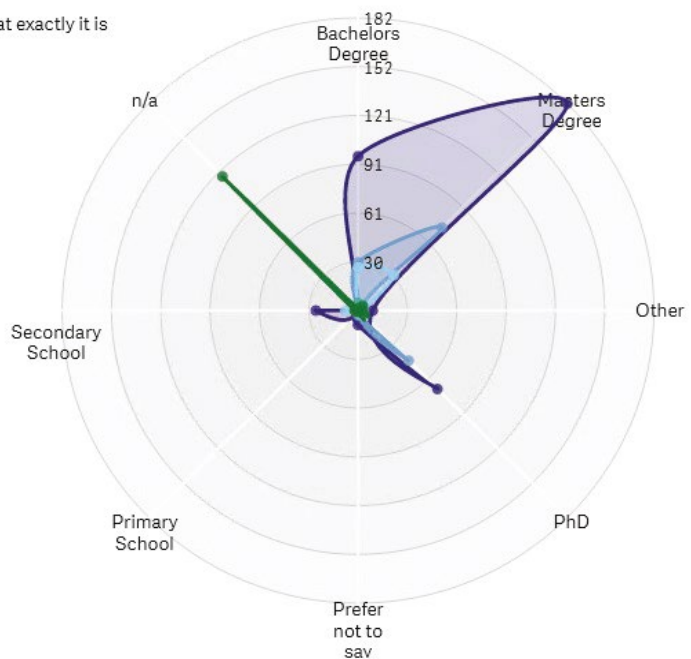
Figure 8

Public perceptions – what the data says

This chapter delves into the interpretation of the responses to the quantitative questions to uncover public perceptions of AI in policing. The analysis is grouped according to a series of categories that reflect the underlying motivation behind each question. This approach ensures that similar themes and concerns are addressed together, providing structure and coherence to the analysis. The categories largely include general awareness of AI applications, trust in police use of AI, and concerns about citizens' rights and data privacy. By analyzing the survey responses within these categories, a comprehensive understanding of the public's views and attitudes towards the integration of AI in policing can be elucidated.

1. General awareness of artificial intelligence systems' application

To gauge general awareness, the survey commenced by asking respondents whether they thought that their local or national police force was using AI in their day-to-day work.[24] **Nearly one in three people (29 per cent) reported not knowing whether AI systems were being used by police in their country.** A small portion (4.3 per cent) admitted they had never thought about that possibility.

On the other hand, **17.5 per cent of participants indicated they were certain that police forces were using AI in their countries**. This group included people of all ages above 18,[25] as well as people associated in some way with the police. Among the respondents who were sure that the police are relying on the technology, the vast majority (62.4 per cent) were not however working for the police. A large portion of this group of respondents held a university degree or higher (90 per cent) and had extensive (47.9 per cent) or broad (49.3 per cent) understanding of AI. The group covered all regions of the world.

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[24] Question 8 of the survey.

[25] The six respondents aged below 18 reported not knowing enough to be certain, they either did not think the police were using AI systems or had never thought about it.

When it comes to informing oneself, only **16.9 per cent said that they had actively sought out information on AI use by police**.[26] Most of the remaining respondents did not feel the need to verify their belief (75.6 per cent), whereas some did think about doing so, but ultimately decided not to do it (18.7 per cent).

Among the survey participants who searched for information, most were male (64 per cent) held university degrees (87.6 per cent) and had broad or extensive knowledge of AI (81.4 per cent). Slightly over one third of them (37.2 per cent) were working with or in the police. In other words, one in four of the respondents who work with or in the police (25.3 per cent) sought to actively inform themselves on the police use of AI. Half of them (52.2 per cent) were convinced that the police were already using AI and the other half was not (47.8 per cent). While they came from all regions of the world, the relative share of responses from Australia and Latin America was higher in this group compared to overall respondents' distribution.[27]

Are your local/national police using AI? Values given in percentages
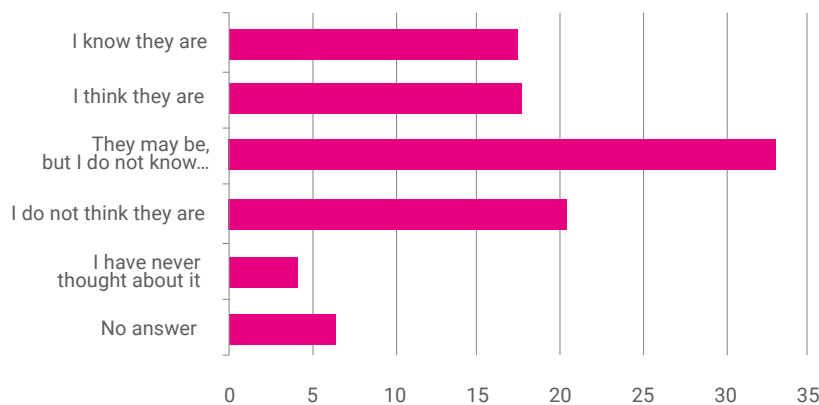
Figure 9

Percentage of respondents who actively sought out information on police use of AI

Figure 10

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26   Question 9 of the survey.

27   The overall share of the respondents who come from Latin America is 7.3 per cent. The share of the respondents who come from Latin America and reported to have sought out information on how the police uses AI is 18.6 per cent. The shares for Australia are 1.8 per cent overall, and 3.5 per cent here.

Intersection of the respondents' professional engagement with police forces with their educational background and age
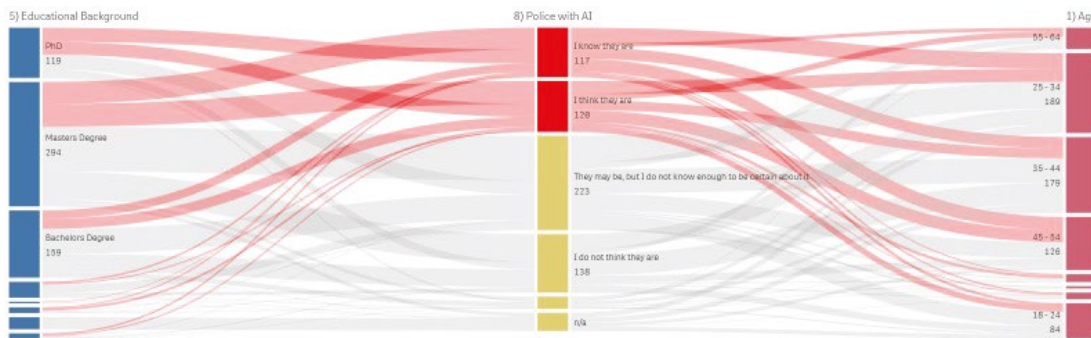
Figure 11

Intersection of the respondents' awareness of their local/national police using AI with their familiarity with AI and professional engagement with the police
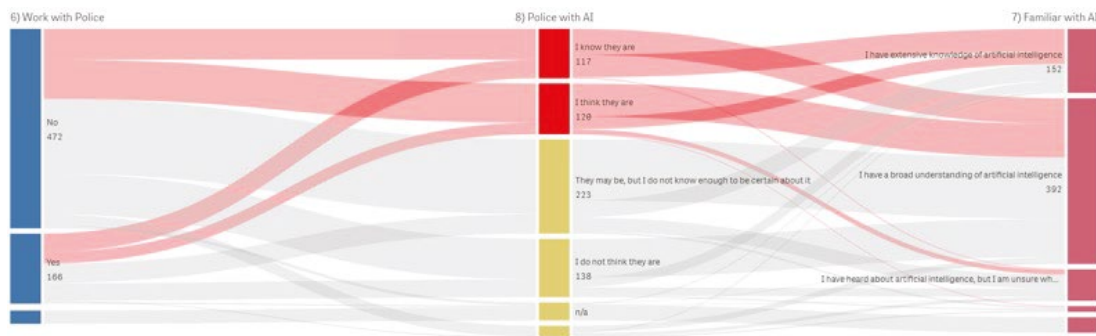
Figure 12

2.   Trust in the police and AI

Moving from general awareness, the survey sought to ascertain how the public felt in terms of its trust in the police and AI. **Nearly half of the people who participated in the survey (49.1 per cent) expressed confidence that their local or national police were respecting the law and citizens' rights.**[28] The other half did not share the same view, with one in four (24.1 per cent) being distrustful. Among those expressing distrust, one in ten (8.1 per cent) had strong suspicions about the police's conduct. The remaining 26.9 per cent of the respondents who did not express confidence in their local or national police respecting the law and citizens' rights could not decide on how to answer this question or simply opted not to answer it.

The respondents that expressed confidence in their police's acting in accordance with the law came from nearly all regions of the world represented among the survey participants, excluding only Melanesia and Polynesia. **The confidence was most spread among European respondents**, who made up 59 per cent of this category. The regional distribution within

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[28]   Question 10 of the survey.

My local or national police respect the law and citizens' rights (Percentage of total)

15.8	33.3	17	16	8.1	9.9
STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO ANSWER
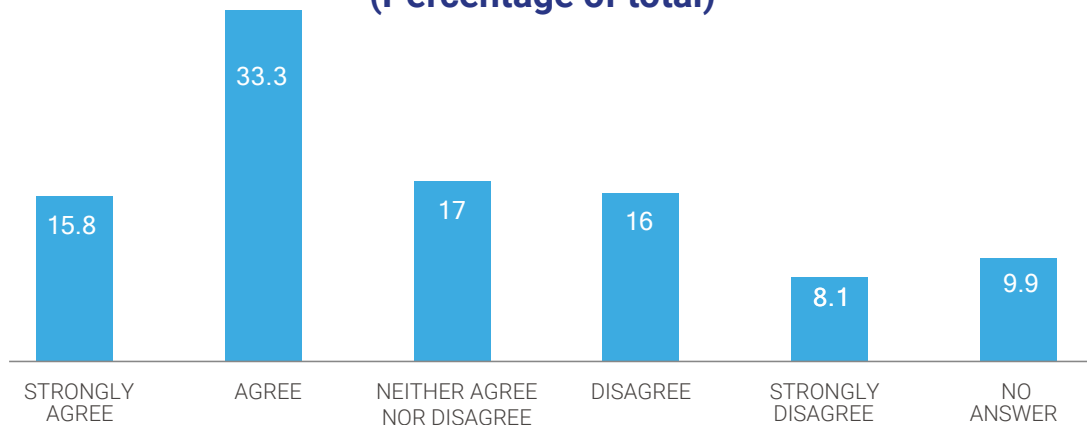
Figure 13

Europe was as follows:

- 27.7 per cent from western Europe;

- 16.1 per cent from southern Europe;

- 10.9 per cent from northern Europe; and

- 4.3 per cent from eastern Europe.

When it came to other regions, 16.4 per cent of those who felt certain about the lawful conduct of local or national police came from Asia, 12.8 per cent from northern America, 4.9 per cent each from Africa and Latin America, and 2.1 from Australia.

The group of respondents reported to be working in or with the police still included people who did not have confidence or full confidence in the police's respect for the law and the citizens' rights. Of 166 respondents in this group, the majority (117 people, or 70.5 per cent) were indeed confident that the police were acting in accordance with the law. The remaining 49 respondents (29.5 per cent) were divided into those who did not share this conviction (21 people or 12 per cent), those who could not decide (21 people, or 12.7 per cent) or those who did not respond (seven people, or 4.2 per cent). Out of the 21 who had doubts about the police's conduct, eleven were from Europe, five were from Asia, two were from Africa, two were from Latin America and two were from Northern America.

Moving from the police to the technology, **when prompted to share their perceptions on whether AI can be useful for police to protect them and their community, over half of the respondents (53.3 per cent) indicated their agreement**.[29] Seventeen per cent did not believe that AI can help the police: 9.7 per cent disagreed and 7.3 per cent strongly disagreed. Nearly a third (29.7 per cent) did not answer.[30]

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[29]   Question 11 of the survey.

[30]   The number includes 18.4 per cent who neither agreed not disagreed, and another 11.3 per cent who did not answer.

**Artificial intelligence can help the police to better protect me
and my community (Percentage of total)**
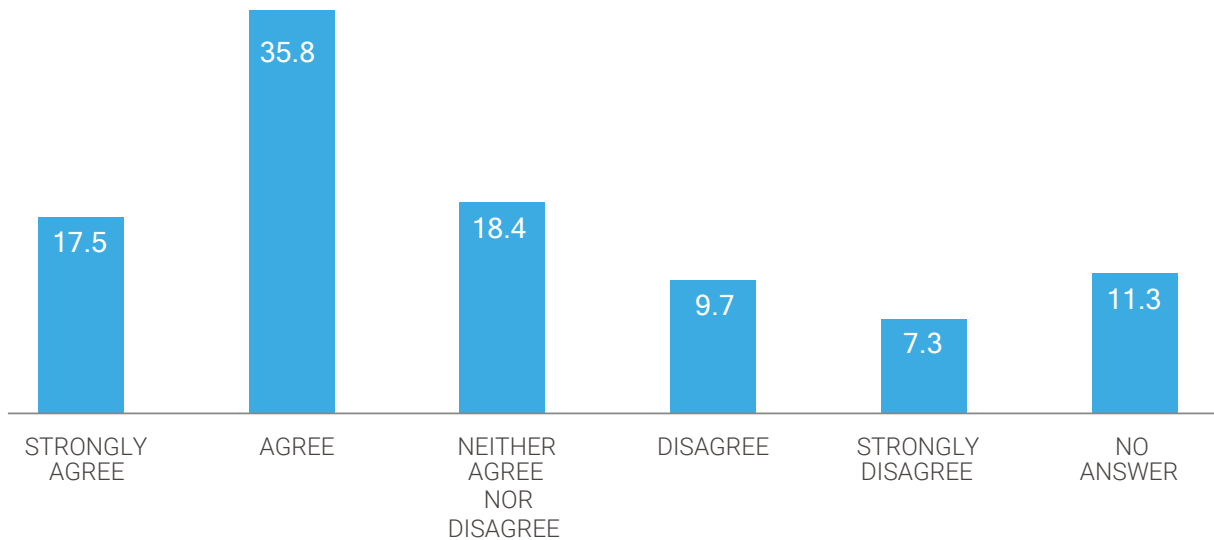
Figure 14

Correlating the data, it can be seen that **the participants who believed in AI systems' usefulness for the police tended to also believe that the police respect the law and the citizens' rights (75 per cent)**. Interestingly, one in four people (25 per cent), however, trusted AI more than they trusted the police.

Among those that were suspicious about the use of AI systems in policing (17 per cent), nearly a half were women (48.7 per cent). As may be anticipated, the share of people within this group who felt potentially vulnerable to discrimination was also higher[31] and there was also a higher share of people who preferred not to declare their gender or identified themselves as "other".[32]

3. Application of AI in policing

Turning from trust in AI and in the police, the survey proceeded into the application of AI in policing. Here, **a high number of respondents (62.8 per cent) thought that AI is essential to help solve certain crimes in an increasingly digital world**.[33] The remainder were split relatively evenly across the other opinions, with 11.8 per cent disagreeing, 11.8 per cent providing no answer, and 13.6 per cent neither agreeing nor disagreeing. A relatively small portion strongly disagreed (5.4 per cent).

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[31] Forty-seven per cent in this group compared to 38 per cent in the total surveyed population.

[32] Prefer not to declare: 5.2 per cent here compared to 3.6 in the overall sample. Other: 4.3 per cent here compared to 1.5 overall.

[33] Question 12 of the survey.

Of those that neither agreed nor disagreed on AI systems being indispensable to police work (13.6 per cent), 15 per cent were people working in or with the police.

Comparing the answers to the questions on a) AI systems' usefulness in helping the police to better protect the community (see above)[34], and b) them being indispensable for solving certain crimes, it is interesting to observe the extent of agreement on these two issues. **Just below half of all respondents to the survey (47.8 per cent)[35] agreed or strongly agreed that AI systems are essential for solving certain crimes and can support the police to better perform their duties.**

Some respondents, however, made a distinction between these two statements. 15 per cent found AI systems essential for solving certain crimes,[36] but could not agree on whether AI is useful in protecting the communities; whereas 5.1 per cent believed that AI systems can be useful to the police,[37] but that they are not essential for solving crimes.

In an increasingly digital world, AI is essential to help solve certain crimes (per centage of total)

STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO ANSWER
24	38.8	13.6	6.4	5.4	11.8
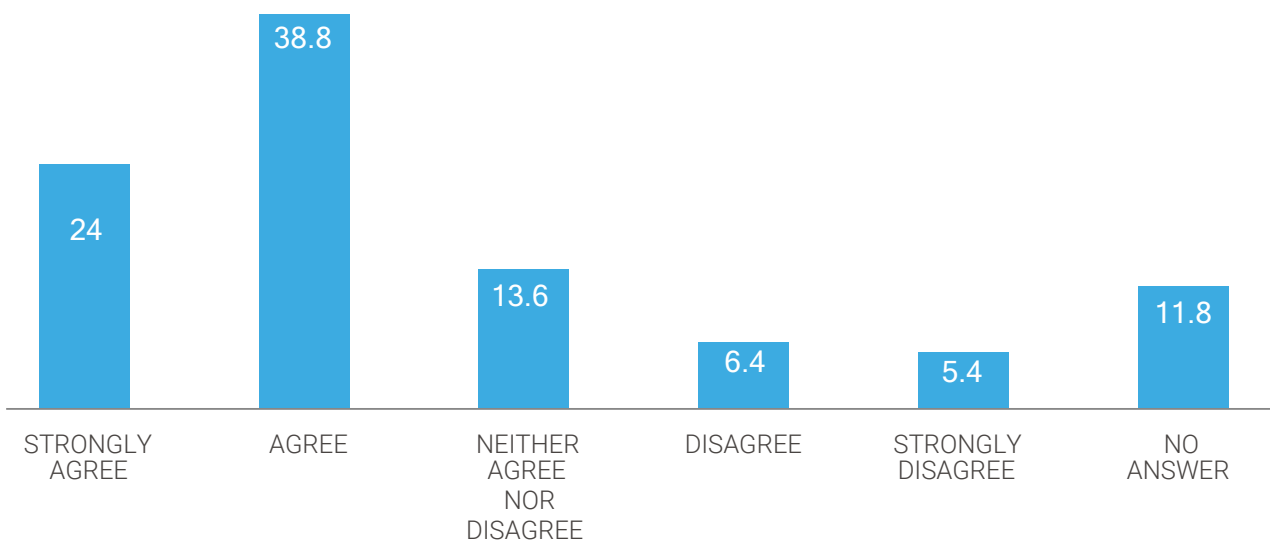
Figure 15

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34 Question 11 of the survey.

35 Or, 76 per cent of those who thought that AI systems are essential to help solve certain crimes also believe that AI can support the police to better perform their duties.

36 Or 24 per cent of those who thought that AI systems are essential to help police solve certain crimes: this includes 4.5 per cent of those who disagree, 1.9 per cent those who strongly disagree and 17.6 per cent of those who thought that AI systems are essential to help police solve certain crimes but could neither agree nor disagree with whether they can help the police to offer better protection.

37 This includes 0.6 per cent of those who disagree, 1.9 per cent those who strongly disagree and 0.4 per cent of those who could neither agree nor disagree with whether AI systems are essential.

These distinctions may indicate that the general public can discern small differences between different applications of AI systems in various police functions. Alternatively, they may also suggest a widespread misunderstanding of how AI systems are applied in general, especially in policing.

Moving from general policing, the survey sought to build on this by better understanding through a series of multi-choice questions how comfortable respondents were about the use of AI systems in specific contexts.[38] This was approached by looking at both generic law enforcement functions and specific applications of AI in law enforcement.

First, respondents were prompted to express whether they felt comfortable with police agencies using AI to support them in the following generic functions:

- Preventing crimes from happening;
- Detecting that a crime has been committed;
- Investigating serious crimes;
- Investigating all other kinds of crimes;
- Protecting people and property;
- Maintaining public order and safety; and
- Back-office functions.

Respondents could select any number of functions for which they felt comfortable with police using AI. They could also select the option "I do not feel comfortable with the police using artificial intelligence" or to select "other" and add their comment through an open-ended answer. The respondents were assumed to be against or not in favour of functions they did not select.

15.7 per cent of survey respondents expressed that they felt comfortable with the police using AI systems to support them in all of the listed functions. The respondents who gave additional comments indicated that they saw the benefits of:

- Using the technology for limiting and exposing corruption, injustice, and violations against citizens;
- Exposing exploitation of children by handling reports; creating an image of a suspect;
- Managing prisons;
- Staffing efficiently;
- Reducing expenses, increasing performance efficiency, supporting development efforts;

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[38]   Questions 13 and 14.

■ Enhancing coordiantion within the crimininal justice system, including law enforcement and judicial authorities.

The substantial majority of respondents - 60.1 per cent – expressed clear support for the use of AI in investigating serious crimes. Additionally, 42.5 favoured employing AI to detect when a crime has been committed. These findings highlight strong support for AI in key policy functions.

On the other hand, most respondents felt uncomfortable with the use of AI for investigating less serious crimes and for maintaining public safety; only 30.8 per cent and 33.3 per cent, respectively, expressed comfort with these uses.

The remaining three functions saw roughly an equal amount of both negative and positive opinions:

■ Preventing crimes from happening, 43.4 per cent in favour and 41.9 against (1.5 per cent difference);

■ Protecting people and property, 38.1 per cent against and 37.3 in favour (0.8 per cent difference); and

■ Back-office functions, 38.6 per cent against and 36.8 in favour (1.8 per cent difference).

Representation of respondent's views of comfort around use of AI in generic police functions
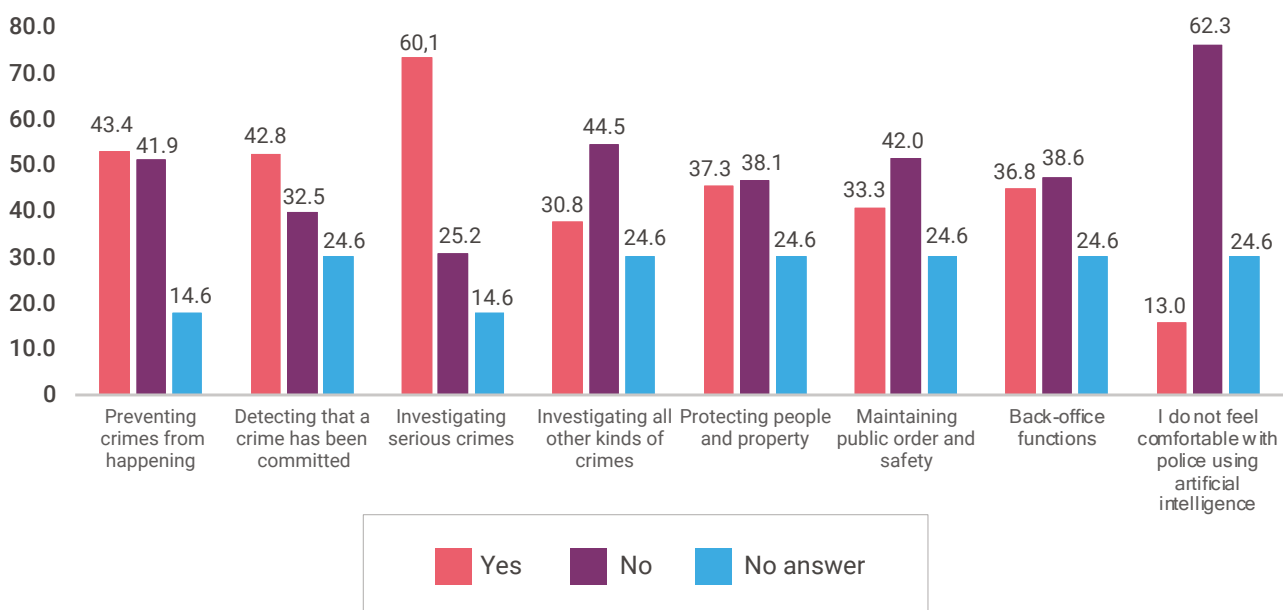
Figure 16

These responses offer the possibility to identify and compare which functions had a majority support from the respondents. For instance, a larger group of people deemed the use of AI favourable for functions involving investigating serious crimes, and crime prevention and detection. In contrast, there were more people against using the technology for investigating all other crimes, protecting people and property, maintaining public order and safety, and carrying out the back-office functions.

Functions selected by the largest majority of respondents		Functions most often not selected by respondents	
Investigating serious crimes	60.1%	Investigating all other kinds of crimes	44.5%
Preventing crimes from happening	43.4%	Maintaining public order and safety	42.0%
Detecting that a crime has been committed	42.8%	Back-office functions	38.6%
		Protecting people and property	38.1%

Figure 16: Breakdown of comfort around use of AI in generic police functions around favourability

More than 40 per cent of the respondents were either in favour or against five of the seven stated functions. These included:

- Investigating serious crimes;
- Investigating all other kinds of crimes;
- Preventing crimes from happening;
- Detecting that a crime has been committed; and
- Maintaining public order and safety

It is challenging to attempt to ascertain from the data why responses were presented in this manner. Looking at the demographics, **the survey respondents who answered the question were spread across the spectrum in terms of age, gender, origin, education or the declared knowledge of the topics**. Yet, these five functions triggered large portions of the respondents largely against or in their favour.

With respect to the remaining two functions of protecting people and property and carrying out back-office functions, the participants were more equally divided in their opinions and differences were less marked.

There were also respondents who felt negatively about all the options presented, not choosing any of the listed policing functions to be aided by AI systems. This category made up 11.9 per cent of the total number of responses. Of these, some gave recommendations as to where, in their view, the use of AI would be more appropriate, while others expressed broader criticism or reservations. The recommendations included countering terrorism, investigating cyber-crimes, monitoring locations and collecting evidence on groups that could harm citizens. Other respondents reported that their lack of knowledge of AI hindered their ability to be able to make proposals, while others cited a lack of trust in the police as an institution. One respondent recognized the potential of the technology to augment human capabilities by processing large data sets. However, the reply suggested excluding the decision-making aspect whenever it concerned areas dealing with justice. This kind of opinion was echoed in numerous suggestions offered by the survey participants in response to the invitation at the end of the survey to share any other comments or thoughts.[39]

Finally, 13 per cent of respondents expressed discomfort with police using AI. However, inconsistencies in relation to their answers to other survey questions were observed. When analyzing the answers of those who selected the option "I do not feel comfortable with police using artificial intelligence" to questions on whether AI can help the police to better protect them and their community[40] or whether it is essential to help solve certain crimes in an increasingly digital world,[41] some respondents expressed favourable opinions. These inconsistencies suggest potential misinterpretation of the question, but they can also be attributed to a nuanced view on the topic, where people simultaneously hold feelings of discomfort and a recognition of the positive potential of AI in policing.

Moving on from the general police functions, the respondents were then asked to consider the use of AI applications for expediting more specific applications of AI in policing. These included the following:[42]

- Assessing the likelihood of certain crimes being committed at a certain location and time;
- Detecting criminal material on the devices of suspects;
- Identifying suspects or victims in a database of lawfully obtained photos;
- Identifying suspects or victims in a crowd in real-time;
- Analyzing job applications and recommending whom the agency should hire;
- Analyzing bank transactions to detect possible financial crimes;

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[39]   Question 29 of the survey, which can be consulted in Annex 1.
[40]   Question 11 of the survey, which can be consulted in Annex 1.
[41]   Question 12 of the survey, which can be consulted in Annex 1.
[42]   Question 14 of the survey, which can be consulted in Annex 1.

- Patrolling or surveilling international borders to detect illegal movements;

- Patrolling or surveilling the streets to detect illegal movements;

- Analyzing images of bodycams worn by law enforcement; and

- Finding connections between pieces of evidence.

Again, respondents were allowed to select the option "I do not feel comfortable with the police using artificial intelligence" or to selected "other" and add their comment through an open-ended answer.

Six of the ten listed applications could be characterized as receiving negative feedback, inferring that the respondents largely did not feel comfortable with the idea of police relying on AI to help them perform these functions. For the other four applications, half or more respondents were largely comfortable with the use of AI systems.

Applications selected by the largest majority of respondents		Applications most often not selected by respondents	
Find connections between pieces of evidence	55.1%	Analyze job applications and recommend who the agency should hire	62.4%
Identify suspects or victims in a database of lawfully obtained photos	52.2%	Patrol or surveil the streets to detect illegal movements	53.7%
Analyze bank transactions to detect possible financial crimes	51.3%	Identify suspects or victims in a crowd in real-time	44.6%
Detect criminal material on the devices of suspects	48.2%	Patrol or surveil international borders to detect illegal movements	43.6%
		Analyze images of bodycams worn by the law enforcement	42.7%
		Assess the likelihood of certain crimes being committed at a certain location and time	42.4%

Figure 17: Breakdown of comfort around use of AI in specific police functions around favourability

Analyzing the breakdown, **respondents appeared to be more comfortable with the police relying on AI for the analysis of events or facts already in their knowledge or possession**. As can be seen from the table above, a majority of the respondents were in favour of AI supporting police in finding connections between evidence, processing lawfully obtained photos, analyzing bank transactions and detecting criminal material on suspects' devices. The logic behind respondents' more favourable views to these applications appears to be that, in these cases, police analyze events or facts in their possession rather than forecasting future ones. Interestingly, 33.7 per cent of respondents selected simultaneously three of the four above mentioned applications: finding connections between pieces of evidence, identifying suspects or victims in a database of lawfully obtained photos and analyzing bank transactions. Their views, however, differed on all the other listed applications.

On the other hand, when specific police functions involved future events or required (near) real-time decision-making the respondents did not express their support. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents were against the use of AI to analyze job applications and take decisions surrounding the hiring process. This particular opinion was expressed across ages, geographies, genders, and levels of education, and even included persons who reported to be working with or in the police, were against the use of AI systems for the described functions.[43]

Representation of respondent's views of comfort around use of AI in specific police functions: I feel comfortable with the police using artificial intelligence to support them in (Values in percentages)
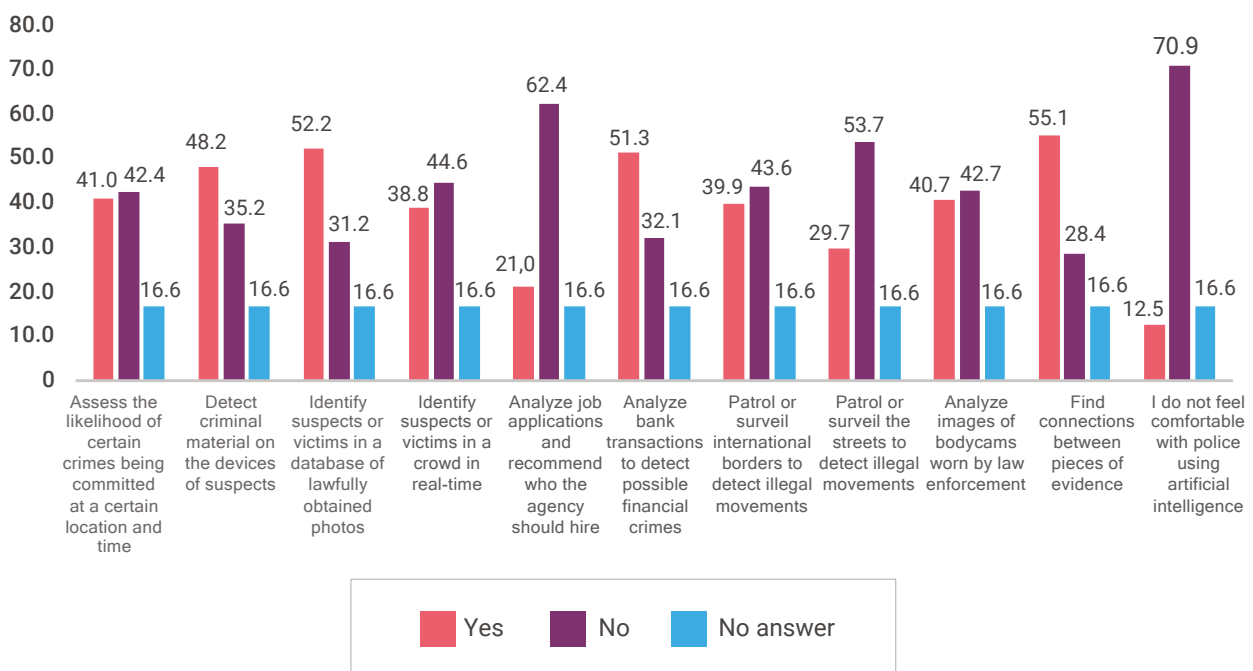

Figure 19

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[43]   102 out of 166 survey participants who reported to be working in or with the police.

Finally, 12.5 per cent of participants expressed feeling uncomfortable with police using AI for any of the specific policing functions. Comparing to the previous questions, 11.3 per cent of respondents expressed feeling uncomfortable with the police using AI for both seven general and ten specific functions.[44] Those who felt uncomfortable with the police using AI to execute specific policing functions also tended to believe that AI is not of help to the police to better protect them and their community – 10.3 per cent of respondents.[45] However, it can be seen by these varying percentages that there is no agreement across these the topics: only 6.7 per cent of participants believed that AI is neither helpful nor essential for the police in general, nor for any of the 17 listed functions.[46]

Only a fraction of the respondents, 14 in total, offered additional comments or suggestions on the topic. Four participants offered positive suggestions, four made negative remarks and six expressed reservations. The negative remarks conveyed a lack of trust in policing as an institution, in some cases based on previous negative experiences. The positive comments were general in nature despite the question's aim to steer conversation towards more specific areas of application. They suggested that the use of AI by law enforcement could save time, protect women's safety in public spaces, protect civilians from abuse of power by the police, and analyze bank transactions while respecting individual's rights. **Five of six respondents who expressed reservations suggested that they would be comfortable with the use of AI in all the ten listed functions of policing should certain safeguards be in place**. This pertained "*mostly to safeguarding human rights*", as one respondent specified. Others suggested that their views depended on whether AI systems are "*robust, legal and ethical*" and that their use is combined with other policing methods, including having human oversight, thus serving as a tool for humans when necessary and appropriate.

Overall, 16.6 per cent of respondents chose not to answer this question. Upon comparing the behaviour of these respondents on other questions, it is evident that this category of respondents largely did not respond to the remainder of the questions in the survey from this point onwards. This could be attributed to the questions becoming increasingly more specific and complex, and/or answering fatigue, with the participants' interest slowly tapering away.

Looking a little more closely at specific feedback from those working in or with the police, **the majority of these respondents (166 people) tended to be more favourably inclined towards using AI for executing general policing functions compared to the general sample**. While one in four (26.5 per cent) were in favour of relying on AI to expedite each of the offered functions, the greatest majority saw benefits of AI in investigating serious crimes (73.5 per cent). Similarly, preventing and detecting crimes attracted large majorities (63.9 and 60.2 per cent

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[44]   Questions 13 and 14 of the survey.
[45]   Question 11 of the survey.
[46]   Comparisons across questions 11, 12, 13 and 14 of the survey.

respectively). Slightly below this, but still over half of them, considered it useful for protecting people and property (54.8 per cent), maintaining public order and safety (54.8 per cent), investigating all other crimes (54.2 per cent) and executing back-office functions (48.2 per cent). Interestingly, those working in the police were most divided when it comes to the back-office functions: with 48.2 per cent considering AI positively here and 44.6 per cent being against its use. In other words, one in four respondents who were against AI systems' use for supporting back-office functions worked in or with the police. As should be anticipated, in every community there are always those who are staunchly against the use of AI irrespective of application, which amounted to 7.2 per cent of those working in or with the police on this occasion.

4. Citizens' rights and policing with AI

The relationship between citizens and law enforcement was at the centre of the next set of questions. The questions revolved around whether the citizens should be notified when the police use AI systems in their operation. One question queried whether citizens should be notified when AI was used for the prevention, detection and investigation of crimes,[47] and the other question queried the need for notification in the context of back-office functions and providing services to the public unrelated to the prevention, detection and investigation of crimes.[48]

In both cases, the expectation was that the citizens should be notified. In the first case, two-thirds of the respondents (65.9 per cent) felt that notification was necessary. In the second case, more than half of the participants (52.2 per cent) also wanted the police to notify citizens. In both instances, as can be seen in the graphs below, the majority of respondents felt strongly about the need for notification - 39.3 per cent and 28.1 per cent respectively.

There was **a comparatively small number of respondents who were willing to forego notification**. In the case of back-office functions and providing services to the public, 13.1 per cent expressed no preference for being notified (9.7 per cent disagree, 3.4 strongly disagree). Half as many, 6.4 per cent, equally did not expect to be notified when police use AI to prevent, detect, and investigate crimes (4.6 per cent disagree, 1.8 per cent strongly disagree). The respondents in these groups were not distinguishable from the rest. In fact, they were mixed in terms of age, gender, origin, education nor experience. Interestingly, **the two groups of respondents willing to forego notifications, in the case of preventive and back-office functions, did not overlap**. In fact, the group who did not expect to be notified for back-office functions, did wish for it in cases of prevention, detection and investigation crimes, suggesting the crux of concern for this category of respondents concerned the outward-facing nature of the prevention functions as distinct from the back-office functions.

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[47]   Question 15 of the survey, which can be consulted in Annex 1.

[48]   Question 16 of the survey, which can be consulted in Annex 1.

Citizens should be notified when the police use AI to prevent, detect and investigate crimes (Values in percentages)
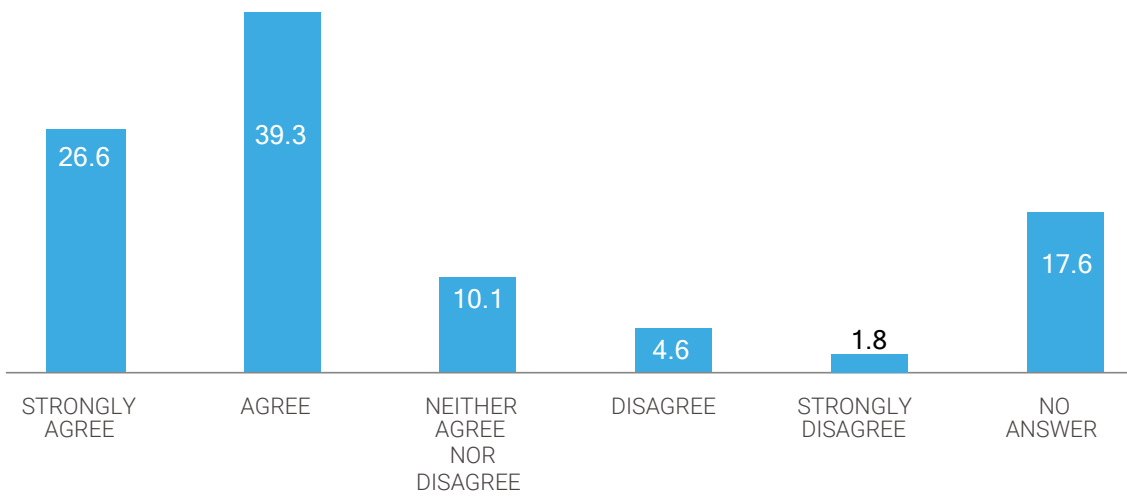
Figure 20

Citizens should be notified when the police use AI to support back-office functions and provide services for the general public that are not related to the prevention, detection and investigation of crimes (Values in percentages)
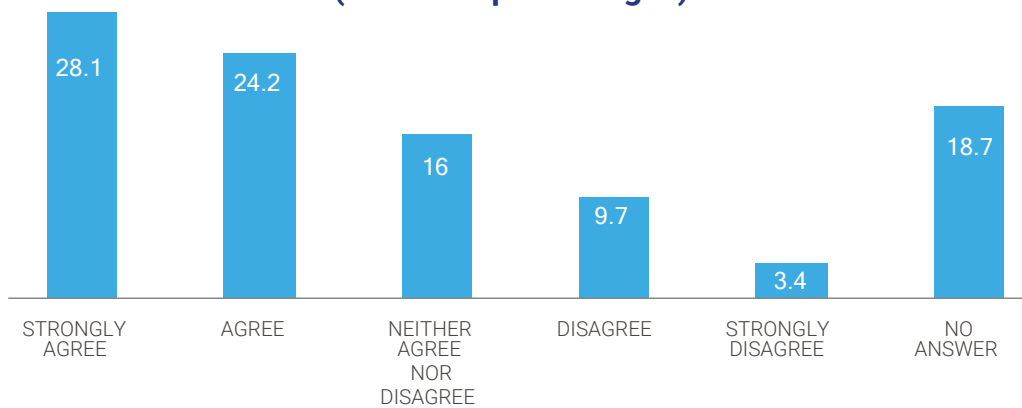
Figure 21

The survey next sought to ascertain whether the respondents thought that the use of AI by law enforcement could impact their personal freedoms.[49] **A majority of 51.2 per cent thought that there was a risk that it would, with the other approximate half being of mixed views – some unsure (16.4 per cent) and some did not think that freedoms would be affected (13.4 per cent)**.

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[49]   Question 17 of the survey.

Those who thought that their personal freedoms would not suffer (13.4 per cent) were mostly male (60 per cent), a significant percentage of which worked in or with the police (42.2 per cent) and two thirds of which claimed to have a broad understanding of AI (66.7 per cent). However, respondents that thought that their personal freedoms would not suffer also included people with both extensive (20 per cent) and limited knowledge of AI (13.3 per cent).

Representation of respondent's views on whether AI can help the police to protect them and their community (Percentage of total).
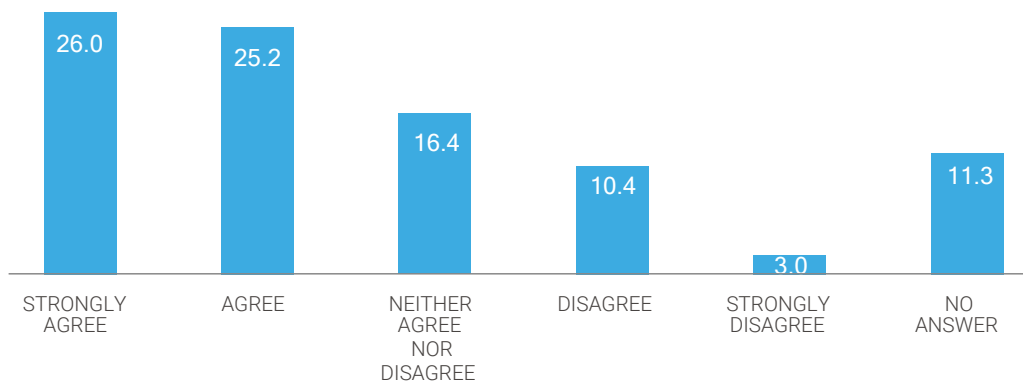
Figure 21: Representation of respondent's views of whether use of AI by police may impact personal freedoms[50]

This group held a somewhat higher proportion of people who were unsure about what AI entails compared to the overall respondents.[51] This would suggest **that respondents' indicated level of knowledge or familiarity with AI and police work in general did not determine their awareness of how AI systems might impact their personal freedoms**.

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[50]   Question 17 of the survey.

[51]   The share of respondents who have reportedly heard about AI but are unsure what it is exactly stands at 11.2 per cent in the overall group, compared to 13.3 per cent among those who believe it would not impact their personal freedoms and are unsure what AI entails."

Recognizing the prevalence of respondents who felt AI use by police may impact their human rights, it is unsurprising that an overwhelming majority of respondents, 75 per cent, also expected the police to take further precautions to ensure that their use of AI does not lead to discrimination.[52] **53 per cent of the respondents expressed a strong conviction about the need for precautions against discrimination**. The importance of anti-discriminatory provisions could be further gauged by the fact that 98 per cent of the respondents found them indispensable.

When asked to assess adequacy of the national laws and regulations to ensure that the police respect their rights when using AI, over half of the respondents found them insufficient (56.4 per cent).[53] Only 8.5 per cent felt somewhat (6.3 per cent) or very (2.2 per cent) comfortable with the guarantees of existing laws and regulations. Those that expressed reservations about existing laws were not a homogenous group, as they included people of all ages, genders, education levels and geographical backgrounds. **Reservations about the current legal safeguards against the risk of harms resulting from AI were evident even within the policing community, with** one in five of those in this category reporting to be working in or with the police (21.7 per cent).

Tellingly, those that were worried about the impact of the use of AI systems on personal freedoms **(51.2 per cent)[54] were also overall apprehensive about the current national laws and regulations**. A large majority (83.7 per cent) of respondents in this category were concerned about the existing legal safeguards, with the remaining 16.3 per cent either not concerned (5.5 per cent) or not sure how to respond (10.8 per cent). Among those who were worried that the use of AI by the police could impact their personal freedoms, 53.9 per cent were seriously concerned that the laws are not a sufficient safeguard.

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[52] Question 20 of the survey.
[53] Question 21 of the survey.
[54] See chapter 5.4 Citizens' rights and policing with AI.

5. Treatment of personal data

One of the most frequently cited human rights concerns in the context of AI and law enforcement is the right to privacy and personal data protection. Accordingly, the survey sought next to assess respondents' perceptions on whether the law or another relevant authority should allow the police to collect and analyze citizens' personal data.[55] **Nearly half of the respondents (28.7 per cent) thought that an officially decreed authorization to collect such data should not be obligatory in every circumstance**. Just under a quarter (21.9 per cent) felt that an authorization should be obtained in all circumstances. Ten per cent neither agreed nor disagreed.

The respondents who believed that authorization is necessary in all circumstances included a mix of both those potentially vulnerable to discrimination (32.7 per cent) and those who were not (62.6 per cent). Interestingly, there was a higher portion of the respondents who worked in or with the police in that group – 35.2 per cent compared to 24.8 per cent in the general sample.

Half of respondents (49.7 per cent), however, concurred that, in extreme circumstances that threaten public security, the police need a legal or formal authorization to collect and analyze personal data with the help of AI.[56] Only 16.6 per cent of the respondents were against this,[57] with another 13 per cent who could neither agree nor disagree and 20.7 per cent who did not provide an answer.

Respondents expecting the police to seek an authorization to use personal data in exceptional circumstances that threaten public security included people of all ages, gender, origin and levels of education. Those with master's degrees were somewhat more represented (48.6 per cent compared to 44.9 of the general sample) as well as those of more than 65 years of age (4.2 compared to 2.8 per cent of the general sample). There were relatively more respondents working with the police (30 per cent compared to 24.8 per cent of the general sample) and potentially vulnerable to discrimination (33.6 per cent compared to 31.8 per cent).

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[55] Question 18 of the survey.

[56] Question 19 of the survey.

[57] This includes 10 per cent who disagree and 6.6 per cent who strongly disagree.

Representation of respondents' views on the need for notification regarding use of AI: The law (or other relevant authority) should authorize the police to collect and analyze citizens' personal data in any circumstances (Values in percentages)

No answer	19.4
Strongly disagree	29.3
Disagree	19.4
Neither agree nor disagree	10.0
Agree	12.4
Strongly agree	9.6
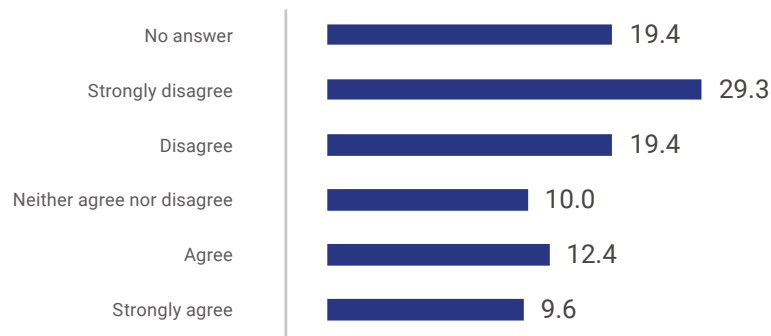
Figure 23

Representation of respondents' views on the need for notification regarding use of AI: The law (or other relevant authority) should authorize the police to collect and analyze my personal data through AI only when there are extreme circumstances at stake that threaten public security (Values in percentages)

No answer	20.7
Strongly disagree	6.6
Disagree	10.0
Neither agree nor disagree	13.0
Agree	35.1
Strongly agree	14.6
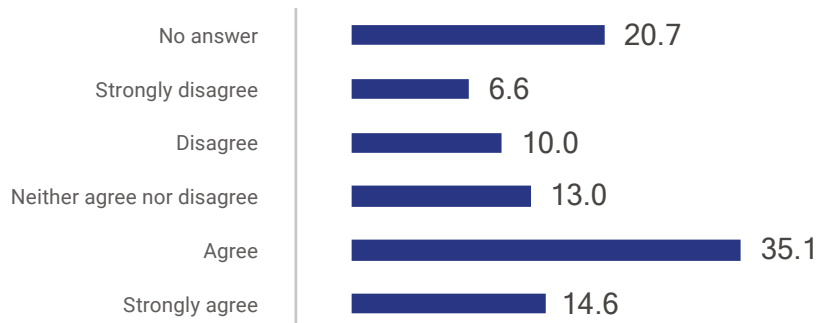
Figure 24

6. How should police use AI?

Having explored perceptions around the utility of AI in policing, as well as general and specific uses of AI by police, the survey proceeded to explore in greater detail how police should use AI. From this series of questions, it was seen that the majority of the participants (69 per cent) believed that **humans should be involved in the review of the results of AI and come to their decisions independently**.[58] Of these, 38.4 per cent strongly agreed on the need for "*a human in the loop*", as suggested by one of the respondents. Less than one in ten respondents (9.3 per cent) felt otherwise, and of those, a 7.5 per cent could not decide on how to answer. The remaining 21.8 per cent gave no answer.

Over 75 per cent of the respondents felt that the police need to have legal and ethical training on the use of AI.[59] In fact, over half of the respondents (56.6 per cent) were convinced that the training should be obligatory. It is highly indicative that less than one per cent (0.8) of respondents thought otherwise. Only two per cent were unsure about how to respond. Furthermore, those who reported to be working in or with the police were also overwhelmingly in favour of the training: 140 of 166 participants (84.3 per cent).

When inquired about the ease of **accessing information surrounding AI use by the police, nearly half of the respondents (44 per cent) reported that it was difficult**.[60] One in ten (9.1 per cent) believed that this was not too difficult, while one in four (25.1 per cent) was not sure how to respond. As may be expected, among the group of people who believed that it was not difficult to obtain relevant information, half worked in or with the police (50.8 per cent).

The survey further sought perspectives on ways in which police obtained AI systems.[61] More specifically, respondents were asked whether police should be allowed to use AI systems that were developed by external organizations or private companies or whether they should seek to deploy AI systems that had been developed in-house specifically to suit their needs. Most participants (41 per cent) thought that it was not necessary for the police to develop their own AI systems and an almost equivalent number (40 per cent) thought that they should be allowed to seek external support for AI development. The participants who disagreed were evenly split, with 12.4 per cent believing that the police should rely only on internally developed AI systems and 14 per cent being of the opinion that police should not be allowed to use AI systems developed by external organizations, including private sector companies. In both cases, one in four respondents were undecided: 24.6 per cent and 24.2 per cent.

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[58]   Question 22 of the survey.

[59]   Question 23 of the survey.

[60]   Question 24 of the survey.

[61]   Question 25 and 26 of the survey.

In case the police decided to integrate AI systems developed by private companies or other external organizations, a significant majority of the respondents (67.6 per cent) expected them to adhere to strict policies and monitor operations more closely.[62] In comparison, an extremely small fraction of the respondents disagreed (2.4 per cent), and less than one in ten were undecided (7.6 per cent).

7. Legal protection in case of citizens' rights' violations

Recognizing that the use of AI systems by police may result in a violation of citizens' rights, the penultimate question looked at legal protections, asking participants whether they thought the laws and mechanisms in place to protect citizens and make amends if police's use of AI breaches their rights were sufficient. [63] 38.1 per cent of the respondents felt that legal protections were insufficient.[64] The remaining responses were rather evenly divided among those who did not answer (22.4 per cent), felt unsure what to respond (20.9 per cent) or else considered the existing laws and mechanisms sufficient (18.7 per cent). It is telling that **only 18.7 per cent found that national laws in place were a sufficient guarantee against potential breaches.** It merits mentioning that the geographical origin of the respondents played a role here, in light of the fact that domestic laws surrounding these issues vary from country to country. It can be observed that the majority of the respondents found legal safeguards insufficient for both the legal guarantees and for the mechanisms in cases of breach. In fact, **56.4 per cent found legal guarantees insufficient to safeguard their rights, while 38.1 per cent found them insufficient should their rights be breached**.

Responses to this question are comparable to those of a previous question requiring respondents to consider whether national laws and regulations were a sufficient guarantee for citizens' rights.[65] In both cases, trust in the legal guarantees was relatively low, accounting for 8.5 per cent and 18.7 per cent respectively. Finally, the percentage of respondents who expressed uncertainty or did not respond to these questions was significant: 35 per cent when it came to the trust in laws ensuring that law enforcement respect citizens' rights and 43.3 per cent when it came to protection when their rights had been breached (see chart below).

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[62] Question 27 of the survey.

[63] Question 28 of the survey.

[64] Question 28 of the survey.

[65] Question 28 of the survey.

Comparison between questions 21 and 28 - National laws and regulations are sufficient to ensure that:	Sufficient	Insufficient	Not sure	Did not respond
Question 21: The police **respect citizens' rights** when using AI	8.5%	56.4%	13.7%	21.3%
Question 28: Citizens are protected and amends made if police's use of AI **breaches rights**	18.7%	38.1%	20.9%	22.4%

Figure 24: Comparison of responses to questions concerning the sufficiency of national law and regulations.

Certain peculiarities can be observed when comparing answers to both questions. Over half (58.4 per cent) of the 18.7 per cent respondents who considered the existing legal mechanisms in place sufficient to protect citizens in case their rights had been violated deemed them insufficient to ensure that the police respect citizens' rights in the first place. In other words, this group of respondents appears to tend to believe more in the remedial than the preventive role of the law. A total of 24 per cent of the respondents in this group believed that the existing legal protections are *sufficient both to protect citizens rights in general and when their rights had been infringed upon*. The remaining 17.6 per cent considered the legal safeguards sufficient to protect them once their rights had been violated but were unsure whether they were sufficient in general.

There was a greater consistency in opinions among the respondents who thought that the laws and mechanisms in place to protect citizens and provide reparations if police's use of AI breaches their rights are insufficient (38.1 per cent). Nearly all respondents in this group (92.2 per cent) considered that the national laws and regulations were equally insufficient to ensure that the police respect their rights when they use AI.

Such different views on nuanced matters suggest that there is, expectedly, a lot of confusion and misunderstanding surrounding AI in general, and its use by law enforcement and potential bias regarding the technology and/or the police. However, it could also suggest a heightened awareness of the national legal system's limitations.

Public perceptions – what else the respondents say

This section examines the open-ended or free-text responses from the survey, where respondents were encouraged to express their thoughts freely on the use of AI in policing. By allowing respondents to share their unfiltered opinions and insights, a richer and more nuanced understanding of public perceptions could be obtained. These responses provided valuable data for qualitative analysis, highlighting diverse perspectives and shedding greater light on concerns and sentiments that might not have otherwise been captured through predefined survey questions.

A significantly large number of the respondents shared their thoughts, comments and suggestions in this part of the survey.[66] Of 670 submissions, 164 offered additional considerations – 24.5 per cent of all respondents. They included people from all regions of the world, of different ages, gender, levels of education and familiarity with AI. Compared to the overall sample of the survey's participants, there were slightly more male respondents (54.9 per cent)[67] in this group, with the respondents being aged between 25 and 54 the most numerous (74.4 per cent).[68] Interestingly, a higher percentage of respondents who considered themselves potentially vulnerable to discrimination (41.5 per cent) and working in or with the police (28 per cent) participated in this part of the survey when compared to the general sample (31.8 per cent and 24.8 per cent respectively).

Among the comments provided, three broad distinct clusters of responses emerged. First, there were those embracing AI as a new technology – even in the context of its use by the police (11 per cent of provided responses). Second, there were those that were vehemently against it (10 per cent). The third group of responses fell somewhere in between (66.5 per

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[66]   Question 29 of the survey.

[67]   Their per centage is 51 per cent in the overall sample.

[68]   Their per centage is 73.7 per cent in the overall sample.

cent).[69] This final cluster, clearly encompassing the largest group of respondents, consisted of a mix of respondents - some inclined to consider the use of AI in a more positive light, others more negatively, and a small portion undecided on which stance to take. Largely, it could be said that respondents who provided feedback in this section, were generally favourable to the use of AI in policing, provided that certain concerns were addressed and measures put in place. No consensus emerged, however, in terms of what these measures should be.

Most of the respondents who were positive about police use of AI were explicit in their support (11 per cent). Over half of them expressed their general support for this technology, referencing the inevitability of technological advancement. As one of the respondents suggested, AI is *"one of the most important achievements for humanity"*. The expectation of such respondents appears to be that its use would help the police address crime more effectively.

Individuals who provided more detailed responses listed benefits such as human rights and citizen protection, anticipating cybercrime trends, recreating crimes for the purposes of analysis, and avoiding wrongful sentencing of innocent people.

At the same time, only four people expressed complete confidence in police use of AI. Others were more cautious, even while being openly positive, expecting ethical considerations to be part of the technology's adoption.

Breakdown of respondents concluding thoughts or suggestions
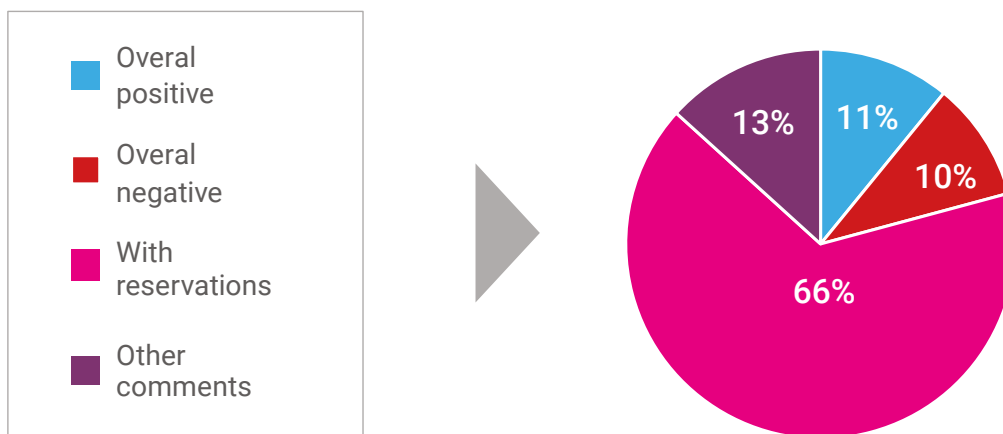
Figure 26

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[69] The remaining 13.4 per cent provided other comments, unrelated to the topic of the survey.

"AI is the way of the future, police organizations should embrace the use of this technology to be more efficient and effective."

"If this makes the police better in protecting citizens and finding criminals, it would be very stupid if they are not using it or are unable to use it due to political constraints."

"Only people who are against this have something to hide." [70]

Seven people who felt negatively towards the adoption of AI by police also chose not to provide any insight as to the motivation behind their point of view. Some expected laws to be passed to make the police's use of AI unlawful, while others suggested that the technology's uses could negatively impact people's lives and lead to hyper-vigilance, invasion of people's privacy, political targeting, and violations of human rights and freedoms. This, it was suggested, resulted from their perceived limitations of AI, including its opacity, reliance on inadequate or partial data, and the oversimplification inherent in using statistical models to make sense of complex human experience. In one case, the use of AI by the police was equated to an autonomous weapons system. Moreover, some respondents believed that the analyses obtained through the use of AI were not being subjected to qualitative evaluations, thus enhancing the risk of institutional bias towards vulnerable groups. Consequently, its use should be strictly limited and guided by ethical considerations set out in an overarching legal framework.

The main difference between the respondents with reservations, on the one hand, and the respondents who were overall positive or negative, on the other hand, is that they expressed caution and concerns accompanied by trust that the risks could be overcome with strong safeguards. In fact, the majority in this group of respondents tended to accept the overall benefits of integrating AI in policing.

In order to gather deeper insights from the responses from a qualitative perspective, each response was analyzed with a view toward isolating distinct terms and themes, then categorized and grouped accordingly. For some responses, more than a single term or theme was isolated. This process allowed for the most dominant concerns and messages to be extrapolated.

An overview of considerations per each theme is provided below. The word cloud in figure 26 also provides a schematic representation of the terms used and their organization under broader themes.

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[70] Remarks by the survey participants.

Figure 26: Word cloud of terms frequently featured in the respondents' narrative feedback

1. Accountability

While it is true that the respondents that answered the final open-ended question frequently invoked the potential of AI to enhance police effectiveness and efficiency in dealing with crime, this was, tellingly, never done without acknowledging its potential for unethical and discriminatory outcomes. Ten respondents suggested that the technology puts great power in the hands of police forces and, consequently, called for stringent measures, extraordinary care and regular checks to ensure that police forces do not to overstep legal limits and boundaries. Legal measures, regulation, policies and routine oversight controls by an independent authority were recommended as measures that could help minimize the risks. These respondents also suggested that police officers found intentionally or incidentally breaching such limits should be subject to some form of reprimands.

One third (34 per cent) of respondents specifically called for independent oversight to be established to guarantee police accountability. Others called for external, ongoing and independent auditing and monitoring or oversight during development, implementation and use. These respondents expected that both the tools used and outcomes obtained be evaluated on the basis of clear criteria. Such evaluations should be carried out along each step of the way: from deciding what is needed, motivating the need, identifying data needed to train the tool, implementing and using the tool (including through AI system confidence metrics).

"The work should consider the wider image and not just focus on very specific use cases - especially since the good intentions may lead to very poor results."

Suggestions were also made for the establishment of independent regulatory bodies, the development of mechanisms to enhance scrutiny, the performance of impact assessments, and the publication of reports. Respondents further suggested that oversight groups or bodies should be multi-stakeholder and inter-disciplinary in nature and, if an official oversight is established by the governments, it should involve different levels of governmental authorities.

"Public reports must be published periodically and widely shared to inform citizens about the use of AI by Police and related forces and to assess their acts along with human rights."[71]

2. Regulatory frameworks

References to a regulatory framework as a precondition for the use of AI by the police was the second most common theme. **Nearly a third of survey participants who shared additional suggestions (28 per cent) made references to constitutions, laws, regulations, rules, procedures, policies, safeguards or other measures.** They agreed that the introduction of a novel technology such as AI should by no means compromise the interpretation and enforcement of any pertinent laws' that existed. Feedback also suggested the belief that the risk of harm resulting from police use of AI was higher where respect for laws was weak. A few respondents also referred to global legal and jurisdictional challenges of dealing with a technology like AI.

"AI is needed to combat cyber-crimes & become more effective in policing, however the current legal framework of most countries did not take AI into consideration. Laws, regulations & policies must be implemented to prevent abuses and/or violation of personal rights."

The respondents also indicated that they expected legal remedies to be guaranteed should people experience infringements of their rights or be incriminated on the basis of evidence obtained by the police through the use of AI. They also expected regulations that provide certain guarantees for defendants.

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[71]   Remark by one survey participant. Other remarks throughout the text are highlighted in the same manner.

3.   Human rights

Nearly one in five respondents (18 per cent) specifically mentioned the need for human rights guarantees as a prerequisite for police use of AI. It was suggested by respondents that human rights compliance needs to be at the forefront in considerations to employ new AI-based tools. This flows from heightened concern around mass surveillance and a belief that the use of AI by police is expected to increase the risks of human rights violations.

> *"There needs to be a happy medium between the necessity of securing the goods of security and protection of life in relation to securing human rights in the use of AI, and I believe that transparency in the use of AI in both the design and use of AI systems enhances the balance of securing these goods in society."*

As many as thirty of 109 respondents (27.5 per cent) expressed fears about AI's potential for discrimination and exacerbation of unfair treatment, resulting from bias within the data that gets built into the tool. Linking in many ways back with the preceding points, one respondent suggested that the databases used for the tools' development be reviewed and audited. Specific concerns were voiced that discrimination would particularly affect racial minorities and other marginalized communities. Some suggested the existence of "**widespread evidence that discrimination already exists within the system**" and that AI use by the police would compound the risk of discrimination.

> *"The question to debate is 'how was the algorithm trained or and on which data set'? Second, we need to understand how to detect bias due to incompetent scientists designing AI systems - this could be skin tone, racial profiling, language use, etc."*

The specific human right to privacy featured in 14.7 per cent of responses, commonly in conjunction with fears of adverse outcomes. In some cases, general respect for individuals' autonomy to decide what information to render public and what to keep confidential was considered more important than the potential benefits obtained. Some respondents considered that rights to privacy are more easily violated by AI, so careful reflection and appropriate legislation are needed before the police employ it.

> *"I am not entirely comfortable with AI in general, much less so with the use of it by police. However, if it is helpful in protecting citizens and maintaining justice,*

then I would at least like to know that every effort is made to protect the privacy and rights of citizens, and that police are properly trained in its use, and appropriately reprimanded in the case of any abuse."

4. Impact on policing

A total of 20 per cent of respondents shared comments that included more general observations about the potential of AI in policing or warnings about its limitations. Some focused on specific aspects of the technology's design, development and deployment. The potential of the technology to enhance effectiveness and efficiency in police departments was highlighted and the possibility of accessing and processing vast amounts of raw data was a clear advantage. AI systems were thought to be of great assistance in time-consuming and labour-intensive tasks such as analyzing data obtained from different sources, and in finding meaningful correlations and patterns. Automation was expected to simplify and streamline the police work, bringing cases to a timelier conclusion.

"AI is not a miracle solution, [it] will not replace the work of police officers but can support them in time-consuming tasks or analyzing numerous flows."

In fact, given the permeating digital presence in the criminality, it was suggested that police would fall behind should they not take advantage of "*a great potential*" that AI technology presents. Some respondents also suggested that they were hopeful that AI would enhance effectiveness in areas they felt traditionally lacked resources, such as gender-based crimes.

Each of the statements in favour of using the technology in policing was, however, accompanied with specific terms under which its application would be acceptable. One in five people who offered comments (18.4 per cent) underlined that AI systems are "*just a tool*", "*just one more tool to fight crime*", "*just the first step*", and, "*as all new technologies*", should be treated accordingly. The expectation is that AI systems would be used in combination with other tools or procedures of ordinary police work. Such combination of tools with human input were considered more effective than any single automated technology. In this vein, respondents implied that the technology adds another responsibility to the police. This is necessary to ensure that safeguards are in place to guarantee that the basic nature of policing is not been altered.

> *"AI can never be truly responsible or accountable for anything. Human responsibility and accountability are critical aspects of policing by consent in a modern democracy."*

In this regard, the accuracy of results produced based on processing vast amounts of data is recognized as a benefit but deemed insufficient. As one respondent observed, data is "*a proxy of reality*" and does "*not capture the whole context of a situation*". Others questioned the possibility of accuracy if ethical guidelines have not been developed and assessed during the different stages of the tool's design, development or deployment. The possibility of using vast amounts of data was also considered as a source of risk. If data has not been vetted for bias or if appropriate levels of access to processes are not granted to authorized specialists for inspection, then it can be a danger. Some concluded that AI may not be as efficient as it is widely believed, and that its limitations need to be considered.

> *"Finally, like any other technology, I think AI can be beneficial to police but that it should be treated as another tool kit that helps the police make their decision like other types of evidence and methods used (like DNA samples, witness testimony/interviews, etc.) and require a human to make the final judgment."*

5. Training

Linked with maximizing the potential and minimizing the risks, a series of observations centred on police forces' readiness to adequately integrate AI-based technology in their day-to-day operations. Eight respondents specifically emphasized the need for training as a precondition for use, so as to ensure that police officers are confident in interpreting and contextualizing the outputs of data analysis with full knowledge of inherent limitations. The expectation was that such training should be ongoing and include ethical aspects of the technology's application in policing, in particular when developed by an external organization.

> *"Additionally, any limitations of AI-tools, which are inevitably present, should be well communicated with investigators using the tools. Training beyond simply using the tools, but also focusing on understanding the limitations and interpreting results correctly is essential."*

6. Development

Fifteen respondents (13.8 per cent) shared considerations that touched upon the development of the technology, the type and quality of data that could be used to train and operate AI systems, and the resources required for this. The nature of AI systems as black boxes was specifically highlighted, with some emphasizing the responsibility of police to understand the selection of data sets, the training of algorithms, and the processing of data to obtain results. Respondents further suggested that data sets used for training algorithms should be diversified and made available for scrutiny in anonymized form. They also felt that using data related to the person's emotions and physiognomy would be controversial. In general, the responses indicated a belief that police should find ways to detect, remove or mitigate bias from the data or the findings. It also appears that some respondents felt that the obligations on police also extended beyond internally developed AI systems and should be able to mitigate the risks inherent in tools developed by private sector companies.

> *"We would need police to police AI developers, data sources and third-party AI models."*

Respondents also expressed that determining the area of application or type of AI systems should be done in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including the scientific community and the public. Respondents felt that the decision to develop AI systems to expedite a task should be justified by research into its benefits and the reasons for which other forensic methods are deemed insufficient.

7. Deployment

A total of 15.6 per cent of the respondents shared suggestions that specifically focused on the deployment of AI in policing. Among the issues raised, the most prevalent has been that the technology is not equal to and can never replace humans, as was alluded in the context of the preceding section on technical considerations. It was felt that a human should be involved to check the results obtained by the AI system and make final decisions. Respondents indicated that they felt it is important that the results obtained are well understood, meaningfully interpreted and contextualized. They considered that only humans are able to discern that the statistical average obtained through predictive analytics may not be truly representative or possible to operationalize in a given situation.

> *"Humans are diverse and hence the most common case does not need to apply all the time. In addition, each one of us is different, so why data from other people should be used to decide a prediction about myself? That is unethical."*

One of the respondents underlined the distinction between cognitive automation and cognitive autonomy in AI.[72] This respondent suggested that the systems operate on the basis of automating tasks normally performed by humans, but do not have the autonomy to think rationally, independently of humans. Several survey participants drew attention to the risks of using AI systems in policing, including risks of false identifications or the findings being undermined by the use of biased data or illicit data leaks. In light of this, respondents suggested that the technology deployment take place within police premises, perhaps adding a further nuance to feedback collected on police acquiring externally developed AI systems.

8. Caution

13.9 per cent of respondents of the last question specifically called for a heightened sense of caution, emphasizing the need to understand the risks and limitations of introducing such a technology into police work. Some even suggested that democracy itself could be at risk if policing methods are not embedded in transparent and accountable practices. They felt that unacceptable harm could be inflicted on citizens if the police utilized AI systems whose procedures could not be explained properly, infringing on the right to due process.

> *"AI is definitely a powerful tool to help the law enforcement units to secure the prevention, investigation and punishment of illicit conducts, but it has to be well regulated in order to permit those affected by its use to properly defend themselves. Otherwise there will be no justice and no democracy."*

Six respondents felt that ongoing monitoring and evaluation of AI systems would ensure that their application is consistent with democratic values. Three respondents further noted the relevance of the overarching political context in which police use AI, with authoritarian systems being particularly concerning in terms of the potential influence over how AI systems are used in policing. In such a case, it would be necessary to "*waterproof AI systems procedurally and architecture-wise*" to ensure that any political abuse is minimized. Two respondents mentioned the need to consider the role or position of political parties, and that a powerful tool would inadvertently be attractive for scoring political points or prosecuting opponents.

> *"The safety of use of AI for citizens depends strongly on the intentions of governments: Do they use AI strictly to ensure public safety and security, or to observe, control and prosecute political opponents?*

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[72]   For distinction see Francois Chollet, AI is cognitive automation, not cognitive autonomy, Sparks in the wind, 28 November 2022

> *Do they only go after individuals involved in crime,
> or do they routinely profile and make dossiers about all citizens?"*

9. Public engagement

Thirteen survey participants highlighted the need for greater public awareness on police use of AI. Some considered it imperative to organize public consultations in advance of developing or using AI systems. Others even questioned their contribution to the topic through this survey given limited possibilities to access relevant information.

> *"It is difficult to answer these questions in whole
> because the application of AI can be extremely broad.
> […] Public input is important but next to useless
> without first public education/awareness."*

Feedback falling under this category conveyed the view that the general public should be made aware of what AI systems are, how they work, how their use by the police can impact the general population, and what type of AI systems would best support police tasks. Awareness-raising campaigns to this end should seek to clarify risks and benefits, and educate the public on the mechanisms in place for handling possible complaints. This would assuage fears, enhancing public trust in both the police work and the technology. Moreover, public awareness campaigns should include evidence on how police departments "*can ethically and responsibly apply AI in ways that do not reinforce existing inequalities*", as one respondent suggested.

> *"It would be good for the police to carry out information
> campaigns for the public on this issue."*

Meaningful consultations and involvement of different segments of society were proposed by ten respondents as a way to ensure that concerns are heard and that sufficient safeguards are put in place. These respondents considered public consultations should be held and that they should be comprehensive in nature, involving policy-makers, academia, the private sector, civil society, and minority and vulnerable groups. Such consultations should precede design, development and deployment of AI systems by the police.

> *"Public consultation in advance of developing or utilizing AI capability is imperative."*

Linked in many ways with public engagement, thirteen respondents called for more transparency and openness by the police in terms of their use of AI systems. Respondents suggested that police should divulge, for instance, how personal data is handled and analyzed and how

the decisions supported by the use of AI are made, allowing the public to exercise their rights if and when necessary.

"There needs to be very strict regulation and transparency around how personal data is handled by AI and then how police/human decisions are made on the basis of AI information."

10. Big picture perspectives

Twelve messages called attention to the bigger picture, including AI's rapid evolution and global reach, with its impact extending far beyond jurisdictions of any single state or legal framework. Such respondents invited the police to consider the political or governance context in which AI systems are to be introduced. Establishing a long-term vision for the use of AI that aligns with societal values would help to alleviate the risks, in particular the risk of unfair treatment of vulnerable groups. In the absence of this, respondents feared that existing institutional problems would not be solved with or in an AI-enabled future.

"Also, police seem to care more about the immediate effects on individual victims, while it is important to also consider a longer-term vision of what kind of society we wish to live in."

Observations and conclusions

The survey reached 670 individuals from diverse backgrounds around the globe, encompassing a wide range of age groups, genders, and educational levels. Despite the acknowledged limitations in the data collected, the sample provides a broad and valuable foundation from which to derive meaningful insights. From these insights, several observations and conclusions on public perception on police use of AI have been formulated, which are both reflective of and informed by the rich diversity of perspectives captured in the survey.

1. An interested and motivated public

The public is by and large interested and motivated when it comes to the topic of AI and policing. This was evidenced by the fact that the majority of respondents (83.4 per cent) committed time and effort to answer a lengthy survey, sharing their thoughts, considerations and suggestions. Tellingly, people working in or with the police and those who consider themselves more vulnerable to discrimination appear more keenly interested in and motivated by the discourse around the topic, as evidenced by their increased sharing of additional considerations and suggestions through the survey.

2. General lack of awareness

Notwithstanding the interest, motivation and positive sentiments about the topic, the public has demonstrated a general lack of awareness of the application of AI in policing. This was very clearly seen in one-third of the respondents stating outright that they did not know if their local or national police were using AI systems. At the same time, the public is not proactive in addressing this lack of awareness, with those indicating they were not aware largely being unlikely to actively seek information on the use of such systems by police.

3. Difficulty in accessing information

Linked with the lack of awareness, and perhaps even feeding into this, the public faces challenges in informing itself about AI and policing. The survey demonstrated that nearly half of the respondents (44 per cent) reported that it was difficult to find relevant information on police use of AI. In essence, the public wants to know more but does not want to look up the information and/or does not know where to find such information.

4. Public engagement as a key strategy

The general public's feedback has proven to be an invaluable resource, offering detailed insights into their concerns and expectations regarding AI in policing. The diversity of opinions highlights the importance of ongoing public engagement, suggesting that law enforcement agencies can benefit greatly from soliciting public input. However, it is also evident that the public does not actively seek out information, which points to a gap in communication. This suggests that law enforcement might need to take a more proactive role in informing the public and addressing concerns directly and/or engage with the media to this end.

5. Positive, yet nuanced views

While the public expresses deep concerns about the use of AI by the police, there is no outright opposition to it. As seen in the survey, very few respondents – in fact, only 17 of 670 respondents – were exclusively negative in their feedback. Instead, the majority of respondents demonstrated a critical and nuanced understanding of the potential benefits of AI in policing, being willing to consider a wide range of circumstances under which AI would be acceptable.

Acceptance of AI is closely linked to the level of trust in the police's respect for the law and citizens' rights. Half of the respondents expressed trust in both the police and AI systems, with slightly more people trusting AI over the police as an institution. Trust in AI is higher among those who already trust the police, suggesting that increasing public confidence in police conduct could facilitate greater acceptance of AI technologies in policing. However, groups vulnerable to discrimination, including women and non-binary individuals, exhibit lower trust in AI's potential benefits, highlighting the need for the police to enhance their communication and operational effectiveness to build trust, particularly among disadvantaged groups.

6. Perceptions vary by application

The public generally considers AI as being useful or, even in some cases, essential for police work. The survey showed that whether AI is viewed as useful or essential depends on the purpose for which the police use the tool. The public appears more comfortable relying on AI systems when its use does not involve interactions with individuals and interferences with events in real-life scenarios or the prediction of behaviours, but rather analyzing events or facts already in police's or another institution's knowledge or possession. In those cases, over half of respondents were in favour of using AI systems. When a specific police function involved events that have not yet taken place, or decisions in real time involving people in specific situations, people tended to withdraw their support.

7. Public support for AI Is conditional

As noted already, the public has a very nuanced opinion of the use of AI in policing. How the public views AI in policing is consequently not black and white. It can be said that the public's support for AI in policing is highly conditional. The survey data suggests that while there is general support for the use of AI by police, this support comes with significant caveats. There is widespread apprehension about the potential risks, particularly in areas like predictive policing or AI systems that make autonomous decisions. The public appears to insist on strict safeguards and the exclusion of decision-making powers from AI systems, reflecting a belief that AI should enhance, not replace, human judgment. The concerns raised by respondents highlight the need for law enforcement to carefully consider how AI is developed and deployed, ensuring that ethical and legal standards are met at every stage. Ignoring these concerns risks eroding public trust and could lead to greater resistance to AI in policing.

8. Laws alone are not enough

The public appears to be deeply concerned about the potential for AI in policing to infringe on their personal freedoms. Over half of the respondents expressed this worry, suggesting that there is a widespread belief that current legal frameworks may not be sufficient to protect individual rights in the face of new technologies. Even among those who work with the police and have a strong understanding of AI, there is uncertainty about the implications for personal freedoms. This indicates a broader public sentiment that familiarity with AI or even working with the police does not necessarily translate into confidence in its safe application. The expectation that police should prevent discrimination when using AI is nearly universal, also reflecting a significant demand for stronger safeguards. The public's concern about the inadequacy of current laws underscores a lack of trust in the ability of existing systems to protect their rights, pointing to a need for more robust legal and regulatory measures.

9. Personal data collection is acceptable, but with safeguards

The value of, or perhaps even the need for, police collecting and analyzing personal data is largely recognized by the public, with most respondents indicating that they did not see the need for police to obtain prior authorization for this. This reflects a certain level of trust in the police to use data responsibly. However, this trust is not unconditional – there is a strong expectation that data should be anonymized and that safeguards must be in place to protect personal freedoms. The public appears to fear that, without proper oversight, there could be potential for abuse, especially in situations deemed as emergencies. This suggests a cautious acceptance of data collection practices, contingent on the presence of clear protections and transparency in how data is used.

10. Ethical use requires human oversight

Ethical considerations are at the heart of the debate for the public when it comes to AI in policing. Nearly 70 per cent of respondents think that human oversight is essential, with decisions being made independently of AI-generated results. This suggests that there is a strong public demand for human accountability in law enforcement decisions involving AI. In addition to the processes and structures, the public also calls for legal and ethical training for police officers using AI, with over 75 per cent of respondents agreeing that training should be in place and over half those respondents believing it should be mandatory. This reflects an expectation that law enforcement agencies must be appropriately prepared to handle AI responsibly, ensuring that the technology is used in a way that aligns with ethical standards and legal requirements

11. Strict policies matter more than AI developers

While the public has very nuanced opinions on many matters, it interestingly seemed to be less concerned with who develops the AI systems used by the police, namely whether they are created in-house by police or by private companies. The public appears to be more focused on the importance of strict policies governing their use, than from where the AI systems originate. A significant majority expect police to adhere to stringent guidelines and closely monitor the use of AI, emphasizing that the key issue is not the origin of the technology, but how it is implemented. This suggests that the public values transparency, accountability, and the protection of human rights above all, indicating a need for clear and enforceable policies that ensure AI is used in a manner consistent with these principles.

12. Aligning AI use with police values

Trust in both the police and AI systems is a contentious issue, with the public divided on whether these entities can be relied upon to act in the public's best interest. To resolve this tension, it seems essential for police forces to clearly articulate their mission and values and demonstrate that ethical and human rights principles guide the use of AI. The general public appears to believe that technological solutions should not compromise the core values of policing, such as fairness, justice, and respect for individual rights. If law enforcement agencies can demonstrate that their use of AI aligns with these values, there is potential for AI to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of policing. However, doubts about police conduct indicate that additional efforts are needed to reassure the public, possibly through public education campaigns and transparent demonstrations of how AI is used.

13. The power of language in shaping perceptions

The language used to discuss AI in policing significantly influences public perception. The survey responses indicate that even neutral phrasing can be interpreted through the lens of individual attitudes, fears, or enthusiasm for technology. This suggests that discussions around complex issues like AI must be carefully framed to avoid unintended biases. However, the data also shows that no matter how carefully language is chosen, people will interpret statements based on their own worldview. This underscores the challenge of communicating about AI in a way that resonates with a diverse audience, while also highlighting the need for clear, transparent, and contextually appropriate language.

Annex I: The questionnaire

PUBLIC OPINIONS ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND POLICE

INTRODUCTION:

This survey is conducted by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute's (UNICRI) Centre for AI and Robotics and INTERPOL's Innovation Centre. Its goal is to support UNICRI and INTERPOL to develop a better understanding of public opinions regarding the use of artificial intelligence (AI) by police. This is part of a series of consultations with different stakeholders within a joint effort to create a guidance document for law enforcement on responsible artificial intelligence innovation.

The survey is anonymous and should take no longer than 8 minutes. Individual feedback received will be merged with that of other respondents in a way that allows UNICRI and INTERPOL to draw broad conclusions about the topic. Personal information will by no means be used to trace the respondents. The findings of this survey will be used for strategic, analytical, informative and advocacy products developed in the interests of the general public, professionals and decision-makers.

The survey will close at midnight Central European Time on 15/06/2023. If you have issues completing it, please contact us at aicentre.unicri@un.org (mailto:aicentre.unicri@un.org) for support.

Thank you for your participation!

There are 29 questions in this survey.

Section 1: About you

1) What is your age? *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

○ <18

○ 18 - 24

○ 25 - 34

○ 35 - 44

○ 45 - 54

○ 55 - 64

○ 65+

○ Prefer not to say

2) What is your gender? *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other

○ Prefer not to say

3) Where do you come from ? *

❗ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

○ Central Asia

○ Eastern Asia

○ South-eastern Asia

○ Southern Asia

○ Western Asia

○ Latin America and the Caribbean

○ North America

○ North Africa

○ Sub-Saharan Africa

○ Eastern Europe

○ Northern Europe

○ Southern Europe

○ Western Europe

○ Australia and New Zealand

○ Melanesia

○ Micronesia

○ Polynesia

If you need more information please see: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/ (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/)

4) Do you consider yourself part of a group or community that may be at increased vulnerability to discrimination? *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ Prefer not to say

5) What is your educational background? *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Primary School

◯ Secondary School

◯ Bachelors Degree

◯ Masters Degree

◯ PhD

◯ Other

◯ Prefer not to say

6) Do you work in or with the police? *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Yes

◯ No

7) Are you familiar with artificial intelligence? *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ I have never heard about artificial intelligence

◯ I have heard about artificial intelligence, but I am unsure what exactly it is

◯ I have a broad understanding of artificial intelligence

◯ I have extensive knowledge of artificial intelligence

8) Are your local/national police using artificial intelligence? *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ I have never thought about it

◯ I do not think they are

◯ They may be, but I do not know enough to be certain about it

◯ I think they are

◯ I know they are

9) Have you actively sought out information on how your local or national police uses artificial intelligence? *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Yes

◯ No

◯ I have thought about it, but have not done it yet

Section 2: Police and artificial intelligence

Do you agree with the following statements? Please rate how much you agree or disagree with each statement or select the option or options that best reflect your opinion.

10) My local/national police respect the law and citizens' rights *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

11) Artificial intelligence can help the police to better protect me and my community *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

12) In an increasingly digital world, artificial intelligence is essential to help solve certain crimes *

❗ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

13) I feel comfortable with the police using artificial intelligence to support them in: (Multiple answers are allowed) *

❗ Check all that apply
Please choose **all** that apply:

☐ Preventing crimes from happening

☐ Detecting that a crime has been committed

☐ Investigating serious crimes

☐ Investigating all other kinds of crimes

☐ Protecting people and property

☐ Maintaining public order and safety

☐ Back-office functions

☐ I do not feel comfortable with police using artificial intelligence

☐ Other:

14) I feel comfortable with the police using artificial intelligence applications that: (Multiple answers are allowed) *

❶ Check all that apply
Please choose **all** that apply:

☐ Assess the likelihood of certain crimes being committed at a certain location and time

☐ Detect criminal material on the devices of suspects

☐ Identify suspects or victims in a database of lawfully obtained photos

☐ Identify suspects or victims in a crowd in real-time

☐ Analyze job applications and recommend who the agency should hire

☐ Analyze bank transactions to detect possible financial crimes

☐ Patrol or surveil international borders to detect illegal movements

☐ Patrol or surveil the streets to detect illegal movements

☐ Analyze images of bodycams worn by the law enforcement

☐ Find connections between pieces of evidence

☐ I do not feel comfortable with police using artificial intelligence

☐ Other: _____

15) Citizens should be notified when the police use artificial intelligence to prevent, detect and investigate crimes *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

16) Citizens should be notified when the police use artificial intelligence to support back-office functions and provide services for the general public that are not related to the prevention, detection and investigation of crimes *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

17) The use of artificial intelligence by the police could impact my personal freedoms. *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

18) The law (or other relevant authority) should authorize the police to collect and analyze citizens' personal data in any circumstances. *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ Strongly disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neither agree nor disagree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly agree

19) The law (or other relevant authority) should authorize the police to collect and analyze my personal data through artificial intelligence only when there are extreme circumstances at stake that threaten public security. *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

- ◯ Strongly disagree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Neither agree nor disagree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Strongly agree

20) The police should take extra precautions to ensure that their use of artificial intelligence does not lead to discrimination. *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

21) I am concerned that the national laws and regulations are not sufficient to ensure that the police respect my rights when they use artificial intelligence. *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

22) The police should always review with a human point of view the results of artificial intelligence and come to their decisions independently *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

23) The police should have legal and ethical training on the use of artificial intelligence. *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

○ Strongly disagree

○ Disagree

○ Neither agree nor disagree

○ Agree

○ Strongly agree

24) It is relatively easy to obtain information about how the police are using artificial intelligence. *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

25) The police should be only able to use artificial intelligence that they developed themselves. *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

26) The police should be able to use artificial intelligence developed by private companies or other external organizations *

❗ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

27) The police should have strict policies and more closely monitor operations when they are using artificial intelligence developed by private companies or other external organizations. *

❗ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

28) The laws and mechanisms in place to protect citizens and make amends if police's use of artificial intelligence breaches their rights are sufficient *

❶ Choose one of the following answers
Please choose **only one** of the following:

◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Disagree

◯ Neither agree nor disagree

◯ Agree

◯ Strongly agree

Section 3: Final thoughts

29) Do you have any other suggestions or thoughts on the police use of artificial intelligence? (max 100 words)

Please write your answer here:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Please share this link (https://poll.unicri-projects.it/index.php/591834?lang=en) (https://poll.unicri-projects.it/index.php/591834?lang=en) to the survey to ensure that a wide range of views are represented

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Submit your survey.
Thank you for completing this survey.