INSTITUTO
UNIVERSITÁRIO
DE LISBOA

Influence of Online Platforms on the Public's Perception of the Police System in France

Clara Courtade

Master in Marketing

Supervisor:

Ph.D, Ana Margarida Mendes Camelo Oliveira Brochado, Associate Professor with Habilitation, Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management at Iscte Business School

September 2025

BUSINESS
SCHOOL

Department of Marketing, Operations & General Management

Influence of Online Platforms on the Public's Perception of the Police System in France

Clara Courtade

Master in Marketing

Supervisor:

Ph.D, Ana Margarida Mendes Camelo Oliveira Brochado, Associate Professor with Habilitation, Department of Marketing, Operations and General Management at Iscte Business School

September, 2025

RESUMO

Esta dissertação examina como as redes sociais influenciam a percepção pública da polícia em França, com foco na legitimidade, satisfação e cooperação. O estudo abrange as três principais instituições policiais francesas: a polícia nacional, a gendarmaria nacional e a polícia municipal. Explora como a comunicação online afeta a confiança e as atitudes, apoiando-se na literatura de comunicação, criminologia e sociologia. É dada especial atenção ao movimento dos Gilets jaunes, uma onda de protestos iniciada no final de 2018. Inicialmente desencadeado pelo aumento do imposto sobre os combustíveis, rapidamente se transformou numa revolta mais ampla contra a desigualdade económica e as políticas governamentais. Os manifestantes usavam os icónicos coletes amarelos de alta visibilidade (gilets jaunes), e o movimento gerou imagens e vídeos virais que moldaram fortemente a visibilidade e a reputação da polícia online. As hipóteses testam como a exposição a conteúdos oficiais, a perceção de transparência, a coerência entre online e offline e a perceção de propaganda influenciam a legitimidade e a satisfação, que, por sua vez, afetam a disposição para cooperar. Fatores offline, como o contacto informal, a coesão comunitária e a perceção da desordem, também são integrados. Ao combinar estas dimensões, o modelo destaca a interação entre estratégias de comunicação digital e determinantes tradicionais de opinião. Esta investigação contribui para os debates sobre a profissionalização da comunicação policial, a desinformação e as condições que permitem reforçar a confiança pública nas forças de segurança.

Palavras-chave: Legitimidade policial; Redes sociais; Confiança pública; Coletes amarelos; Comunicações policiais; França

Códigos JEL: K42 (Comportamento ilegal e aplicação da lei); D83 (Procura, aprendizagem, informação e conhecimento, comunicação, crença)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines how social media influence public perceptions of the police in France, focusing on legitimacy, satisfaction, and cooperation. The study covers the three main institutions of French policing: the national police, the national gendarmerie, and the municipal police. It explores how online communication affects trust and attitudes, drawing on scholarship in communication, criminology, and sociology. Special attention is given to the Gilets jaunes movement, a wave of protests that began in late 2018. Initially triggered by fuel tax increases, it rapidly expanded into a broader revolt against economic inequality and government policies. Protesters wore the iconic high-visibility yellow vests (gilets jaunes), and the movement generated viral images and videos that heavily shaped police visibility and reputation online. The hypotheses test how exposure to official content, perceived transparency, online-offline coherence, and perceptions of propaganda influence legitimacy and satisfaction, which in turn affect willingness to cooperate. Offline drivers such as informal contact, neighborhood cohesion, and perceptions of disorder are also integrated. By combining these dimensions, the model highlights the interaction between digital communication strategies and traditional opinion drivers. This research contributes to debates on professionalized police communication, misinformation, and the conditions under which public trust in law enforcement can be reinforced.

Keywords: Police legitimacy; Social media; Public trust; Gilets jaunes; Police communication; France

JEL Codes: K42 (Illegal Behavior and the Enforcement of Law); D83 (Search, Learning, Information and Knowledge, Communication, Belief)

TABLE OF CONTENT

RESUMO i

ABSTRACT iii

TABLE INDEX ix

FIGURES INDEX xi

APPENDIX INDEX xiii

1. INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Policing, the plurality of "faces," and the social-media turn 1

1.2 Competing visibilities, engagement, and image risk 1

1.3 Legitimacy: contacts, contexts, and why methods matter 2

1.4 Governance, norms, and communicational coherence 3

2. LITTERATURE REVIEW 5

2.1 Historical perspectives 5

2.1.1 Global Historical Perspectives 5

2.1.2 Historical Evolution of Public Perception in France 5

2.1.3 Demographic Differences and Their Influence on Perception 6

2.1.4 Advancements in Communication Technologies 7

2.2 Contemporary impacts of social media on public perception 8

2.2.1 Research Landscape 8

2.2.2 Evolution of Social Media 9

2.2.3 Specific Impacts on Law Enforcement Perception 10

2.2.4 The Role of Social Media in Amplifying Perceptions 11

2.2.5 Key Takeaways 12

2.3 - Online tribunals and networked public judgment 13

2.3.1 - Online tribunals: a digital forum for public judgment 13

2.3.2 Decision-making processes and public discourse 13

2.3.3 Key Takeaways 14

2.4 Institutional Responses: Engagement, Crisis, Transparency 15
2.4.1 Community Engagement 15
2.4.2 Crisis situations 16
2.4.3 Transparency 17
2.4.4 Key Takeaways 18
3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES 21
4. CONTEXTUALISATION 25
5. METHODOLOGY 29
5.1 Overall design and rationale 29
5.2 Instruments 29
5.2.1 Interview Guides Qualitative 29
5.2.2 Questionnaire Quantitative 32
5.3 Sampling Strategy 34
5.3.1 Qualitative Sampling 34
5.3.2 Quantitative sampling 34
5.4 Data Collection Procedures 35
5.4.1 Interviews 35
5.4.2 Survey 35
5.5 Ethical Safeguards 35
5.6 Measures and Operationalization 36
5.7 Data Preparation 36
5.8 Analysis Plan 36
5.8.1 Qualitative Analysis 36
5.8.2 Quantitative Analysis 37
5.9 Validity, Reliability, and Bias Mitigation 37
5.10 Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Evidence 37
5.11 Limitations 38

6. RESULTS 39
6.1. Overview of the Mixed-Methods Results 39
6.2 Synthesis of Interviews (Citizens & Law-Enforcement) 40
6.3 Qualitative Pre-Validation of Hypotheses H1-H10 Based on Interviews 44
6.4 Synthesis for Interviews Only 47
6.5 Quantitative Validation of H1-H10 Based on the Questionnaire (Jamovi) 47
6.5.1 Coding 47
6.5.2 Index Construction 49
6.5.3 Summary of the Jamovi Analyses (N = 113) 50
6.6. Integration of Findings (Convergence/Divergence and Joint Displays) 52
6.7 Limits and Implications 56
7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 59
7.1. Recommendations to Strengthen Cooperation 59
7.2. General conclusion 62
8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES 67
9. APPENDIXES 69

TABLE INDEX

Table 5.1: Summary of Hypotheses and Questions related to the Interviews 30

Table 5.2: Summary of Hypotheses and Questions related to the Questionnaire..... 32

Table 6.1: Final Status by Hypotheses 55

FIGURES INDEX

Figure 3.1: Conceptual Model 24

APPENDIX INDEX

Appendix A: Interviews (FR;EN) 69

Appendix B: Questionnaire (FR;EN) 135

Appendix C: Descriptive statistics of main study variables 147

Appendix D: Linear regression of exposure to police social media interactions predicting satisfaction 148

Appendix E: Linear regression of transparency perception predicting perceived legitimacy 149

Appendix F: Linear regression of transformation vs. normalization perception predicting perceived legitimacy 150

Appendix G: Linear regression of exposure to negative content predicting perceived legitimacy 151

Sources: Own elaboration 151

Appendix H: Linear regression of exposure/interactions predicting favorable opinions of the police 152

Appendix I: Linear regression of perceived legitimacy, satisfaction, and favorable opinions predicting cooperation 153

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policing, the plurality of "faces," and the social-media turn

Public views of policing have never been univocal. They arise from a bundle of lived experiences, mediated narratives, and implicit norms that shape what society expects from the police. From the outset, policing presents several "faces", prevention, investigation, coercion, whose uneven exposure produces contrasting public images (Brodeur, 2003). In some cases, proximity and reassurance dominate; in others, the visibility of public-order units or investigative services makes control and compulsion more notable. This long-lasting plurality helps explain why trust and legitimacy cannot be reduced to a single, stable indicator. They vary by function, moment, and interactional stage.

The social-media turn intensifies this variability. Online, institutions circulate on platforms where editorialization depends on sharing cycles, commenting, and recommendation: messages are not only distributed, but they are also co-produced by public attention. In this environment, police communication has progressively adopted the conversational platforms norms (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.), while agencies deploy practices aimed at community engagement, explanation, and rumor management (Bullock, 2018). Yet the same socio-technical structure multiplies places of judgment: short video fragments and limited context are enough to fuel indignation, or, in contrast, to trigger support (Mutz & Young, 2011). This real-time public judgment challenges organizations because visibility does not guarantee understanding and can break established communication routines (Schneider, 2021). Against this background, a central question persists: do platforms transform relations between police and publics or mainly normalize pre-existing routines under new technical conditions (Bullock, 2018)?

1.2 Competing visibilities, engagement, and image risk

Platforms do not only make things visible; they organize what's seen. During the Gilets jaunes period, analysis of a large amount of tweets and images showed that the most visible police-related representations on Twitter were biased, and that access to visibility depended primarily on the actors who relayed content (accounts with big audience) rather than on intrinsic message features (Bouté, 2021). Digital sharing changes framing power: making content isn't enough; it has to be boosted by key amplifiers. In this case, showing order, a regulated display of competence and restraint, becomes a recurring task for the organization (Bullock, 2016; Bullock, 2018).

Public engagement with police accounts shows positive associations: among followers who are exposed to and interact with posts, higher levels of satisfaction and more favorable judgments are observed (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). But this benefit depends on the type

of content, its tone, and context. Professionalizing the social-media function (dedicated teams, editorial policy, monitoring) appears necessary for transparency, usefulness, and a relational tone to build trust (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). Organizations also describe a "duty of presence" online and act differently on their own channels (controlled) versus external spaces (less control) where they stay cautious and selective (Lev-On & Yavetz, 2020). Meanwhile, the media-risk perspective highlights the need to integrate communicators, rationalize visual formats, and anticipate controversies under operational constraints (Meyer, 2013). In the background, managing image and fixing reputation become key, especially when controversies draw in wider audiences and rival morals (Lancia, 2023; Schneider, 2021).

1.3 Legitimacy: contacts, contexts, and why methods matter

Beyond content, legitimacy is gained over experiences and contexts. Survey evidence from a large U.S. city shows that informal contacts with officers, neighborhood cohesion and control, and perceived disorder explain much of the variation in opinions toward the police. Within that design, direct media effects appear comparatively limited (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003). At the micro level, positive, non-enforcement contact, even brief, can improve attitudes, perceived legitimacy, and willingness to cooperate, with effects lasting for weeks and sometimes stronger among groups typically more distant from the institution (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). These findings do not deny the force of trending stories, but they highlight that interactions remain a strong tool, even in a saturated communicative environment.

Because perceptions are constructed, not just measured, the research requires a design that shows both clear patterns and how people interpret them. Following best-practice guidance for the research process, from problematization to operationalization and data analysis (N'Da, 2005), our study adopts a qualitative core complemented by a questionnaire. Concretely, the fieldwork will include semi-structured interviews with two groups: citizens from diverse backgrounds and neighborhoods, and active-duty police officers. These interviews will gather stories about everyday contact, perceived fairness, expectations of communication, and readings of online content. In parallel, a questionnaire will be administered to capture broader patterns, for example on how often and how good people say informal contact is, plus how they see neighborhood cohesion, control, and disorder (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003), their attitudes toward non-enforcement encounters and legitimacy outcomes (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019), and their exposure/interaction with police social-media content (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019).

Sampling and instrumentation will follow a purposeful, variation-seeking logic appropriate to qualitative inquiry (N'Da, 2005): interviews will maximize diversity of experiences across

locales and roles, while the questionnaire will provide descriptive coverage to situate qualitative insights. Analysis will triangulate interview themes (codes linked to contact quality, interpretive frames, and online/offline coherence) with questionnaire indicators to assess how digital visibility interacts with lived experience. Expert perspectives (Nieto, 2024) will guide reflection and turn findings into practical recommendations.

In short, method is not an afterthought: it is the bridge between classic determinants of opinion (contacts, cohesion, disorder) and the platform dynamics of visibility and amplification. The design ensures that claims about perception rest on what people live and say, citizens and officers, while the questionnaire anchors those narratives in observable distributions.

1.4 Governance, norms, and communicational coherence

Institutional online presence raises questions of governance, like: what limits, standards, and safety measures? Analytical work argues for a presumption against heavy-handed political control of content moderation, placing responsibility on private platform governance and on organizational speakers to meet standards without scaring the effects (Samples, 2019). For police organizations, the point is less about limiting visibility and more about controlling it by matching words with actions.

In France, work on mediatization from the police point of view documents a long-standing professional reception that is critical of media treatment, alongside a gradual professionalization of media relations (Le Saulnier, 2012). At the same time, online formats became less formal, using everyday language and practical styles to seem less distant (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.). On the public side, perception results from an entanglement of exposures and experiences, from an organizational side, image work is now a core competency in contentious cycles (Meyer, 2013; Lancia, 2023; Schneider, 2021). Communication strategies work when rooted in recognizable proximity practices, openness (useful information, contextual responses), and vigilance about risk (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). Otherwise, visibility can turn into a public trial where institutional narration is just one voice among many (Bouté, 2021).

This frames the research problematic « How do online platforms influence the public's perception of the police system in France? » and its contribution. Empirically, the combined interviews (citizens and active-duty officers) and questionnaire will clarify how everyday contact and neighborhood context shape the reception of online police communication and the interpretation of viral fragments. Analytically, the study will integrate classic factors of opinion (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003), experimental evidence on non-enforcement encounters and legitimacy (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019), and platform dynamics of engagement and amplification (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019; Bouté, 2021; Bullock, 2016; Bullock, 2018;

Mutz & Young, 2011). Normatively, it will assess organizational strategies under the dual test of coherence (alignment of what is said and done) and governance (speaking effectively within privately governed spaces) (Samples, 2019; Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Le Saulnier, 2012; Meyer, 2013; Lancia, 2023; Schneider, 2021; Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023).

2. LITTERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Historical perspectives

2.1.1 Global Historical Perspectives

Historically, the police are not one single body but a mix of practices whose visibility shifts with context. The typology of faces highlights functions, patrol, investigation, public order, each tied to different symbols and public expectations (Brodeur, 2003). Media have always served as an interface: they do not only transmit facts, they give those facts a form that orients collective understanding. Research on communication and public opinion shows that much of what we treat as "public opinion" results from selection, framing, and interpersonal networks that filter exposure to information (Mutz & Young, 2011).

Within this landscape, the public agenda acts as an important trigger: when an issue rises in visibility, policy responses are more likely to adjust, without implying a fixed or uniform way (Burstein, 2003). This holds for policing, a particularly exposed organization: praised in big crises, criticized in controversy, and vulnerable to powerful images. So, even before the digital era, regimes of visibility already conditioned and shaped public judgment.

With platforms, these historical mechanisms are accelerated and diffused: mediation persists but de-centers. Framing is no longer just for editors, it is shared across institutions, news media, organized publics, and new digital intermediaries. This mix of voices exacerbates latent tensions: the same intervention may be praised by some audiences and denounced by others, depending on the repertoires of meaning used. So, image management cannot be a simple extra to operations, it becomes a pillar intertwined with operational, legal, and relational dimensions (Bullock, 2018).

Methodologically, studying these changes requires complementing quantitative approaches with qualitative designs able to capture how people build meanings and live experiences (N'Da, 2005). By coupling detailed description with broader data, we can tell apart structural trends from local spread effects (Mutz & Young, 2011; Burstein, 2003). This general frame sheds light on the French case, where organizational heritage and culture now meet networked visibility formats.

2.1.2 Historical Evolution of Public Perception in France

In France, police–public relations long rested on a culture of discretion and defensive communication, alongside a gradual professionalization of media-facing functions (Le Saulnier, 2012). This repositioning aimed to close a perceived gap between institutional self-presentation and dominant media narratives, often centered on conflict or the exceptional. In parallel, the rise of audiovisual and digital formats pushed agencies to integrate certain

competencies and anticipate media risks: formalizing validation steps, producing content, and building monitoring tools (Meyer, 2013).

The Gilets jaunes cycle served as a test of these changes. On Twitter, the visibility of content about the police was forged in competing arenas where relay by influential accounts, shaped images and interpretation (Bouté, 2021). This does not mean institutional narration is powerless, but that it is one voice among others in a circulation area governed by amplification dynamics. In such a space, a relevant strategy combines explanation (what we do, why, how) and listening (responding, contextualizing), while accepting the constant possibility of opposing narratives.

The de-formalization of online exchanges, ordinary tone, pedagogical formats, direct address, answers demand for proximity and readability (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.). But it also imposes strong organizational discipline: showing presence is not enough if operational practices generate dissonance. Communication should extend interactions, not replace them. The French case suggests that trust gains linked to digital visibility are reversible if coherence is not maintained over time (Meyer, 2013; Bouté, 2021).

Overall, the French case confirms general tendencies: public perception rely on the plurality of faces (Brodeur, 2003), is recomposed by entering into online spaces (Bouté, 2021), and pushes toward a professionalization that combines technique, ethics, and relations (Le Saulnier, 2012; Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.).

2.1.3 Demographic Differences and Their Influence on Perception

Attitudes toward the police are not uniform, they vary with direct experiences and contexts. A foundational study shows that neighborhood cohesion, perceived disorder, and, above all, the frequency and quality of informal contacts with officers weigh strongly on judgments, more than simple sociodemographics, the direct media effect in that design is limited (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003). In other words, for many citizens, trust is built (or eroded) in everyday interactions: visible presence, conversations, availability.

Urban field experiments indicate that brief, positive, non-enforcement contact can improve attitudes and perceived legitimacy, including among initially more distant publics, with effects persisting in the short term (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). Conversely, interactions perceived as unfair or abrupt weigh disproportionately on opinion, especially when crystallized into shared stories. In digital environments, regular exposure to and interaction with institutional content is associated with higher satisfaction among engaged followers (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019), but this effect is contextual and does not erase disparities tied to field experiences.

Practitioner reports stress the need to adapt postures and formats to audiences, making actions clear and fixing misunderstandings (Nieto, 2024). From a procedural-justice perspective, the goal is less to impose a narrative than to make intervention intelligible and to assume accountability. Social networks reverberate these gaps: they amplify local indignations into public issues or, in the contrary, valorize gestures perceived as kind. Managing demographic and so contextual differences cannot be limited to messaging, it requires practices of welcome, listening, and explanation, plus follow-through that closes the gap between online and offline (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003; Peyton et al., 2019; Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019).

Finally, social networks introduce selective-exposure and reinforcement effects that make some communities more sensitive to some stories (Mutz & Young, 2011). Under these conditions, perceived equal treatment also reposes on the capacity to reach different publics with formats that respect their codes and expectations.

2.1.4 Advancements in Communication Technologies

Two movements meet in techno-communication. On one side, institutions incorporate platforms and staging devices (posts, live streams, stories) to show action, respond, and prevent (Bullock, 2018). On the other side, these spaces are governed by amplification rules largely beyond senders' control: algorithms, practice communities, relays by high-reach accounts. The consequence is twofold: unprecedented opportunities for proximity, and bigger exposure to misunderstandings, tonal errors, and interpretive conflict (Schneider, 2021).

In terms of strategy, the literature describes impression management work that seeks to bring together professionalism and approachability: reassurance, explanation, and humanization, without forgetting authority or operational prudence (Bullock, 2016; Bullock, 2018). Field guidance recommends professionalization: clear editorial rules, response plans, coordination with operations, and anticipation of information threats (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). In some contexts, organizations differentiate between internal arenas, controlled channels for informing and showcasing, and external arenas where interventions are more restrained and potential confrontations are accepted (Lev-On & Yavetz, 2020).

Technology is not neutral. In crises, the trajectory of a video or image series can escape attempts at reframing, reshaping public discussion within hours (Bouté, 2021). In such moments, coherence between what is said online and what is done offline becomes decisive: performative transparency does not suffice if observed practices contradict the narrative (Schneider, 2021). Thus, the need to articulate online presence with listening devices, situated explanations, and sustained commitments over time.

Finally, governance debates call for clear limits on public regulation of socio-digital environments and recognition of platform and sender responsibility (Samples, 2019). For police organizations, the heart of the response remains in the quality of interactions, the traceability of decisions, and the capacity to learn from controversies rather than seeking to suppress them (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Bullock, 2018; Lancia, 2023).

2.2 Contemporary impacts of social media on public perception

2.2.1 Research Landscape

Recent work across criminology, communication, and public administration converges on a core observation: social media neither uniformly improve nor uniformly damage perceptions of the police. Instead, they create contested spaces where legitimacy is negotiated. Three main threads dominate this landscape.

First, studies of platform visibility show that attention is unevenly distributed and shaped by socio-technical mechanisms. During the French Gilets jaunes cycle, for instance, the most visible police-related images and narratives on Twitter were biased, and visibility depended less on the real features of posts than on the actors who amplified them (Bouté, 2021). This type of content about this particular movement is striking for people and resonates with them directly, which is why their opinions are biased and their reactions on social media are often quite strong. This decouples content production from public reach, complicating institutional communication.

Secondly, research on presentational strategies examines how police organizations perform authority and accessibility online. Analyses rooted in impression management show that posts often aim to reassure, signal competence, and maintain "order" as a social performance (Bullock, 2016). A broader assessment asks whether social media represent a transformation of police–public relations or a normalization of existing bureaucratic routines; evidence frequently points to the latter, with technology layered onto older logics (Bullock, 2018).

Thirdly, studies of audience engagement link exposure and interaction with more favorable attitudes among followers who actively consume and respond to police content (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). But this association is conditional: benefits depend on content, tone, and context, and do not erase the weight of offline experiences. Classic determinants, informal contacts, neighborhood cohesion, perceived disorder, continue to explain a large share of opinion variance, with media effects appearing more limited within that design (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003). At the same time, the wider communication literature reminds us that visibility and selection processes shape which opinions appear in public spaces (Mutz & Young, 2011).

Across these strands lies a governance question: who sets the rules of the communicative space? Commentaries on bureaucratic propaganda warn that police image work can slide into legitimacy-seeking promotion, particularly in tense times (Schneider, 2021), while policy analyses argue for a presumption against heavy-handed political regulation of content moderation, emphasizing private platform governance and speaker responsibility (Samples, 2019). In practice, agencies gravitate toward professionalized social media operations (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023), while scholars document the organizational limits of online dialogue and the enduring centrality of coherence between speech and practice (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Lancia, 2023). The research landscape is best seen as ambivalent: opportunities for proximity and transparency coexist with heightened exposure to critique and rapid, networked judgment.

2.2.2 Evolution of Social Media

Empirically, the police adoption of social media has moved through three overlapping phases. The first is presence-building: opening accounts, sharing routine information, and experimenting with tone. Early analyses already observed a tendency to reassure and project competence, in line with pre-digital public communication rather than a radical break (Bullock, 2016).

The second phase is the operationalization: integrating editorial calendars, monitoring workflows, and response plans. Here, organizations formalize a communication function online, seeking not only reach but also consistency and risk control. This extends a longer trajectory of professionalization that started before platforms (Meyer, 2013).

The third phase is strategic differentiation across spaces. Agencies describe a "duty of presence" but act differently in internal (controlled) and external (less control) social-media arenas (Lev-On & Yavetz, 2020). Internally, emphasis often falls on giving info and boosting image, and externally, caution and selective engagement prevail. Parallel scholarship highlights the possibility that these online practices normalize existing bureaucratic routines more than they transform organizational culture (Bullock, 2018). In short, platform presence tends to be layered onto established hierarchies and risk-aversion.

As adoption matures, professionalization becomes a condition for public value. Practitioner guidance highlights the need for dedicated teams, editorial standards, archiving/evidence systems, and crisis plans (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). From the audience side, when posts are perceived as timely, useful, and authentic, and when followers interact regularly, satisfaction tends to be higher (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). Yet the same systems that enable responsiveness also amplify criticism. Network logics give big power to key relays, so that a single fragment can outpace official narratives (Bouté, 2021). Communication scholarship

helps situate this: the public visibility of opinions is structured by selection, visual appeal, novelty, and perceived audience interest (Mutz & Young, 2011).

Finally, institutional experimentation with tone, the de-formalization of messages to match everyday talk, conversational codes (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.), brings both gains and risks. It can reduce distance, but it raises the coherence bar: online approachability must align with offline behavior. When it does not, organizational attempts at reframing can be read as performative or defensive (Schneider, 2021; Lancia, 2023). In this evolution, social media appear less as a discrete revolution than as a new layer interacting with long-standing imperatives of image, risk, and service.

2.2.3 Specific Impacts on Law Enforcement Perception

Evidence about particular impacts clusters around three mechanisms: exposure and interaction, contact and context, and contestation. On exposure, survey work with followers of police accounts finds that more frequent viewing and response are associated with higher satisfaction and more positive evaluations of the organization (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). This does not prove causation in all settings, but it indicates that regular, reciprocal communication can coincide with more favorable perceptions among engaged publics. On contact and context, classic determinants remain powerful: informal interaction with officers, neighborhood cohesion and control, and perceptions of disorder significantly shape opinion and media influence appears comparatively limited within that study's design (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003). These factors remind us that online messaging works best when it echoes tangible local experiences.

Experimental evidence reinforces the role of positive contact. A randomized field experiment shows that even brief, non-enforcement encounters, when respectful and transparent, can improve attitudes, perceived legitimacy, and willingness to cooperate for weeks afterward, with particularly strong effects among some groups (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). For communicators, this suggests that social media should be aligned with offline practices that create credible anchors for trust. Put differently, platforms can amplify what agencies already do well, or, if misaligned, they can amplify skepticism among the population.

A third mechanism is contestation and framing. During the Gilets jaunes cycle, what became most visible on Twitter was mostly critical and depended primarily on who relayed content (Bouté, 2021). This illustrates that online perception is not a neutral mirror of events, it is actively constructed through networked amplification. Analyses of police presentational work show agencies attempting to stabilize meaning by projecting competence, care, and order (Bullock, 2016), while broader assessments caution that many efforts remain bureaucratically

patterned (Bullock, 2018). Commentaries on organizational image work warn that, particularly in contentious contexts, posts can function as bureaucratic propaganda, attempts to shape and promote public opinion and normalize law-enforcement stories (Schneider, 2021). Finally, communication research strikes how selection and visibility processes determine which views rise to prominence (Mutz & Young, 2011), setting the stage for disproportionate effects of notable incidents.

Taken together, the impacts are conditional: social media can support trust where organizational behavior provides credible substance. They can also intensify scrutiny where people perceive dissonance between message and experience. Strategy therefore rests on aligning message, medium, and context.

2.2.4 The Role of Social Media in Amplifying Perceptions

Amplification is the defining feature of social media's effect on police perception. At least four amplification patterns repeat. First, network structure: visibility depends on relays with audience capital, the same post can be ignored or go viral depending on who shares it (Bouté, 2021). For institutions, this means that communication planning must anticipate indirect audiences and intermediaries, not just followers. Second, content creation: visuals and novelty accelerate adoption, a pattern consistent with research on how media shape which opinions become publicly visible (Mutz & Young, 2011). Agencies that invest in clear, timely, and context-rich visuals can raise the chances of useful sharing, but cannot guarantee it.

Third, narrative competition: organizational presentational strategies (reassurance, professionalism, care) face counter-framings that may re-interpret the same footage or update with additional context (Bullock, 2016; Bullock, 2018). Where publics distrust institutional motives, image work risks being viewed as manipulation. Commentaries warn that in heated times, official posts can be perceived as propagandistic attempts to influence sentiment, especially when they emphasize legitimation over dialogue (Schneider, 2021). Fourth, institutional capacity: professionalized teams, emergency protocols, and cross-functional coordination can mitigate some risks and increase the usefulness of messages in crisis or routine operations (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). Yet capacity does not erase the structural asymmetry: a single unexpected clip may outrun any carefully prepared thread.

Amplification also links the online and offline. Positive street-level contact can seed trust that makes digital communication more credible (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019), while routine, informal interactions in cohesive neighborhoods correspond to more favorable opinions (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003). Where such foundations are absent, amplification tends to favor critical framings (Bouté, 2021). From a policy perspective, the importance created by

viral visibility can push issues onto the agenda, prompting institutional responses and reforms (Burstein, 2003). Finally, amplification is not purely a risk. When aligned with substantive practice, platforms enable transparency, quick public-safety updates, and conversational touches that reduce distance (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). The key is that amplification magnifies coherence, or its absence.

2.2.5 Key Takeaways

Five conclusions seem to emerge from this analysis. First, visibility is structured. On platforms, visibility is not a simple function of message quality; it is a function of who relays content and how networks are configured (Bouté, 2021). So, communication plans must consider amplification channels and intermediaries rather than assuming linear delivery to followers.

Second, presentational work persists. Police accounts exercise authority, reassurance, and care, but much of this work normalizes preexisting bureaucratic routines rather than transforming relations (Bullock, 2016; Bullock, 2018). Image work becomes strategic, especially under controversy (Lancia, 2023), yet it is judged against lived experience.

Third, engagement helps but with conditions. Among followers, frequent exposure and interaction correlate with higher satisfaction (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). Gains are greater when content is timely, useful, and authentic, and when offline encounters provide credible bases (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019; Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003).

Four, amplification helps and hurts. The same networks that carry safety advice and community messages can boost critique and rival perspectives, especially in crisis situations (Bouté, 2021). In heated cycles, official posts risk being read as propagandistic if they prioritize legitimation over dialogue and accountability (Schneider, 2021).

And finally, five, professionalization and governance matter. Dedicated teams, editorial standards, and crisis plans improve usefulness and credibility (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). At the macro level, arguments for platform-level governance (rather than political control of moderation) place responsibility on senders and private intermediaries (Samples, 2019). Communication research reminds us that public visibility is filtered by selection and audience interest (Mutz & Young, 2011).

Across these points, one thread is constant: coherence. Social media change the tempo and topology of perception, not the fundamental test. The public judges alignment between what is said and what is done. Where everyday contact, neighborhood conditions, and organizational behavior set favorable baselines, platforms can reinforce trust, when they do not, platforms magnify skepticism. Effective strategy therefore integrates operational practice, presentational work, and audience-aware communication within the constraints of networked amplification.

2.3 - Online tribunals and networked public judgment

2.3.1 - Online tribunals: a digital forum for public judgment

Social platforms function as forums of judgment in which citizens collectively evaluate police actions at speed, often with fragmentary context. Communication research helps explain why: what becomes "public opinion" is filtered by selection and visibility mechanisms that privilege visually appealing, fresh, and interest-driven items (Mutz & Young, 2011). In policing, these filters interact with the platform's amplification logic. During the Gilets jaunes cycle, the police-related images and stories that rose to highest visibility were frequently critical, and their reach depended on who relayed them rather than what they showed (Bouté, 2021). This decouples event content from audience impact and turns circulation itself into a site of judgment.

Agencies do not enter neutral spaces, they perform authority, reassurance, and care, classic presentational strategies, to stabilize meaning (Bullock, 2016; Bullock, 2018). Yet the same dynamics that make proximity possible also create rival framing opportunities, especially in contentious moments when organizational posts are read as image work or even bureaucratic propaganda, attempts to shape and promote public opinion and normalize law-enforcement narratives (Schneider, 2021). From the organizational side, the task is not only to "speak," but to navigate fields: internal, controlled spaces prioritize information and image enhancement, while external arenas require restraint and selective engagement (Lev-On & Yavetz, 2020).

These tribunals matter because salience carries policy consequences. When images become central, public agenda pressure rises and authorities are more likely to respond, without implying automaticity or uniform direction (Burstein, 2003). Practically, agencies therefore invest in professionalized social-media operations (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023), framing risk as a governance problem (standards, intensification, archiving) rather than a purely messaging problem. Still, judgment extends beyond communication: the coherence test, alignment between what is shown and what is done, remains decisive (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Lancia, 2023; Meyer, 2013). Online tribunals magnify that test: they translate isolated clips into broader claims about legitimacy, forcing organizations to treat every post and every encounter as potentially representative of the whole.

2.3.2 Decision-making processes and public discourse

Digital verdicts emerge from communicative drive rather than formal procedures. Network structure puts visibility in the hands of high-reach relays. As a result, likes, shares, and quote-tweets operate as signals of endorsement that push a story forward (Bouté, 2021). Communication scholarship clarifies why some posts break through: the public importance of

opinions depends on the selection processes, visual appeal, freshness, perceived audience interest, more than on completeness or evidence value (Mutz & Young, 2011). This logic helps explain why short clips may "decide" the debate long before official clarifications circulate.

Institutional discourse, for its part, is performative, a stage on which police try to give convincing expressions while avoiding signals that could be read as eroding reputation and legitimacy (Bullock, 2016). But performance occurs under constraint. In polarized cycles, posts may be interpreted as legitimation-seeking rather than interactive (Schneider, 2021), particularly if they prioritize control of narrative over acknowledgment and explanation. Agencies, therefore, differentiate behavior across internal and external spaces (Lev-On & Yavetz, 2020), and practitioner guidance calls for rules of engagement: pre-approved response plans, monitoring, and evidence/record systems to support timely, accurate updates (Carr, 2023). Forward-looking advice calls for preparation for synthetic media and misinformation shocks that can outrun official channels (Dawkins, 2023).

Yet public discourse on platforms is not detached from lived experience. Classic determinants, informal contact, neighborhood cohesion, perceived disorder, continue to account for a large share of opinion (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003). Where street-level encounters are positive and non-enforcement, a single respectful visit can measurably improve attitudes and perceived legitimacy for weeks (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). These bases shape how online stories are received: in communities with credible offline standards, official posts travel farther as reassurance. Where baselines are weak, the same posts may be read as manipulation. In short, decision-making in online tribunals blends network shortcuts (who shared, how fast) with interpretive schemas formed in everyday contact, both of which agencies can influence only by aligning message, medium, and context (Bullock, 2018; Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019; Lancia, 2023).

2.3.3 Key Takeaways

First, platforms are judgment machines. They structure what rises to attention: visibility is a property of networks and relays, not only of message quality (Bouté, 2021; Mutz & Young, 2011). Agencies must plan for amplification ways, indirect audiences and intermediaries, rather than assuming linear delivery to followers.

Second, presentational work persists and is judged. Police accounts perform authority and reassurance, but much online practice normalizes pre-existing bureaucratic routines (Bullock, 2018) and is vulnerable to disruption and rival interpretation (Bullock, 2016). In disputed cycles, posts risk being decoded as propagandistic image work (Schneider, 2021) unless paired with acknowledgment, context, and responsive follow-through.

Third, engagement helps conditionally. Among followers, frequent exposure and interaction correlate with higher satisfaction (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019), but effects depend on coherence with offline experience. Routine informal contacts and cohesive neighborhoods are associated with more favorable views (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003), and even brief positive encounters can lift perceived legitimacy (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). Platforms tend to amplify whatever standard exists.

Fourth, governance and capacity matter. Professional standards (editorial, monitoring, archiving, rise) and crisis plans improve usefulness and credibility (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). Agencies also face arena choice, internal vs. external spaces, with different risk profiles (Lev-On & Yavetz, 2020). At the macro level, arguments for platform-level governance (not political control of moderation) place responsibility on private intermediaries and speakers (Samples, 2019).

Fifth, salience links tribunals to policy. When issues become important, political responsiveness increases (Burstein, 2003). That link is neither automatic nor uniform, but it raises the chances of getting communication and practice right. Ultimately, online tribunals boost a single test: the alignment of what is said with what is done. Where organizations build credible proximity and coherence over time, platforms can reinforce trust, when they do not, platforms accelerate skepticism (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Lancia, 2023; Meyer, 2013).

2.4 Institutional Responses: Engagement, Crisis, Transparency

2.4.1 Community Engagement

Community engagement remains the most consistently supported path to strengthening trust, provided it is rooted in everyday interactions and aligned with organizational practice. Classic survey evidence indicates that informal contact with officers, neighborhood cohesion and control, and perceptions of disorder explain a substantial share of variation in opinions toward the police, within that design, direct media effects appear comparatively limited (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003). Experimental work complements this by showing that even brief, non-enforcement encounters, respectful, transparent, and clearly purposive, can raise attitudes, perceived legitimacy, and willingness to cooperate for weeks afterward (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). These two threads converge on a practical point: engagement works when it is embodied in face-to-face contact and then echoed online, not the reverse.

On social platforms, engagement is most promising when built around usefulness, timeliness, and reciprocity. Among followers of police accounts, more frequent viewing and responding correlate with higher satisfaction (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). But the same study reminds us this is conditional: content, tone, and local context matter. French

organizational analyses describe a move toward de-formalization, adopting ordinary, conversational codes that reduce perceived distance (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.). This stylistic shift can humanize institutions, yet it raises the coherence bar: approachable voice online must be matched by credible practice on the street.

From an organizational point of view, engagement requires professionalization rather than improvise posting. Practitioner guidance emphasizes dedicated teams, editorial standards, archiving/evidence systems, and clear rules of engagement to prevent misinformation and sustain credibility (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). Research on presentational strategies shows that agencies try to project competence, care, and order, but warns that much online practice can normalize pre-existing bureaucratic routines unless rooted in genuine dialogue (Bullock, 2016; Bullock, 2018). In mixed or polarized settings, public judgments will track substance over style.

Comparative cases underline risks and opportunities. Analyses of image work during controversies show organizations negotiating legitimacy under intensified inspection, strategic impression management helps but cannot substitute for policy and practice (Lancia, 2023). In France, efforts to professionalize communication, integrate specialized staff, and routinize media work illustrate how engagement became a core function rather than a side extra (Le Saulnier, 2012; Meyer, 2013). In sum, effective community engagement aligns offline contact (ordinary, non-enforcement presence), online reciprocity (useful, responsive content), and organizational capacity (professionalized teams and processes). Where this alignment holds, platforms tend to reinforce trust, where it does not, they amplify skepticism.

2.4.2 Crisis situations

Crises, protests, high-profile incidents, severe threats, compress time, multiply audiences, raise the risk that single fragments will define legitimacy. Networked visibility means that who relays a content can matter more than the content itself. During the Gilets jaunes cycle, the most visible representations of police on Twitter were critical, with visibility driven primarily by amplifiers rather than content alone (Bouté, 2021). In such conditions, institutional posts enter contested spaces where counter-frames emerge quickly and may dominate.

The immediate implication is that crisis communication is not simply a messaging task but a governance challenge. Practitioner guidance converges on readiness: standing teams, escalation protocols, evidence/records systems, and cross-functional coordination to release timely, accurate, and contextualized updates (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). Analyses of presentational work show agencies attempting to stabilize meaning through reassurance and professionalism (Bullock, 2016), but the broader assessment is serious: much “crisis use” of

platforms normalizes existing routines and can be read as defensive when acknowledgment or context is thin (Bullock, 2018). Commentaries warn that in tensed moments, official posts risk being decoded as bureaucratic propaganda, legitimation-seeking rather than interactive, especially if they highlight institutional image over accountability (Schneider, 2021).

Crisis dynamics also rely on coherence with what happens offline. Where street-level behavior provides credible anchors, respectful, non-enforcement contact, clear rationale for action, publics are more receptive (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). Where baseline experience is weak or negative, online messaging faces structural obstacles, in survey designs, informal contact, cohesion, and disorder still account for much of opinion variance (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003). This is why de-formalized online tone must be backed by operational consistency (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.).

Finally, crises connect tribunals to policy. As visibility escalates, notable rises, increasing the likelihood of political response, though not in a uniform direction (Burstein, 2003). Strategic takeaways emerge from image-management cases: acknowledge uncertainty early, provide process-oriented context, and avoid over-promising (Lancia, 2023). In the French setting, prior investments in professionalization, specialized communicators, standardized media work, visual standards, helped agencies articulate their actions, but did not eliminate the structural asymmetry of networked amplification (Le Saulnier, 2012; Meyer, 2013; Bouté, 2021). The governing principle is to treat every post and every field interaction as potentially representative, and to prepare accordingly.

2.4.3 Transparency

Transparency on platforms is best understood as coherence made visible. It combines open communication (timely facts, accessible explanations) with alignment to observable practice. Without that alignment, “transparency” reads as performance. Communication research cautions that public visibility follows selection rules, visual appeal, originality, perceived audience interest, so that not all explanations travel equally (Mutz & Young, 2011). Agencies must therefore design for clarity and context, but also accept that circulation will be uneven and partly outside their control.

Institutional analyses of police social media show a persistent tension between broadcasting and dialogue. Much practice projects reassurance and authority, reproducing bureaucratic routines online (Bullock, 2018). At the same time, de-formalization, ordinary tone, pedagogical formats, direct address, can reduce distance when it reflects genuine openness (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.). French organizational trajectories document the integration of specialized communicators and the routinization of media work, signs that transparency has become a

planned function rather than a secondary thought (Le Saulnier, 2012; Meyer, 2013). Yet commentaries remind us that in contentious cycles, posts may be read as legitimation-seeking unless paired with acknowledgment, context, and follow-through (Schneider, 2021).

Practitioner guidance translates these insights into operations: establish editorial standards (accuracy, timeliness, accessibility), ensure archiving/evidence systems, define response plans (when to acknowledge, when to defer, how to escalate), and prepare for mis/disinformation shocks, including synthetic media that can outrun official channels (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). From an engagement perspective, transparency works when publics can verify claims against everyday contact and local conditions. Survey and experimental findings imply that informal contact, neighborhood cohesion, and non-enforcement encounters provide anchors that make online explanations more credible (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003; Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). Meanwhile, among followers, regular exposure and interaction correlate with higher satisfaction, especially when content is useful and authentic (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019).

Governance questions complete the picture. Analyses argue for a presumption against political control of content moderation, placing responsibility on private platforms and on organizational speakers to meet standards without coercive regulation (Samples, 2019). For agencies, the practical result is to build capacity (people, processes, policies) and to accept that transparency is not just about disclosure but about sustained coherence, the convergence of what is said and what is done. Image-management cases underline this: impression management can support understanding, yet it cannot replace consistent practice over time (Lancia, 2023).

2.4.4 Key Takeaways

Four lessons synthesize institutional responses across engagement, crisis, and transparency. First, coherence is the main pillar. Publics judge alignment between message and practice. Where informal contact, neighborhood cohesion, and visible, respectful non-enforcement encounters set favorable standards, perceptions improve and online messages gain credibility (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003; Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). Among engaged followers, frequent exposure and interaction correlate with higher satisfaction, especially when content is timely and useful (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). Social media, then, tend to amplify the baseline, trust where substance exists, skepticism where it does not.

Second, visibility is structured and contested. Platforms privilege what influential relays share, again, during the Gilets jaunes cycle (that directly impacted and echoed with people's personal lives, finances, quality of life, emotions…), the most visible police-related content were mostly critical (Bouté, 2021). Agencies must plan for amplification paths and opposing

views. Presentational work helps, reassurance, professionalism, care, but it remains vulnerable to disruption and often normalizes existing routines unless coupled with dialogic practice (Bullock, 2016; Bullock, 2018).

Third, capacity and governance determine credibility under pressure. Professionalized teams, editorial standards, monitoring, archiving, and escalation protocols improve the usefulness and trustworthiness of communication, especially in crisis (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). At the macro level, arguments for platform-level governance (rather than political control of moderation) place responsibility on private intermediaries and organizational speakers to meet public-interest standards without chilling effects (Samples, 2019). Internally, agencies should differentiate behaviors across internal and external arenas, acknowledging that care is needed outside home ground (Lev-On & Yavetz, 2020).

Fourth, image work is necessary but insufficient. Strategic impression management is now a core competency, particularly when controversies mobilize distant publics (Lancia, 2023). French organizational trajectories, professionalization of media relations, integration of communicators, and visual standards, show what investment looks like (Le Saulnier, 2012; Meyer, 2013). Yet commentaries warn that in heated cycles, posts risk being read as bureaucratic propaganda unless paired with acknowledgment and accountability (Schneider, 2021). Communication research similarly reminds us that selection and visibility logics shape which opinions surface (Mutz & Young, 2011).

Across all four lessons runs a final base: the plurality of policing (Brodeur, 2003). Because publics encounter different “faces” at different moments, no single channel or tone will suffice. Effective response integrates operational practice, presentational strategy, and audience-aware communication across contexts. When this integration holds, platforms can reinforce legitimacy, when it fails, they will accelerate contestation.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The conceptual model starts from a simple observation: the public never encounters "the police" as a single thing. Policing is read through multiple functions, preventive presence, investigative work, coercive capacity, that carry distinct symbolic meanings (Brodeur, 2003). In the contemporary media environment, those meanings are no longer filtered only by traditional intermediaries, they are continuously re-authored on platforms where visibility is a function of amplification, timing, and who relays content. In the French case, a large-scale analysis of Twitter activity during the Gilets jaunes cycle (1,500,976 tweets; 31,698 images; 446,824 shares) demonstrated that the most visible representations of police were predominantly critical and that visibility depended mainly on the accounts amplifying content rather than on message features alone (Bouté, 2021). For police organizations, this creates a dual imperative. First, communication must adopt platform codes, proximity, clarity, responsiveness, without losing institutional authority (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Meyer, 2013). Second, communication must anticipate that competing frames will circulate and may set importance regardless of institutional intent (Bouté, 2021; Schneider, 2021).

This environment helps explain why agencies invest in what UK-based work terms "presentational strategies" online (Bullock, 2016; Bullock, 2018), and why French scholarship documents both the professionalization of communication roles and the "deformalization" of tone in digital spaces (Le Saulnier, 2012; Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Meyer, 2013). Practical guidance complements this: set up a team, deliver timely and accurate updates, speak plainly, and prepare for mis/disinformation cycles (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023). Comparative evidence suggests that how audiences evaluate this presence depends not only on the content but also on how they interpret the organization's stance, whether it feels genuinely more open (a transformation) or merely a continuation of one-way routines (a normalization) (Bullock, 2018), and whether it resembles bureaucratic propaganda during contentious moments (Schneider, 2021). In parallel, classic opinion drivers still operate: informal contact with officers, neighborhood cohesion and control, and perceived disorder are robust correlates of what people think about the police (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003). Experimental evidence shows that even a single, brief, non-enforcement visit by a uniformed officer can improve attitudes, legitimacy, and the propensity to cooperate for several weeks (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). Practitioner reflections stress that online tone must align with on-the-ground experience if trust is to grow rather than erode (Nieto, 2024).

Bringing these strands together, the model treats legitimacy and satisfaction as meso-level perceptions that are shaped simultaneously by online exposure/interpretation and by lived

interactions/contexts. Willingness to cooperate (e.g., reporting, sharing information, attending meetings) is modeled as a downstream outcome that follows from those perceptions. The model allows for direct contributions from some inputs (e.g., perceived transparency; exposure to negative viral content) to those perceptions, while recognizing that organization-level strategy and governance choices condition what publics see and how they judge it (Lev-On & Yavetz, 2020; Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023; Lancia, 2023; Samples, 2019).

Operational focus and measurement. For empirical testing, exposure refers to how often respondents see posts from official police accounts; interaction refers to likes, comments, or shares on those accounts. Perceived transparency refers to whether posts are timely, accurate, explanatory, and consistent. Transformation vs. normalization is an audience reading of whether police communication feels newly open and dialogic (transformation) or remains one-way and routine (normalization) (Bullock, 2018). Perceived bureaucratic propaganda refers to whether official content is read as primarily legitimating the organization rather than opening accountability (Schneider, 2021; Lancia, 2023). Exposure to negative viral content captures how often respondents encounter widely shared, critical depictions of policing (Bouté, 2021). Informal contact captures frequency/quality of ordinary encounters with officers; cohesion/control and perceived disorder operationalize neighborhood context (Ashcroft et al., 2003). Legitimacy and satisfaction are distinct constructs; cooperation captures behavioral intentions. Finally, online-offline coherence captures whether respondents feel the online message matches offline experience (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019; Meyer, 2013).

Logic and sequencing of hypotheses. The sequence is designed so each statement is a simple pairwise expectation, and together they trace a coherent path from inputs to outcomes. First, follower studies suggest that those who see and respond to official content more often tend to evaluate the police more favorably (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). Hence:

H1. Higher exposure to and interaction with official police social-media accounts is associated with higher satisfaction with the police. (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019)

Second, practical and organizational work converges on transparency and responsiveness as levers for trust (Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023; Lev-On & Yavetz, 2020; Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.): **H2. Perceived transparency of official posts is positively associated with perceived legitimacy.**

Third, audiences may read police online practice as either transformed or normalized (Bullock, 2018). If it is read as genuinely more open and dialogic, legitimacy should be

higher: **H3. Perceived transformation (vs. normalization) of police online communication is positively associated with perceived legitimacy.** (Bullock, 2018)

Fourth, visibility dynamics show that negative/critical depictions can dominate what becomes important (Bouté, 2021) and that publics may decode official narration under contention as promotional rather than accountable (Schneider, 2021). Consistent with selection/reinforcement processes in communication (Mutz & Young, 2011): **H4. Exposure to highly visible negative/critical content about policing online is negatively associated with perceived legitimacy.**

To connect perceptions to outcomes, experimental evidence indicates that improved attitudes and legitimacy are accompanied by stronger cooperation (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). Therefore: **H5. Perceived legitimacy is positively associated with willingness to cooperate with the police.**

Offline interactions remain central. A brief, positive, non-enforcement interaction can move attitudes and legitimacy (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019): **H6. Recent positive non-enforcement contact with a uniformed officer is positively associated with perceived legitimacy.**

Classic opinion determinants underscore the role of ordinary contact and local conditions (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003): **H7. More frequent informal contact with police is positively associated with favorable opinions of the police.**

H8. Neighborhood cohesion/control is positively, and perceived disorder is negatively, associated with favorable opinions of the police.

Content that is read as propaganda undermines trust (Schneider, 2021; Lancia, 2023): **H9. Perceived bureaucratic propaganda in official posts is negatively associated with perceived legitimacy.**

Finally, communications scholarship and practice concur that consistency between online tone and offline experience is decisive (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019; Meyer, 2013): **H10. Perceived online-offline coherence is positively associated with perceived legitimacy.**

Taken together, H1-H4 populate the online side of the model; H6-H8 populate the offline side; H9 and H10 capture interpretive checks audiences apply to official narration; and H5 links the meso perception (legitimacy) to the behavioral outcome (cooperation). This yields a parsimonious test plan: regress legitimacy on online and offline inputs (H2-H4, H6-H10), regress satisfaction on H1 inputs, and regress cooperation on legitimacy (H5), adding

robustness checks that include direct associations from key inputs to cooperation if required by model fit.

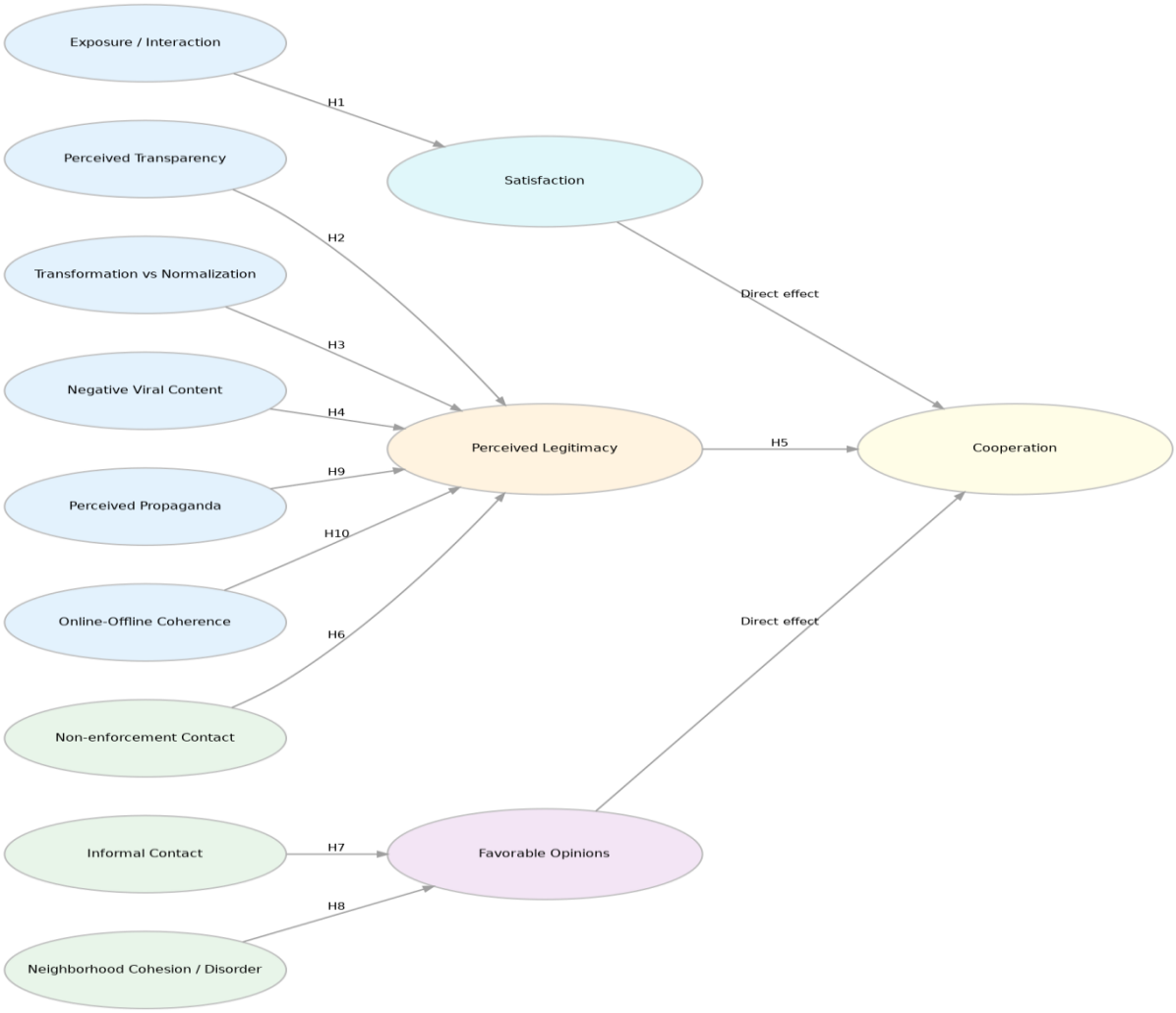


Figure 3.1: Conceptual Model

Source: Own elaboration

4. CONTEXTUALISATION

This study is situated in a communication environment where institutional authority is performed, examined, and often contested in public view. Historically, policing projected multiple "faces" whose visibility varied by context, patrol, investigation, public order, making a single, stable image improbable (Brodeur, 2003). The digital turn did not erase this plurality; it amplified it. Messages circulate through platforms whose logics are conversational and immediate, and where publics participate in editing what counts as salient. French work traces how police organizations responded by professionalizing communication functions and adopting a lighter, more accessible tone online, the "deformalization" of institutional voice (Le Saulnier, 2012; Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.). This move sought to reduce perceived distance, meet publics where they are, and support day-to-day information needs, all while preserving the prudence and accuracy expected of public agencies (Meyer, 2013).

Visibility, however, is not a neutral backdrop; it is a mechanism that structures judgment. During the Gilets jaunes protests, a massive collection of tweets and images showed that the most visible representations of police were often critical, and that visibility hinged on who relayed content (Bouté, 2021). In such arenas, official narration becomes one voice among many. The implications for communication practice are concrete. First, usefulness and clarity matter: updates that explain the "what, why, and how" of police action reduce interpretive gaps. Second, listening matters: responding to questions and contextualizing decisions signals respect for the audience's stake in events. Third, timing and reach matter: absent amplification from accounts with established audiences, even accurate information can remain peripheral (Bouté, 2021).

The organizational response is increasingly understood as image work. Agencies operate with the awareness that controversies travel fast and far, that snippets can become symbols, and that audiences evaluate not just words but the stance behind them (Lancia, 2023). UK analyses highlight the construction of "presentational strategies" by public police online, efforts to appear competent, restrained, and approachable while recognizing organizational constraints that make practice cautious and risk-averse (Bullock, 2016; Bullock, 2018). French scholarship documents the integration of professional communicators and the growth of audio-visual production to support coherent public image and to manage media risks (Meyer, 2013). Yet these adaptations do not automatically transform how institutions communicate; much usage still resembles traditional, one-way routines that prioritize control of message over dialogic exchange (Bullock, 2018). When publics sense that official content is designed primarily to

legitimate authority rather than to open accountability, they may label it as bureaucratic propaganda (Schneider, 2021). That reading is particularly potent during contentious cycles.

On the audience side, research points to two simultaneous processes. One is exposure and interaction with official accounts. Among followers, more frequent viewing and responding to police posts associates with higher satisfaction (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). This is not a universal remedy, appreciation of self-promotion varies, and tone can misfire if interpreted as staged, but it supports an actionable premise: useful, timely, and human communication can help. The second process is selective and reinforced visibility: platforms do not simply deliver information; they curate attention through social ties and algorithmic ordering (Mutz & Young, 2011). In practice, that means negative or critical depictions can dominate what audiences see, not because institutions are silent, but because other actors, and their networks, amplify those depictions more effectively (Bouté, 2021). When official posts attempt to rationalize police actions during protest cycles, publics can decode them as promotional rather than accountable, which depresses trust (Schneider, 2021).

Despite the centrality of platforms, offline experience remains a powerful anchor. Survey-based work shows that informal contact with officers, neighborhood cohesion/control, and perceived disorder are robust correlates of opinion, while demographics and media alone explain less in that design (Ashcroft, Daniels, & Hart, 2003). Experimental evidence demonstrates that even a brief, positive, non-enforcement visit can improve attitudes, perceived legitimacy, and willingness to cooperate for weeks, effects that were particularly large among nonwhite respondents (Peyton, Sierra-Arévalo, & Rand, 2019). These findings justify modeling legitimacy as a function of both mediated exposure and lived interaction. They also explain why practice-oriented guidance emphasizes community relations, clarity, and continuity between online tone and offline behavior (Nieto, 2024; Carr, 2023; Dawkins, 2023).

The governance dimension adds a further layer. Agencies operate within platform architectures, and broad proposals to directly regulate content moderation raise questions about speech and the role of private governance (Samples, 2019). From an operational standpoint, this suggests that rather than seeking top-down control over attention, agencies should invest where they have traction : competent presentational work (Bullock, 2018), transparent routines (Carr, 2023), preparedness for crisis mis/disinformation (Dawkins, 2023), and a clear policy for engaging internal (home-turf) versus external arenas, acknowledging a “duty of presence” while avoiding performative confrontation on other people’s pages (Lev-On & Yavetz, 2020). In short, the constraint is real, but so are the levers.

The French context concentrates these issues. Professionalization of communication has expanded, yet the very "deformalization" that makes messages accessible demands organizational discipline: tone, content, and response patterns must be consistent with on-the-ground practice (Huré & Le Saulnier, s.d.; Meyer, 2013). When coherence holds, publics reward clarity and proximity (Williams & Fedorowicz, 2019). When it breaks, when online friendliness collides with offline experience, visibility accelerates reputational damage (Schneider, 2021). This is why image work in controversy cannot rely on performance alone; it must rest on traceable facts, procedural clarity, and a willingness to learn from disputes (Lancia, 2023).

Finally, public opinion is not just an outcome to be measured; it can shape what decision-makers do when issues become salient (Burstein, 2003). In cycles where negative depictions dominate attention and drive collective discussion, pressure for change, policy, oversight, training, can mount independently of agency messaging. Recognizing this link is not fatalistic; it clarifies why consistency matters. The same visibility that enables criticism also allows organizations to show competence, restraint, and care. The choice is not whether to participate, but how.

In this setting, the study's model and hypotheses are proportionate. They capture what platforms add (exposure, transparency cues, transformation vs. normalization, negative viral content, propaganda readings), what lived experience anchors (informal contact, non-enforcement encounters, cohesion/disorder), and how perceptions organize behavior (legitimacy, satisfaction, cooperation). They are also test-ready: each hypothesis specifies a relationship between two variables, so you can estimate them cleanly and then examine the overall pattern. The empirical design (detailed in the subsequent Methodology section) prioritizes qualitative depth to surface interpretive logics, with a complementary questionnaire to map patterns across audiences (N'Da, 2005; Nieto, 2024).

5. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a mixed-methods design to explain how social media reshape public perceptions of law enforcement in France, and to test the relationships specified in the conceptual model. The approach is sequential and complementary. A qualitative phase uses semi-structured interviews with citizens and law-enforcement personnel to surface mechanisms, language, and experiences that give meaning to legitimacy and cooperation online. A quantitative phase then tests the resulting relationships on a broader sample using a structured questionnaire aligned with the constructs in the model. The combination allows a shift from depth to breadth, from lived descriptions of visibility and dialogue in digital spaces to statistical tests of how these factors relate to legitimacy and willingness to cooperate. The design is presented as continuous text and retains the instruments specified for the study.

5.1 Overall design and rationale

The mixed approach is grounded in a dual ambition: to understand the meaning citizens and officers attach to police communication online and to test whether, and how strongly, social-media exposure and engagement are associated with perceived legitimacy and cooperation. The qualitative strand is inductive, using semi-structured interviews to elicit narratives about exposure to police content, reactions to negative incidents, and expectations of transparency. These insights inform measurement choices and help interpret statistical patterns that would otherwise remain opaque. The quantitative strand is deductive, using a questionnaire with Likert-type items mapped to the constructs in the conceptual model, social-media exposure and engagement, perceived legitimacy, perceived transparency, and willingness to cooperate, to test a set of parsimonious hypotheses suitable for bivariate and multivariate analysis. The plan mirrors the study's research logic and is articulated as a coherent, written method section.

5.2 Instruments

5.2.1 Interview Guides Qualitative

Two semi-structured guides were developed, one for citizens and one for law-enforcement personnel (see Appendix A). Questions explore frequency and modes of exposure to police-related content; typical reactions to negative incidents online; perceived role of transparency; and concrete examples of social-media interactions that improved, or harmed, cooperation. The guides also include prompts about the tension between proximity and authority, and about how humour, responsiveness, or procedural explanations are received in digital settings. These guides constitute the fixed qualitative instrument for data collection.

Table 5.1: Summary of Hypotheses and Questions related to the Interviews

THEMES	HYPOTHESIS	QUESTIONS FOR CITIZENS (traduced in English)	QUESTIONS FOR LAW-ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL (traduced in English)
Exposure & Interaction	H1	How often do you see content from official police accounts on social media?	How does your service encourage citizens to engage with your social media posts?
Exposure & Interaction	H1	Do you usually interact (like, comment, share) with these accounts? Why or why not?	What type of content generates the most interaction with citizens?
Transparency	H2	Do you perceive police communication online as clear, timely and accurate?	What challenges do you face in ensuring transparency on social media?
Transparency	H2	Do you feel official police information is reliable compared to other sources?	How do you build credibility and trust in your online posts?
Transformation vs. Normalization	H3	Do you feel police communication has become more open and dialogic online, or does it remain one-way?	How do you balance innovative digital practices with traditional routines of communication?
Negative Viral Content	H4	Have you seen viral negative content (videos, images) about police on social media? How did it affect your perception?	How does your service react when negative content about police goes viral?

Negative Viral Content	H4	Do you think these viral contents influence public trust in the police?	What strategies do you use to reduce the impact of viral negative content?
Legitimacy → Cooperation	H5	Would perceiving the police as legitimate make you more willing to cooperate (report incidents, share information, attend meetings)?	In what ways do you think legitimacy influences citizens' willingness to cooperate?
Non-enforcement Contact	H6	Have you had recent positive contact with a police officer outside enforcement (e.g., conversation, assistance)? How did it affect your opinion?	Do you think non-enforcement interactions help to build trust? Can you give examples?
Informal Contact	H7	How often do you have informal encounters with police officers in your neighborhood?	How important are informal contacts in shaping your relationship with citizens?
Cohesion / Disorder	H8	Do you think neighborhood cohesion or perceived disorder affects your opinion of the police?	How do you perceive the influence of local cohesion or disorder on trust in your service?
Propaganda vs. Accountability	H9	When you see official police posts, do they seem informative or manipulative/propagandistic?	How do you avoid being perceived as propagandistic in your communication?
Online–Offline Coherence	H10	Do you feel the tone of police communication online matches your offline experiences with officers?	How do you ensure coherence between online messaging and field practices?

Online–Offline Coherence	H10	If online communication and real-life experiences differ, how does it affect your trust?	What measures are taken to align online communication with on-the-ground behavior?

Source: Own elaboration

5.2.2 Questionnaire Quantitative

The survey instrument (see Appendix B) translates the conceptual model into measurable constructs using closed-ended items and 5-point scales. Sections cover social-media usage and exposure to police content, engagement behaviors (viewing/responding), perceived legitimacy and fairness, perceived transparency, and willingness to cooperate with law enforcement. The skeleton and illustrative items are retained from the conceptual model and research design, with wording designed to be neutral and non-leading. The instrument is implemented as a self-administered online questionnaire, consistent with the research design. Where appropriate, item formats follow operationalizations commonly used in survey work on police social-media communication (e.g., frequency of viewing/responding; five-point performance ratings), supporting comparability and facilitating ordinal modeling if needed. This alignment is reflected in "view" and "respond" frequency metrics and in a global rating of perceived performance/legitimacy, adapted to the French context.

Table 5.2: Summary of Hypotheses and Questions related to the Questionnaire

THEMES	HYPOTHESIS	QUESTIONS (traduced in English)
Exposure & Interaction	H1	How often do you see content related to law enforcement on social media?
Exposure & Interaction	H1	How often do you interact (like, comment, share) with law enforcement content on social media?
Transparency	H2	To what extent do you think law enforcement is transparent in their communication with the public?

Transparency	H2	Does transparency in law enforcement communication improve the trust you place in them?
Transformation vs Normalization	H3	To what extent do you think social media improves communication between the public and law enforcement?
Transformation vs. Normalization	H3	When law enforcement tells positive stories (proximity, help…), do you think their image improves?
Negative viral content	H4	When negative incidents (violence, misconduct) are shared, what is the impact on your perception?
Negative Viral Content	H4	Does repeated exposure to negative law enforcement content normalize these behaviors?
Legitimacy → Cooperation	H5	In general, do you consider the actions of law enforcement to be legitimate?
Legitimacy → Cooperation	H5	How likely are you to cooperate with law enforcement if needed?
Legitimacy → Cooperation	H5	Does engaging with law enforcement content on social media make you more likely to cooperate?
Non-enforcement Contact	H6	To what extent do you trust law enforcement to act fairly and justly?
Informal Contact	H7	Does seeing positive content about law enforcement on social media

		improve your perception of their legitimacy?
Cohesion / Disorder	H8	To what extent do you think social media shapes public sentiment towards law enforcement?
Propaganda vs. Accountability	H9	When law enforcement shares emotional and engaging content (heroic acts, personal stories), how does it affect your feelings towards them?
Propaganda vs. Accountability	H9	Which type of crime-related content seems most effective to you?
Online–Offline Coherence	H10	When law enforcement engages in real-time conversations with the public on social media, does this improve public trust?
Online–Offline Coherence	H10	Overall, how has your perception of law enforcement changed due to exposure on social media?

Source: Own elaboration

5.3 Sampling Strategy

5.3.1 Qualitative Sampling

For the interview phase, the sampling strategy is purposive and maximum-variation. Participants include citizens differing in age, gender, and social-media habits, as well as law-enforcement personnel in distinct roles (e.g., police municipale, gendarmerie). Selection focuses on those with first-hand experience encountering (or producing) law-enforcement content online and those able to articulate expectations of transparency, fairness, and responsiveness. The target size (approximately 5 to 10 interviews) is designed to reach thematic saturation while preserving heterogeneity across profiles and viewpoints, as intended

.

5.3.2 Quantitative sampling

For the survey, the population is residents of France who use social media. Recruitment occurs via multiple online channels to diversify the sample and mitigate self-selection toward any single platform or viewpoint (e.g., posts in multi-interest groups, not only institutional accounts). The initial target is a larger sample to ensure stable estimates and subgroup comparisons, the dataset collected to date is treated as the analysis sample, with clear reporting of response counts and missingness. The recruitment, sample description, and administration mode follow the approach defined for the study. To keep the chapter purely methodological, descriptive statistics of the obtained sample (age, gender, platform use, education) appear in the Results chapter, not here.

5.4 Data Collection Procedures

5.4.1 Interviews

Interviews are conducted in person or via secure videoconference, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. The protocol opens with rapport-building and confidentiality, then proceeds through core domains: everyday exposure to police-related content, interpretations and emotions triggered by negative incidents, perceived usefulness of practical/educational posts, expectations of transparency, and perceived consequences for trust and cooperation. Officers are invited to describe content strategies, constraints, and examples where online engagement improved cooperation, as well as experiences of backlash and reputational risk. Interview length is approximately 40–60 minutes, consistent with the design.

5.4.2 Survey

The questionnaire is self-administered online. Before full launch, a short pilot checks clarity, response burden, and routing. The final survey then runs over a defined fieldwork window, with attention to distributing the link across different audience pools to reduce audience homophily. The item structure mirrors the sections of the instrument (usage, exposure, engagement, legitimacy, cooperation), using balanced wording to reduce social-desirability pressures.

5.5 Ethical Safeguards

All participants receive an information sheet explaining the study's purpose, voluntary participation, right to withdraw, and data-handling procedures. Interviewees provide recorded or written consent; survey respondents consent by proceeding past the opening page. Personally, identifying information is not collected in the survey; interview transcripts are pseudonymized at transcription. Audio files and transcripts are stored on encrypted media accessible only to the researcher. These procedures align with standard protections for human-participants research.

5.6 Measures and Operationalization

In the survey, social-media exposure is operationalized as frequency of encountering police/gendarmerie content online, engagement as frequency of likes/comments/shares or responses to institutional posts, perceived legitimacy via items tapping fairness, trust, and appropriateness, perceived transparency via clarity, completeness, and responsiveness of communication; and cooperation via stated likelihood to assist, report, or comply. The operationalizations and scale formats are consistent with the questionnaire blueprint and remain suitable for descriptive analysis and regression with ordered or interval-treated outcomes, depending on diagnostics.

For the interview data, codes reflect the guide's domains: forms of visibility, interpretations of negative incidents, usefulness of pedagogical content, transparency expectations, and perceived shifts in trust/cooperation. Additional inductive codes capture emergent themes (e.g., perceptions of humour and tone, comparisons between online and face-to-face interactions). The interview corpus and prompts underpin this structure.

5.7 Data Preparation

Interview recordings are transcribed verbatim and verified against audio. A codebook is drafted after an initial close reading of several transcripts, then refined iteratively. To limit researcher bias, coding proceeds in two passes, and discrepancies are resolved by discussion and memoing.

Survey data cleaning includes treatment of partial records, removal of straight-lining or implausible completion times, and checks for duplicate entries. Negatively keyed items (if any) are reverse-scored before scale construction. The final analysis dataset includes derived indices (e.g., mean legitimacy scale) contingent on acceptable internal consistency. Otherwise, analyzes rely on item-level models. This procedure is congruent with good measurement practice.

5.8 Analysis Plan

5.8.1 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis follows reflexive thematic analysis. After immersion, initial codes are generated at the semantic level (e.g., "seeing interventions only via viral clips," "value of safety/pedagogy posts," "procedural explanations reduce anger"), then regrouped at a more conceptual level (e.g., "amplification of negativity," "perceived coherence between words and acts," "procedural justice online"). Memos document interpretive decisions and links to the conceptual model. When feasible, a light member-checking step is used, sharing brief analytic summaries with a subset of interviewees to confirm plausibility without requesting approval of interpretations.

5.8.2 Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis begins with descriptive statistics and correlation matrices for core variables. Depending on scale diagnostics, indices (e.g., legitimacy, transparency, willingness to cooperate) are formed and assessed for internal consistency. Bivariate tests examine whether higher exposure/engagement are associated with legitimacy and cooperation. Multivariate models then test the hypotheses with controls (e.g., demographics and platform use), using OLS for approximately continuous indices or ordinal logistic regression for ordered outcomes. Mediation is tested by estimating indirect effects from exposure/engagement to cooperation through legitimacy, with bootstrapped confidence intervals. The analysis plan is intentionally tractable to match the streamlined hypothesis set and the questionnaire design.

5.9 Validity, Reliability, and Bias Mitigation

Several safeguards are implemented. First, construct validity is supported by tight alignment between conceptual definitions and operationalizations embedded in the survey blueprint, informed by item formats with precedent in police / social-media research. Second, internal reliability of multi-item indices is checked, with transparent reporting; if indices underperform, analyses revert to item-level models to avoid masking multidimensionality. Third, social-desirability bias is addressed by neutral wording, anonymity in the survey, and indirect framing of sensitive items. Fourth, selection bias is mitigated by distributing links across varied channels rather than relying only on institutional feeds or single-community groups. Finally, the qualitative strand addresses researcher bias via memoing, peer debriefing, and consistency checks across code applications. These safeguards reflect the study design.

5.10 Integration of Qualitative and Quantitative Evidence

Integration occurs at two points. Before the survey launch, interview insights inform final item wording and the inclusion of concrete content prompts (e.g., perceptions of procedural explanations, educational content, or crisis communications). After both strands are complete, integration proceeds through a triangulation matrix that contrasts thematic claims with statistical patterns, for example, whether the themes “coherence between acts and words” and “pedagogical content reduces hostility” correspond to higher legitimacy and cooperation scores among respondents who report frequent exposure to such content. Where convergence is observed, stronger inferences about mechanisms are drawn; where divergence appears, interviews help explain why statistically similar exposure may produce different perceptions across groups. This integrated logic reflects the research plan.

5.11 Limitations

The design is observational and cannot establish causality. While mediation tests strengthen process plausibility, unobserved confounding remains possible. Self-selection into the survey may over-represent respondents with strong views; broad recruitment helps but does not eliminate this risk. Qualitative findings are not statistically generalizable; their role is explanatory rather than enumerative. These limitations and their mitigations are acknowledged in the methodological framework.

6. RESULTS

6.1. Overview of the Mixed-Methods Results

This chapter reports the findings in the order required by the conceptual model and the study hypotheses. The evidence comes from two complementary sources: a corpus of semi-structured interviews with citizens (varied stances toward the police) and law-enforcement personnel (municipal police and gendarmerie), and an online questionnaire dataset (113 completed responses). The chapter moves from interpretation to testing and then to integration: first a qualitative synthesis of interview material, then a hypothesis-by-hypothesis reading of that material, then statistical tests on the survey data, and finally a short integration that brings both strands together.

The interview synthesis (§5.1) offers a written account of recurrent mechanisms and tensions described by participants. Verbatim quotations are embedded in the prose, kept in their original language, and attributed to anonymized participant codes (citizens: C1, C2, C3; law-enforcement: LEO1, LEO2, LEO3). The synthesis focuses on the dynamics that matter for the model: visibility and explanation; the impact of negative viral content; the balance between reserve and transparency; and the coherence between online messaging and offline practice. These mechanisms prepare the ground for the hypothesis frame that follows.

The qualitative pre-validation (§5.2) aligns interview evidence with each hypothesis H1–H10. For every hypothesis, the analysis states whether the interview material tends to support, nuance, or contradict the expected relationship, and why. The aim is not to count responses but to identify mechanisms (e.g., how explanatory content is perceived to lift legitimacy; how repeated exposure to contentious clips depresses trust; why coherence between words and actions conditions credibility). This section uses the same participant codes as §5.1 and retains the same writing style.

The quantitative validation (§5.3) tests the hypotheses on the survey data using Jamovi. Where constructs are measured by multiple items, indices are formed after reliability checks, where a construct is captured by a single item, the item is analyzed as such. Each hypothesis is tested with a simple model: one focal predictor and one focal outcome, with a small set of controls (age, gender, overall social-media intensity) when appropriate. Depending on measurement, models are estimated with linear regression (for approximately continuous indices) or ordinal regression (for ordered items). Coefficients are reported with standard errors, p-values, and confidence intervals; model fit is summarized with R^2 (for linear models) or appropriate ordinal metrics. Where theoretically relevant, an indirect path is examined with legitimacy as a mediator toward cooperation. Robustness checks (e.g., alternative codings,

item-level analyses when reliability is weak) are used to verify that conclusions do not hinge on a single specification.

The integration (§5.4) brings both strands together on a hypothesis-by-hypothesis basis. For each result, a short numerical summary is paired with a representative interview excerpt that illuminates mechanism and scope conditions. Convergences are highlighted; where the strands diverge, the interview material is used to clarify why a statistical association may be weak or heterogeneous across audiences. The section closes with a concise interim conclusion (§5.5) that states what the evidence, taken together, implies for the conceptual model.

Two reporting notes guide the reader. First, estimates are presented in a compact, readable format (standardized coefficients where helpful; two-decimal precision for tables; exact p-values). Second, claims are framed as associations rather than causal effects: the design is observational, results describe patterns consistent with the model and the interview mechanisms but do not establish causality. With these conventions in place, the chapter opens with the interview synthesis that structures the reading of the subsequent tests.

6.2 Synthesis of Interviews (Citizens & Law-Enforcement)

The interviews converge on a shared diagnosis: social media reshape what is visible about policing and how judgments are formed. For some citizens, institutional accounts open an ordinary, non-spectacular window onto practice. As one participant puts it, « Bah, ça permet de les voir à l'œuvre » (C1). Seeing routine work, explanations of why and how decisions are made, and prevention-oriented posts reduces distance without erasing criticism. These respondents tend to consume official content regularly, and what they value most is contextualization rather than slogans. The same interviewee contrasts educational formats with more sensational material: « Alors, il y a des contenus qui montrent souvent les interceptions … mais moi, ce que je trouve qui marche le mieux, c'est la pédagogie » (C1).

This first current is counterbalanced by a second, expressed by distrustful citizens, who insist that legitimacy is undermined by recurring incidents that circulate online. Their trust is oriented toward "ground footage," not institutional narratives: « Les vidéos brutes. Celles filmées par des citoyens … C'est là qu'on voit la vérité, pas dans les communiqués » (C2). In their view, platforms do not merely host content; they tilt the balance toward indignation. The same speaker states, « Ils la sapent. Et c'est justifié » (C2), where "they" refers to social networks as a medium that exposes misconduct and, by doing so, erodes perceived legitimacy. He also points to a gap between "PR-clean" messages and lived experience: « Il y a un décalage énorme entre la com' bien propre et ce qu'on vit dans certains quartiers » (C2).

A third voice, more supportive of the institution, emphasises that feeds disproportionately reward outrage. The "pro-police" interviewee describes regular exposure, « Fréquemment, mais c'est rarement flatteur », and sees algorithms as amplifying unfair portrayals: « Ils sont trop timides… il ne faut pas laisser les réseaux devenir une arme contre la police » (C3). He values educational formats, « les vidéos pédagogiques » (C3), but underscores the emotional economy of platforms: « Une vidéo qui fait pleurer ou qui choque aura plus d'impact qu'un rapport de 50 pages » (C3).

Law-enforcement interviews describe a posture that balances visibility with restraint. The municipal officers and the gendarmerie converge on a pragmatic doctrine: show, explain, avoid performative back-and-forth, and keep communication anchored in verified facts. A gendarme summarizes the brief in three points: « Trois objectifs essentiels: visibilité, pédagogie et proximité » (LEO3). He links steady, plain-language posting to perceived fairness: « L'engagement positif construit notre légitimité » (LEO3) and specifies how explanatory content works: when an intervention is clearly broken down « la parole, maîtrisée et pédagogique, renforce la légitimité » (LEO3). The same interview stresses cadence and continuity, « ne jamais laisser un vide de communication » (LEO3), as part of a craft logic.

Municipal officers share this view but stress constraints. One explains why the service rarely dives into viral storms: « On serre les dents. On regarde passer la tempête » (LEO2). The rationale is twofold: legal/procedural risk and the belief that "replying in the heat of the moment" is a losing game, « on n'a pas à répondre à chaud sur un terrain qui n'est pas le nôtre » (LEO2). The same officer notes a structural asymmetry: incendiary material spreads faster than reassurance, « les réseaux préfèrent le sang à la solidarité » (LEO2), and repeated exposure is « une lessiveuse mentale » (LEO2) that depresses trust. While he acknowledges limited positive effects (appeals for witnesses, safety alerts), his overall stance is caution and sobriety: « on a intérêt à rester sobres » (LEO2).

For the first municipal officer, public confidence is not built in comment threads but through dependable service and pedagogical presence. He refuses reactive sparring, « pas de réaction : il ne faut pas réagir à ça » (LEO1) and reconnects legitimacy to everyday usefulness: in an emergency, people still call « le 17 » or « le 18 » (LEO1). At the same time, he recognises the role of non-repressive, low-stakes contact: « pour socialiser avec eux, pour développer du lien … Ça participe au calme » (LEO1). Resource limits temper these intentions: online conversations are time-consuming; maintaining presence without inflating expectations is a structural challenge.

On transparency, all three law-enforcement interviews draw the same line: explain after verification, avoid "marketing," and protect the integrity of procedures. The gendarme frames it as a refusal of "publicity-style" communication, « en refusant la communication "publicitaire" » (LEO3), while still insisting that the institution must speak first when possible: « parler aux citoyens avant que d'autres ne le fassent à notre place » (LEO3). This is mirrored by the municipal officers' insistence that not everything can be shown or said, « on ne peut pas tout dire, ni tout montrer » (LEO2), without turning policing into a permanent spectacle.

Citizen interviews, meanwhile, articulate two frictions that condition how institutional speech is received. The first is perceived coherence: if words and on-the-ground practice diverge, explanations read as cosmetic. The distrustful interviewee puts it bluntly: « C'est creux. Ça communique, mais ça n'écoute pas … C'est une communication de façade » (C2). The second is the economy of emotion: shocking material outruns patient explanation. The pro-police voice warns about this drift, « L'émotion prend le pas sur la raison »; « Une vidéo qui fait pleurer ou qui choque aura plus d'impact qu'un rapport de 50 pages » (C3), and calls for a firmer, more consistent institutional presence: « Ils sont trop timides » (C3). The distrustful voice rejects one-off "nice" clips as compensation: « Ce n'est pas une vidéo virale de câlin qui va effacer le reste » (C2).

These frictions map onto different patterns of citizen behavior. The distrustful interviewee shares and boosts controversial content, « Je les partage. Immédiatement » (C2), on the ground that otherwise "it disappears into the feed." He asks for more truth-telling and less image-management: « Arrêter de faire de la com'. Commencer à faire de la vérité » (C2). By contrast, the supportive respondent slows down, checks provenance, and tries to "set the record straight" among peers. Between these two poles, the "rather positive" citizen is receptive to context and format: he values debriefs of interventions and prevention content, and he explicitly calls for cooler timing, « Éviter les communications à chaud » (C1), and for formats that teach rather than provoke, « J'avais bien aimé un format de communication … plus pédagogique » (C1).

Taken together, four mechanisms stand out. First, visibility with explanation appears to lift perceived legitimacy among audiences open to institutional content. « Bah, ça permet de les voir à l'œuvre » (CIT1) resonates with the gendarmerie's practice: explanatory returns on interventions and regular posting where « la parole, maîtrisée et pédagogique, renforce la légitimité » (LEO3). This does not mean "more posting is always better," but that cadence, plus the clarity, plus the non-promotional tone fosters credibility with segments who are not closed off a priori.

Second, viral negativity reliably depresses legitimacy. The municipal officer describes a "spin cycle", « une lessiveuse mentale » (LEO2), fueled by repeated exposure; the pro-police citizen notes that the feed is wired to surface conflict, not routine service, « les réseaux préfèrent le sang à la solidarité » (LEO2). The distrustful citizen's media practice, « Je les partage. Immédiatement » (C2), illustrates how circulation becomes a judgment in itself. These dynamics explain why "good news" pieces underperform and why institutional silence, « le silence ne fait pas de bruit … ça biaise la perception » (LEO2), is often read as avoidance rather than prudence.

Third, reserve and transparency must be balanced. Officers insist that legal and safety limits constrain what can be said, « on ne peut pas tout dire, ni tout montrer » (LEO2), and defend cooler timing as part of professional ethics, « on n'a pas à répondre à chaud » (LEO2). Citizens accept this to different degrees. Supportive voices want the institution to "take back initiative" without slipping into hype, « Ils sont trop timides » (C3). Distrustful voices equate reserve with spin, « C'est une communication de façade » (C2), and call for straighter talk.

Fourth, coherence between online messaging and offline practice is the hinge. Explanations have traction when they align with observed behaviour; otherwise, they backfire. This is why low-stakes, non-repressive contact is valued by both sides. The first municipal officer highlights its calming effect, « développer du lien … Ça participe au calme » (LEO1), while the gendarme reframes proximity as an outcome of method: regular, non-advertising posts and targeted community replies. Incoherence is what the distrustful interviewee reacts against: video "niceness" cannot offset repeated negative experiences, « Ce n'est pas une vidéo virale de câlin qui va effacer le reste » (C2).

A final point concerns capacity. Officers underline the limits of time and staffing for sustained online dialogue. « Franchement? Elles influencent peu » (LEO2), says one about comment-thread conversations, not because the public is unreachable but because durable trust is not "built with likes." This matches the "rather positive" citizen's preference for structured formats (prevention, debriefs) over reactive replies. It also clarifies why interviewees across positions advocate professionalization over mere volume: « parler aux citoyens avant que d'autres ne le fassent à notre place » (LEO3), but with method, cadence, and restraint.

In summary, the interviews depict a field where legitimacy is contingent on how visibility is produced (routine work vs spectacle), how explanations are staged (measured, verifiable, non-promotional), how viral negativity is handled (timing, reserve, follow-up), and whether online messages match offline practice. Citizens who are open to context respond to steady pedagogy; citizens oriented to "raw" footage treat institutional speech as façade unless it is

backed by experience; supportive publics want the institution to be firmer without becoming promotional. Officers aim for a narrow path, visibility, pedagogy, proximity, under constraints of law, safety, and capacity. These mechanisms set the stage for §5.2, where we align the interview evidence with the study's hypotheses and then test them on the survey.

6.3 Qualitative Pre-Validation of Hypotheses H1-H10 Based on Interviews

H1 - Exposure/interaction with official accounts → Satisfaction / favorable opinions

Interviews suggest that routine exposure to official content, especially pedagogical and service-oriented posts, can temper skepticism and foreground a non-repressive image of policing. (C1) links daily following of police accounts to reminders that policing also involves prevention and guidance rather than "only repression". (LEO3), speaking as a practitioner, frames social platforms as a lever to humanize the institution and counter stereotypes. The mechanism is straightforward: repeated contact with informative, non-confrontational content normalizes a broader role for police, which respondents read as reassuring. "Bon, alors moi, je consulte les réseaux sociaux… sur des sujets généralement de sensibilisation." – (C1). *I check social networks… mostly sensitization content.* "Aujourd'hui, les réseaux sociaux sont devenus un levier fondamental… humaniser notre institution… déconstruire les stéréotypes." – (LEO3). *Social networks are a fundamental lever… to humanise the institution and deconstruct stereotypes.* **Preliminary verdict: Tends to confirm** H1 (with the caveat that effects hinge on tone and substance of posts).

H2 - Perceived transparency → Legitimacy

Transparency emerges as a legitimacy engine when it takes the form of clear, timely explanations (what happened, why, with what safeguards). (LEO3) makes this causal pathway explicit: well-explained debriefs consolidate authority; silence feeds distrust, measured speech reinforces legitimacy. Conversely, (C2) describes transparency as "totally absent" in viral controversies, reading opacity as proof of evasiveness. "Lorsqu'on publie un retour d'intervention bien expliqué… la parole, maîtrisée et pédagogique, renforce la légitimité." – (LEO3). *Well-explained debriefs… measured, pedagogical communication strengthens legitimacy.*

"C'est fondamental. Et totalement absente… Aujourd'hui, c'est l'opacité qui domine…" – (C2). *It's fundamental, and totally absent… opacity dominates today.* **Preliminary verdict: Confirms** H2; transparency is salient both positively (when present) and negatively (when missing).

H3 - Transformation (vs normalization) of police social-media use → Legitimacy

Officers depict a cautious, normalized approach more than a transformative one: use the channels, keep a sober tone, avoid "performing" online. (LEO2) stresses prudence, "better to remain sober", while (LEO1) doubts social media fundamentally alter citizen-police relations compared to service delivered "when people call 17." Gains in legitimacy are depicted as incremental and contingent (regularity, clarity), not as a platform effect in itself. "…je me dis qu'on a intérêt à rester sobres." – (LEO2). *...it's better to remain sober.* "Aujourd'hui, le citoyen… il appelle le 17… Est-ce que ça va vraiment altérer sa perception? Je ne pense pas." – (LEO1). *People call 17... I don't think social media truly alters perceptions.* **Preliminary verdict: Nuanced**, closer to **normalization** than transformation; limited, conditional legitimacy gains.

H4 - Repeated exposure to negative/viral content → ↓ Legitimacy

Citizens emphasize the corrosive effect of viral negativity and repetition. For (C2), daily feeds of "muscular arrests" and "unjustified violence" recalibrate expectations and normalize a critical stance; raw citizen-filmed videos are treated as more credible than official statements. (LEO2) adds that sensational framings outcompete reality in attention metrics. "Tous les jours… une vidéo d'interpellation musclée… ou de violence non justifiée." – (C2). *Every day a clip of a rough arrest or unjustified violence.* "Évidemment qu'ils influencent la perception… ce qui "fait de la vue", c'est la caricature." – (LEO2) (paraphrased from line 99 with ellipses intact in transcript). *They do influence perception… the caricature gets the views.* **Preliminary verdict: Confirms** H4; repeated negative exposure is read as delegitimizing.

H5 - Legitimacy → Willingness to cooperate

Where legitimacy is present, interviewees describe behavioral cooperation: calling, tipping, assisting. (LEO3) gives a concrete case (missing person) where online mobilization yielded dozens of useful tips within hours; (LEO1) notes that, whatever attitudes, citizens rely on police in emergencies, cooperation is the behavioral "cash-out" of perceived credibility. "…nous avons reçu des dizaines de signalements… L'un d'eux s'est révélé décisif." – (LEO3). *We received dozens of tips… one was decisive.* "…la confiance… quand elles font, c'est composer le 17…" – (LEO1). *...trust shows when people dial 17...* **Preliminary verdict: Confirms** H5; legitimacy aligns with willingness to act in support of police goals.

H6 - Positive, non-enforcement contact (prevention, pedagogy) → Legitimacy

Pedagogical, human-scaled content is repeatedly valued. (C1) praises sensitisation posts for defusing unproductive polemics; (LEO3) calls human stories and clear prevention "exceptionally powerful" for engagement and reassurance. The implied mechanism is reduced threat salience and increased perceived fairness. "…sur des sujets généralement de

sensibilisation." – (C1). *Mostly sensitisation topics.* "Les contenus… qui touchent l'humain… prévention claire… ont une puissance exceptionnelle." – (LEO3). *Human stories and clear prevention are exceptionally powerful.* **Preliminary verdict: Confirms** H6.

H7 - Frequency of informal contact → Favorable opinions

Officers consider informal proximity useful ("create a link") yet constrained by staffing and time; feasibility, not desirability, is the obstacle. (LEO1) is explicit about lacking time and numbers to sustain low-stakes relational presence. The qualitative signal supports the hypothesis in principle, while underscoring capacity limits. "…pour socialiser avec eux, pour développer du lien…" – (LEO1). *...to socialize and build ties...* "…on n'a pas beaucoup de temps… on est peu nombreux." – (LEO1). *...we don't have much time... we are few.* **Preliminary verdict: Suggests** H7 (directionally positive) but flagged as capacity constrained.

H8 - Neighborhood cohesion/control (+) and disorder (-) → Favourable opinions

Evidence in interviews is thinner yet consistent with contextual effects: (C2) perceives a "huge gap" between polished messaging and lived realities "in some neighborhoods," implying that local disorder colours interpretations of official content and reduces favorability. "Il y a un décalage énorme entre la com' bien propre et ce qu'on vit dans certains quartiers." – (C2). *There's a huge gap between clean comms and what we live in some areas.* **Preliminary verdict: Indicative support** for H8; more granular (geocoded) survey analysis would be needed to substantiate.

H9 - Perceived "bureaucratic propaganda" → ↓ Legitimacy

Citizens penalize content read as staged or evasive. (C2) demands "truth, not comms," arguing that trust is earned by candor. (LEO2), from the institutional side, acknowledges the tightrope: the risk of being accused of propaganda pushes toward a measured, factual posture. Both sides recognise the legitimacy cost of perceived spin. "C'est creux… C'est une communication de façade." – (C2). *It's hollow... a façade of communication.* "Notre seul objectif, c'est de rétablir un minimum de vérité… éviter de tomber dans la polémique." – (LEO2). *Our only goal is to restore a minimum of truth... avoid sliding into polemics.* **Preliminary verdict: Confirms** H9.

H10 - Perceived online-offline coherence → Legitimacy

Coherence is named as a core criterion: (LEO3) warns that silence fuels distrust and advocates regular, plain-spoken updates, i.e., make the online narrative match operational practice. (LEO2) adds that silence "does not produce confidence," biasing perceptions; hence the effort to keep messages factual and sober. "Le silence alimente la défiance; la parole,

maîtrisée et pédagogique, renforce la légitimité." – (LEO3). *Silence fuels distrust: measured, pedagogical speech strengthens legitimacy.* "…le silence ne fait pas de l'audience… ça biaise la perception." - (LEO2). *Silence doesn't get audience… it biases perception.* **Preliminary verdict: Confirms** H10.

6.4 Synthesis for Interviews Only

Taken together, interviews substantively support H1, H2, H4-H6, H9-H10, suggest H7, and offer indicative support for H8. H3 is nuanced: practice reflects cautious normalization rather than transformation, legitimacy effects appear when communication is steady, explanatory, and human-scaled, not directly because of platforms. These patterns supply the mechanisms we will now test quantitatively (exposure/engagement → satisfaction/legitimacy; transparency → legitimacy; legitimacy → cooperation; negativity → ↓ legitimacy; coherence → legitimacy), with capacity and context acting as boundary conditions.

6.5 Quantitative Validation of H1-H10 Based on the Questionnaire (Jamovi)

6.5.1 Coding

To begin with, the raw file preserves respondents' answers exactly as they were given, many items use categorical Likert labels in French or English, sometimes with minor spelling variants, while the Jamovi project contains a harmonized version in which every eligible item has been recoded on a common 1 to 5 scale, with 5 consistently meaning more of the intended construct. The recoding proceeded in two steps, first we normalized labels so that accents, punctuation and spacing could not prevent recognition, then we mapped each family of Likert scales onto a single numerical metric. For agreement items, both languages were aligned on the sequence Pas du tout d'accord or Strongly disagree equals 1, Plutôt pas d'accord or Disagree equals 2, Ni d'accord ni pas d'accord or Neutral equals 3, Plutôt d'accord or Agree equals 4, Tout à fait d'accord or Strongly agree equals 5. For frequency items, the sequence Jamais or Never equals 1, Rarement or Rarely equals 2, Parfois or Sometimes equals 3, Souvent or Often equals 4, Très souvent or Toujours, or Very often or Always equals 5. For image or favorability items, Très défavorable or Very unfavorable equals 1, Défavorable or Unfavorable equals 2, Neutre or Neutral equals 3, Plutôt favorable or Somewhat favorable or Favorable equals 4, Très favorable or Very favorable equals 5. For level or quality items, Très faible or Very low equals 1, Faible or Low equals 2, Moyen or Moderate or Average equals 3, Élevé or High equals 4, Très élevé or Very high equals 5, likewise Poor maps to 1, Fair to 2, Average to 3, Good or Very good to 4, and Excellent to 5. This approach ensures that a one-point change has the same interpretation across instruments, and it preserves the ordinal ordering while enabling subsequent composite scoring.

In a second step, we aligned directionality so that higher numbers always indicate a higher level of the construct. Items phrased in the opposite direction were reverse coded with the standard transformation six minus x, consequently a response that originally decreased the construct now increases it after recoding, and a value of 5 always represents the favorable pole for constructs such as satisfaction, legitimacy, transparency, or willingness to cooperate. Importantly, the original variables were not altered, all recoded variables were created as new columns adjacent to the raw items, which guarantees full traceability and allows any analyst to compare a source response with its numeric counterpart. Cells that were empty in the source remain empty after recoding, no values were imputed at the coding stage, and missing data are handled analytically in Jamovi by list-wise or pairwise procedures depending on the model that is estimated.

Once items were on a common scale and properly oriented, we constructed the composite measures required by the research model. Satisfaction Index, Legitimacy Index, Favorable Opinions Index, and Cooperation Index were computed as respondent level means of their constituent recoded items, after any necessary reverse coding, which places all four indices on the same 1 to 5 metric. The same averaging logic was applied to explanatory blocks that appear in the hypotheses, such as perceived transparency, exposure to and interaction with official accounts, exposure to negative content, perceived propaganda, and coherence between online messages and offline practice. Equal weighting across items keeps the scoring transparent, and a minimum response rule is used so that an index is calculated only when a respondent has provided enough non missing answers within that scale, for example at least half of the items, otherwise the index is left missing for that person. Before modeling, internal consistency can be checked in Jamovi with reliability analysis, and if a low performing item weakens a scale, it can be excluded, and the index recomputed without disturbing the raw data.

Finally, this coding scheme serves the analytic strategy that underpins the study, because predictors and outcomes now share the same orientation and range, it becomes straightforward to estimate the pathways posited in the conceptual model. Effects of exposure and interaction on satisfaction can be read directly, effects of transparency, transformation, negative exposure, propaganda, and online or offline coherence on legitimacy are comparable in magnitude, and the downstream influence of satisfaction, legitimacy, and favorable opinions on cooperation can be assessed both separately and jointly. Treating multi-item indices as approximately interval is common practice for survey research, and it allows the use of linear regression and mediation with interpretable coefficients, one point on the 1 to 5 scale always corresponds to a higher level of the underlying construct. If one prefers to remain closer to an ordinal framework,

Jamovi also permits ordinal regression for single item outcomes, or confirmatory factor analysis with appropriate estimators to generate factor scores, yet the present recoding already provides a coherent and reproducible basis for the ten hypothesis tests without altering the integrity of the original dataset.

6.5.2 Index Construction

The composite measures are built from items recoded on a 1-5 Likert metric, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of the underlying construct. The Satisfaction Index draws on an appraisal of communication improvement and global affective evaluations. In its broad specification, the index is the respondent-level mean of Q15, Q22, and Q25, where Q15 captures the perceived improvement in communication afforded by social media, Q22 captures the affective impact of police content, and Q25 captures the overall change in perception attributed to social media exposure. A more stringent specification retains Q15 and Q25 only. In both cases, higher values indicate greater satisfaction.

Perceived legitimacy is operationalized with two direct indicators. The Legitimacy Index is the mean of Q10, assessing whether police actions are most of the time seen as legitimate, and Q11, assessing trust that officers act fairly and equitably. Because both items point toward higher legitimacy, no reversal is required, and the index remains on the same 1-5 scale. Cooperation is captured with two items reflecting willingness and the influence of online engagement. The Cooperation Index is the mean of Q13, the stated likelihood of cooperating with law enforcement when needed, and Q14, the extent to which engaging with police content on social media increases such willingness. Higher scores indicate a stronger propensity to cooperate.

Attitudinal valence is represented through items that speak to image and sentiment. The Favorable Opinions Index is the mean of Q16, which assesses whether positive storytelling improves image, Q22, which gauges how emotional content affects sentiment, and Q25, which registers the overall direction of change in perception. These items jointly deliver a coherent measure of favorable attitude on the same 1-5 metric.

Predictor blocks used in hypothesis testing are constructed analogously. Exposure and interaction with official accounts is the mean of Q8, frequency of seeing police or gendarmerie content, and Q9, frequency of interacting with it. Perceived transparency can be represented narrowly by Q20 alone, or more broadly by the mean of Q20 and Q21 when the perceived trust benefit of transparency is included. Negative exposure is the mean of Q17, the impact of negative incidents encountered online, and Q18, the effect of repeated exposure to such content. Because Q15 contributes to satisfaction in this design, the transformation versus normalization

construct is represented by a single indicator, Q24, which asks whether conversational engagement by police improves public trust.

All indices are computed as respondent-wise means of their constituent items, with missing responses left missing at the item level and ignored in the averaging process. Directionality is aligned a priori so that higher values consistently denote more of the intended construct, and internal consistency can be examined before modeling to confirm that each multi-item index functions reliably on the common 1-5 scale. This construction yields interpretable measures for estimating effects on satisfaction, perceived legitimacy, and favorable opinions, and for assessing the downstream impact of these three on cooperation.

6.5.3 Summary of the Jamovi Analyses (N = 113)

The quantitative picture indicates that attitudes toward law enforcement sit slightly below the neutral midpoint on 1–5 scales, while perceived transparency is comparatively higher. Descriptive statistics (see Appendix C) show means of 2.44 for perceived legitimacy, 2.34 for cooperation, 2.12 for favorable opinions, and 2.29 for satisfaction, with perceived exposure and interaction with official content averaging 2.98, perceived transparency 3.69, negative exposure 2.28, and transformation or normalization 3.24. These levels suggest limited enthusiasm overall, modest contact with official content, relatively low but nontrivial exposure to negative material, and a comparatively favorable view of transparency practices.

The first inferential result concerns satisfaction. A linear regression of satisfaction on exposure and interaction with official accounts yields a positive and statistically significant association, Est. = 0.0857, t = 2.08, p = .040, with a small proportion of variance explained, $R^2 \approx .037$ (see Appendix D) In practical terms, more frequent contact and engagement with institutional content aligns with a small rise in overall satisfaction. The size of the effect is modest, which is consistent with the idea that routine visibility may help at the margin, while stronger gains likely depend on content quality, timing, and perceived tone.

Perceived transparency emerges as a clearer driver of perceived legitimacy. Legitimacy regressed on transparency produces a positive coefficient, Est. = 0.278, t = 2.60, p = 0.011 (see Appendix E). Among the tested links, this is one of the more robust, and it coheres with the notion that explanatory and non promotional communication supports judgments of fairness and propriety. The magnitude remains moderate, yet it is sufficiently stable to mark transparency as an actionable lever in the attitudinal space measured here.

Several hypothesized effects on legitimacy are not corroborated by the data. The transformation versus normalization indicator, drawn from a conversational engagement item, does not predict legitimacy, Est. = - 0.044, t = - 0.43, p = .672 (see Appendix F). Negative

exposure, operationalized as the perceived impact of online incidents and repeated negative content, likewise shows no association with legitimacy in this sample, Est. = 0.006, $t \approx 0.05$, $p = .959$ (see Appendix G) with a very small, explained variance, $R^2 \approx .016$. These null findings are informative. They may reflect limited variance in legitimacy, measurement proximity between predictors and outcomes that reduces discriminant power, or the fact that the negative exposure items capture immediate affect rather than more durable evaluative change. They also caution against assuming a uniform detrimental effect of negative content in all audiences and contexts.

Favorable opinions are not significantly related to exposure and interaction with official content in the simple specification estimated here, Est. = 0.0599, $t = 1.34$, $p = .182$ (see Appendix H). If the expectation is that proximity and dialogue improve image, this pattern suggests that exposure alone is insufficient to shift overall sentiment as it is measured in this instrument, which emphasizes affective responses to positive storytelling and emotional content. Content style, credibility, and perceived sincerity likely condition any conversion from exposure to favorable attitude.

The combined model for cooperation, with legitimacy, satisfaction, and favorable opinions entered simultaneously, does not yield statistically reliable unique predictors in this dataset. The coefficients are small and nonsignificant, Legitimacy Est. = - 0.109, $p = .222$, Satisfaction Est. = 0.0035, $p = .989$, Favorable Opinions Est. = - 0.172, $p = .484$ (see Appendix I). Read literally, these results do not support the view that these three attitudinal indices, as operationalized here, uniquely account for willingness to cooperate once they compete in the same model. Several explanations are consistent with this outcome, including overlap among the three attitudinal constructs that dilutes unique contributions, limited scale variance on the cooperation items, and the possibility that cooperation intentions depend more strongly on situational or experiential factors not included in the present indices.

Taken together, the analyses support two central propositions, while leaving others indeterminate. First, regular exposure and interaction with official content aligns with higher satisfaction, although the effect is small. Second, perceived transparency aligns with higher legitimacy with a moderate effect. The data do not show effects of transformation versus normalization or negative exposure on legitimacy, they do not show a simple exposure effect on overall image valence, and they do not identify unique attitudinal drivers of cooperation when legitimacy, satisfaction, and favorable opinions are modeled together.

These findings carry several implications for interpretation and for future analytical steps. Transparency retains clear value for legitimacy, hence communication that is traceable,

measured in tone, and oriented to explanation is likely to be consequential where audiences are willing to engage. Routine engagement appears helpful for satisfaction, although shifts in overall image likely require formats that communicate substance and coherence rather than frequency alone. The absence of unique predictors for cooperation suggests that this outcome may be more sensitive to contextual factors, for example recent personal experience, perceived procedural fairness in specific encounters, or trust in particular units, which are not directly captured by the present indices.

In terms of methodological reflection, the pattern invites robustness checks that remain consistent with the data at hand. Alternative specifications can be estimated by using stricter or broader definitions of the transparency index, testing satisfaction as a tighter construct around communication improvement and overall change, and examining whether the cooperation items exhibit floor or ceiling effects that attenuate relationships. Where reliability permits, mediation tests can probe whether transparency relates to cooperation indirectly through legitimacy and whether exposure relates to cooperation indirectly through satisfaction, with the understanding that modest scale variance will limit power. Finally, the null findings on negative exposure and transformation indicate that measurement refinements may be needed if those mechanisms are to be detected reliably, for example by separating episodic reactions from more stable evaluations or by distinguishing conversational formats from perceived authenticity.

Overall, the quantitative evidence validates a focused portion of the conceptual model. Transparency aligns with legitimacy, and exposure aligns with satisfaction. Other pathways remain inconclusive in this sample, which suggests prioritizing communication practices that demonstrably increase perceived transparency and refining measurement where effects are theoretically expected but not observed.

6.6. Integration of Findings (Convergence/Divergence and Joint Displays)

The quantitative and qualitative strands converge on a restrained but coherent picture of how social media relate to attitudes toward law enforcement. Descriptively, mean scores sit below the neutral midpoint on most evaluative scales, with perceived legitimacy at 2.44 with a standard deviation of 0.84, cooperation at 2.34 with a standard deviation of 0.79, favorable opinions at 2.12 with a standard deviation of 0.49, and satisfaction at 2.29 with a standard deviation of 0.46. Exposure and interaction with official content average 2.98 with a standard deviation of 1.03, perceived transparency averages 3.69 with a standard deviation of 0.73, negative exposure averages 2.28 with a standard deviation of 0.68, and transformation or normalization averages 3.24 with a standard deviation of 0.77. The attitudinal baseline is

therefore cautious rather than enthusiastic, contact with official content is moderate, negative exposure is present but not dominant, and transparency is comparatively well regarded.

Within this landscape, satisfaction responds to institutional presence in the expected direction. A linear model indicates a positive association between satisfaction and exposure or interaction with official accounts, estimate 0.0857, t 2.08, p 0.040, with a small proportion of variance explained, R squared approximately 0.037. The effect is modest, yet it aligns with interview accounts in which citizens who value explanatory content report that routine, plain language posts reduce distance and normalize everyday policing. Qualitative material also makes clear that cadence and tone matter. Pedagogical formats, debriefs, and practical advice are mentioned as credible, while reactive sparring in comment threads is described as unproductive. Officers describe a doctrine of visibility, pedagogy, and proximity, anchored in verified facts and careful timing. In that perspective, the statistical signal on satisfaction is consistent with a communication craft that privileges regularity over spectacle.

Perceived legitimacy is more tightly linked to perceived transparency. The regression of legitimacy on transparency yields a clear positive coefficient, estimate 0.278, t 2.60, p 0.011. Among the tested links this is the most stable and it mirrors the qualitative diagnosis that legitimacy follows from explanations that are traceable, measured in tone, and explicitly non promotional. Interviews on the law enforcement side emphasize speaking first when possible, avoiding marketing codes, and explaining interventions after verification. Citizens who are receptive to institutional speech echo this expectation. They prefer formats that unpack the why and the how rather than slogan-oriented content. The statistical association therefore reads as a quantitative footprint of a broader norm of procedural communication.

Other hypothesized drivers of legitimacy are not corroborated by the survey. The indicator intended to capture transformation rather than normalization, operationalized through a conversational engagement item, does not predict legitimacy, estimate approximately minus 0.044, p 0.672. The qualitative corpus does not point to a strong transformative turn either. Officers describe continuity, caution, and legal constraints, while distrustful citizens tend to interpret conversational gestures as cosmetic when offline practice is perceived as unchanged. The mechanism may require finer measurement, for example separating the format of dialogue from its perceived authenticity and from the coherence with on the ground conduct.

Negative exposure does not show the expected detrimental association with legitimacy in this dataset, estimate approximately 0.006, p 0.959, with very low explained variance around 0.016. This null result contrasts with interviews that describe a feed economy where sensational material outruns reassurance and where repeated exposure acts as a mental spin cycle that

depresses trust. Two explanations are plausible. The survey items for negative exposure capture perceived impact rather than stable evaluative change, which may reduce discriminant power. In addition, audiences vary in predispositions and media practices, hence the same content can either be discounted or amplified depending on prior beliefs, which a small cross-sectional sample may not resolve statistically.

The treatment of favorable opinions or image valence points in the same cautious direction. A simple model relating favorable opinions to exposure and interaction with official content does not reach significance, estimate 0.0599, t 1.34, p 0.182. If proximity were sufficient to shift sentiment, a clearer signal would be expected. The qualitative material suggests why sentiment may be stubborn. Image moves when content conveys substance, coherence, and measured timing. Citizens who are undecided react to teaching oriented formats and debriefs, while distrustful respondents discount one off heartwarming clips when they conflict with lived experience. In other words, frequency of touch-points does not substitute for perceived credibility;

The combined model for cooperation, entered as a function of legitimacy, satisfaction, and favorable opinions, does not yield statistically reliable unique predictors. Coefficients are small and nonsignificant, legitimacy estimate approximately minus 0.109 with p 0.222, satisfaction estimate approximately 0.0035 with p 0.989, favorable opinions estimate approximately minus 0.172 with p 0.484. Interviews help interpret this absence. Cooperation is framed as a function of dependable service, low stakes proximity, and the practical usefulness of the institution in emergencies, rather than as a derivative of online attitudes. Municipal officers explicitly refuse reactive exchanges and stress that durable trust is not built with likes. The statistical model appears to validate this intuition. Once general attitudes compete in the same equation, none explains cooperation on its own, which suggests that situational and experiential factors carry weight that the present indices do not capture.

Taken together, the evidence validates a narrow corridor within the conceptual model. Transparency aligns with legitimacy and routine exposure aligns with satisfaction. The remaining pathways are either null or indeterminate in this sample. The conclusion is not that these mechanisms are absent, but that in the current measurement and with the available power they are not detectable beyond noise. The interviews show what the survey does not measure well, namely the emotional economy of feeds, the salience of raw footage for distrustful publics, and the central fonction of coherence between online messaging and offline practice. The results therefore recommend prioritizing explanatory communication and investing in formats that

sustain credibility, while refining measurement for transformation, negative exposure, and cooperation pathways.

Table 6.1: Final Status by Hypotheses

Theme	Hypothesis	Status	Reason (short)
Satisfaction	H1, Exposure and interaction with official accounts increase satisfaction	Supported	Positive coefficient, estimate 0.0857, p 0.040, interviews describe reduced distance with regular pedagogical posts
Legitimacy	H2, Perceived transparency increases perceived legitimacy	Supported	Positive coefficient, estimate 0.278, p 0.011, interviews stress explanation and measured tone as legitimacy drivers
Legitimacy	H3, Transformation rather than normalization increases legitimacy	Not supported	Null coefficient, p 0.672, qualitative accounts indicate continuity and caution rather than transformation
Legitimacy	H4, Negative online exposure reduces perceived legitimacy	Inconclusive	Null coefficient, p 0.959, interviews describe outrage dynamics and trust erosion, likely measurement or power gap
Cooperation	H5, Legitimacy increases cooperation, with roles for satisfaction and favorable opinions	Not supported	No unique predictors in combined model, all p greater than 0.20, interviews link cooperation to service and proximity

Legitimacy	H6, Positive non repressive contacts increase legitimacy	Qualitative support only	No survey items capture this construct, interviews converge on visibility with explanation and low stakes contact
Favorable opinions	H7, Informal contact increases favorable opinions	Qualitative support only	No direct item for informal contact, interviews suggest warmer attitudes with clarifying and non reactive exchanges
Favorable opinions	H8, Neighborhood cohesion increases favorable evaluations and disorder reduces them	Not tested	No neighborhood items in the instrument, construct absent from the dataset
Legitimacy	H9, Perceived propaganda reduces legitimacy	Qualitative support only	No propaganda scale is present, interviews flag façade communication as damaging to credibility
Legitimacy	H10, Coherence between online messages and offline practice increases legitimacy	Qualitative support only	No direct coherence item, interviews identify coherence as the hinge of credibility

Source: Own elaboration

6.7 Limits and Implications

The analysis relies on a single cross-sectional sample of 113 respondents, on indices constructed from a limited set of items, and on treating multi-item Likert composites as approximately interval. Several constructs central to the conceptual model lack dedicated survey items, which precludes direct tests for informal contact, neighborhood cohesion and disorder, perceived

propaganda, and online offline coherence. Significant effects that do appear have small to moderate magnitudes, while several theoretically expected links do not reach significance. Explanations include limited variance on some scales, measurement proximity between predictors and outcomes that reduces discriminant validity, and insufficient statistical power for small effects. The qualitative corpus provides convergent evidence for the importance of transparency and pedagogy, and it highlights mechanisms that the questionnaire does not capture well, including emotional amplification, the evidentiary status of raw footage, and the premium placed on coherence between discourse and practice. The validated portion of the model is therefore focused on transparency for legitimacy and on exposure for satisfaction, while future work should refine measurement around transformation, negative exposure, and cooperation pathways, and incorporate situational and experiential determinants that are likely to influence willingness to cooperate.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Recommendations to Strengthen Cooperation

Improving cooperation with law enforcement in the social media era requires acting where the evidence is clearest, then building the conditions that allow attitudes to translate into cooperative behavior. The quantitative results point to two reliable levers, transparency aligns with higher perceived legitimacy, and regular exposure and interaction with official content align with higher satisfaction. The interviews explain why these levers matter and how they work, visibility with explanation, measured timing, plain language, and low stakes proximity are valued by citizens, while reactive sparring, marketing tones, and incoherence between messages and practice undermine credibility. The literature reviewed throughout converges with these lessons, scholarship on police communication and social media stresses that platforms can strengthen bonds when they are dialogic and pedagogical, and studies of legitimacy emphasize the mission of fairness and explanation in public judgment. On that basis, the following recommendations target content, process, organization, and evaluation, with the aim of lifting legitimacy and satisfaction first, then creating reliable pathways from attitudes to cooperation.

First, institutional communication should be anchored in a transparency architecture rather than in episodic messaging. A practical approach is to standardize after action explanations when the law and procedure allow it. Short, structured debriefs that state the context, the legal basis, the sequence of decisions, and the outcome help citizens understand why an intervention occurred, and they minimize space for conjecture. Templates reduce the cognitive cost for teams and promote consistency across units. Interviews show that citizens respond to breakdowns of why and how more than to slogans, and that officers themselves are more comfortable with facts that have been verified. Transparency should also include routine disclosures that are not crisis driven, for example periodic posts about how patrol priorities are set, what constraints apply to crowd management, or how complaints are handled. Making the rulebook more legible turns visibility into understanding, which is the route to legitimacy observed in the data.

Second, routine visibility should prioritize pedagogical formats over spectacle. Satisfaction rose with exposure and interaction, yet the effect was modest, a reminder that frequency without substance does little. The content strategy should then favor explainers, prevention advice, and calm debriefs, and it should avoid racing the feed with sensational snippets. The interviewees who were rather positive toward the institution described precisely this preference, and the literature on presentational strategies in police social media echoes it, reassurance and authority

are better projected through information and service than through showmanship. The cadence should be steady but sustainable, a predictable rhythm that signals presence without inviting fatigue, since officers stressed capacity limits and the risk of burnout.

Third, cooperation is more likely when the message is coupled with dependable service and low stakes proximity offline. The multivariate models did not identify unique attitudinal predictors of cooperation, a result that matches what officers and citizens described. People decide to cooperate when they have tangible reasons to trust that cooperation will be useful and safe. Communication can support this by tying messages to concrete services, for example clear instructions on how to report incidents digitally, follow up summaries on the outcomes of appeals for witnesses, and locally anchored features that highlight non repressive contacts such as school visits or neighborhood meetings. These small, repeated signals of usefulness and accessibility build a bridge between attitude and action.

Fourth, crisis communication should favor timing, verification, and proportionality over rapid rebuttal. The interviews suggest a shared doctrine of restraint, officers prefer to wait for verified facts, and supportive citizens value calm explanations more than hot takes. The crisis protocol should define thresholds for speaking first, identify what can be released without jeopardizing procedure, and assign fonctions so that legal and operational checks are rapid. Where an incident is already viral, a neutral holding statement that states what is known, what is being checked, and when the next update will arrive can contain speculation without entering emotional escalation. When the full account is available, a step by step explanation, supported by law and policy references in accessible terms, will do more for legitimacy than defensive tone. This approach is consistent with the finding that transparency, not volume, moves legitimacy.

Fifth, the perceived coherence between online messages and offline practice must be protected as a strategic asset. Citizens in the interviews explicitly penalized gaps between polished posts and lived experience, and supportive respondents warned that emotional content easily outruns patient explanation. To mitigate this, communication should avoid promises that front line practice cannot deliver, it should prefer verifiable claims to aspirational narratives, and it should escalate factual corrections through official channels only when evidence is solid. In parallel, internal feedback loops are needed so that communicators can flag recurring friction points to operational leadership, for example recurring confusion about identification checks or use of force thresholds, and leadership can adjust training or procedure accordingly. Coherence is maintained when messaging follows practice and practice is adjusted in light of legitimate public misunderstanding.

Sixth, organization and resources matter, because good communication is a craft and a team sport. An editorial charter should codify tone, timing, and verification standards, and it should be endorsed by command so that communicators are not asked to chase short term visibility. Training should cover plain language writing, platform affordances, legal boundaries, and psychological self care, since repeated exposure to negative content affects the teams as well. Local accounts should have defined autonomy within the charter, because proximity is credible when it speaks the language of a place, yet escalations to a central account should be clear for high salience events. Partnerships with trusted local intermediaries, for example schools, health services, or community organizations, can help carry prevention and service messages beyond the institution's own channels without sliding into promotional tone.

Seventh, a measurement framework should be established to guide iteration and to keep incentives aligned with the cooperation goal. Vanity metrics such as raw follower counts and impressions should not drive decisions, because the interviews and the quantitative results show that legitimacy and satisfaction hinge on explanation and perceived transparency, not on spectacle. Instead, track indicators that reflect the strategy, for example average time to verified update in crises, share of posts that use structured debriefing templates, proportion of prevention content in the calendar, response latency to public questions that ask for clarification rather than debate, and completion rates for digital reporting flows when posts include a call to action. On the attitude side, periodic pulse surveys can track the same indices used in the analysis, perceived transparency, legitimacy, satisfaction, and willingness to cooperate, at least at the district level. Where resources allow, short experiments can test whether new formats improve these indices before wider rollout.

Eighth, negative exposure should be handled through pre bunking and context rather than through denial. The quantitative model did not detect a direct statistical link between negative exposure and legitimacy in this sample, but the interviews made clear that outrage travels faster than reassurance. The safest route is to front load context proactively where patterns are predictable, for example regular reminders that edited clips can omit the sequence that establishes legal thresholds, or explainers about how complaints are processed and what happens after a report is filed. When specific allegations arise, corrections should cite procedures, timelines, and where applicable independent oversight, in order to anchor the response in verifiable processes rather than institutional sentiment.

Finally, the link between social media presence and cooperative behavior should be built through service design. Each message that invites cooperation should map to a friction light action pathway, for example a reporting form that works on mobile, confirmation that a report

has been received, and a clear description of what happens next. Where cooperation involves personal risk, posts should state available protections and alternatives. If the path from message to action is opaque, the best attitudinal gains will not convert. The literature on public opinion and policy and the experiments on community policing both suggest that perceived fairness and usefulness matter more than sheer volume of contact. In that sense, communication is a means to a practical end, it should be engineered to make cooperation easy, safe, and meaningful.

These recommendations align with what the data consistently showed and with what interviewees across positions said matters. They begin with the most reliable levers, transparency for legitimacy and pedagogy for satisfaction, then they extend to the organizational and procedural changes needed for attitudes to convert into cooperation. The approach is conservative in tone and ambitious in design, it favors explanation over promotion and substance over tempo, and it treats coherence as the hinge of trust.

7.2. General conclusion

This study set out to understand how social media reshape the public perception of law enforcement and how institutions can sustain or regain cooperation in an environment marked by constant visibility and rapid judgment. The project combined a focused review of the literature, a conceptual model articulated around satisfaction, perceived legitimacy, favorable opinions, and cooperation, and a dual research design that integrated interviews with citizens and officers and a quantitative survey analyzed in Jamovi. The inquiry followed a simple logic. If visibility is now produced as much online as on the street, then legitimacy and satisfaction are negotiated in arenas that reward immediacy, emotion, and repetition. The task was to identify which features of institutional communication and public exposure relate to judgments of fairness and usefulness, and whether those judgments translate into an intention to cooperate.

The literature reviewed throughout offered three anchoring insights. First, policing presents multiple faces, and public judgment oscillates with the face that is most visible, routine service, investigative work, crowd control, emergency response. Second, digital platforms create a new regime of visibility in which institutions no longer control the frame, videos circulate, comments accumulate, and meaning is fixed before formal procedures can catch up. Third, legitimacy rests on perceived fairness and explanation, and communication can support legitimacy when it clarifies law, context, and decision making rather than substituting narrative for substance. These points informed the conceptual model and the selection of constructs in the survey, while the interviews were designed to surface how different publics interpret the same streams of content.

The qualitative strand described a field of practice in which both sides know what is at stake. Citizens who are receptive to institutional communication value plain language, step by step explanations, prevention advice, and calm debriefs. They do not ask for promotion, they ask for understanding. Distrustful citizens describe a feed that privileges outrage, they treat raw footage as primary evidence and discount friendly formats when offline experience contradicts them. Officers, for their part, advocate a craft based posture, speak first when facts are verified, show what can be shown, refuse sparring in threads, and protect procedure. Across positions there is an implicit agreement that legitimacy depends on explanation and coherence. The disagreement concerns whether online arenas allow coherence to be seen and whether they reward it.

The quantitative results confirmed a narrow corridor within this larger landscape. Satisfaction increased with exposure and interaction with official content, although the effect was modest. Perceived transparency showed a clear and positive association with perceived legitimacy. Other expected effects did not materialize in this sample. A conversational indicator of transformation rather than normalisation did not relate to legitimacy. The index for negative exposure, which captured perceived impact of online incidents and repetition, did not predict legitimacy either. Favorable opinions did not respond directly to exposure in a simple model, and in a combined specification that entered legitimacy, satisfaction, and favorable opinions together, none of these attitudinal indices uniquely explained cooperation. These findings do not undermine the model as a whole, they delineate what is most detectable with the present instrument and sample. Transparency relates to legitimacy, regular contact relates to satisfaction, the rest appears to depend on conditions or measurements that were not fully captured.

The dual design helps interpret why results cluster this way. Interviews provide a mechanism for the significant findings. Where institutions explain decisions after verification, where tone is measured and content is practical, respondents report a stronger sense of fairness, and that is precisely what a legitimacy item measures. Where citizens see and occasionally interact with routine content, they report being slightly more satisfied with what they think the institution is doing, which fits the nature of a satisfaction index anchored in overall appraisal. The interviews also explain the null results. Exposure to negative content travels through emotions and identity and may change perception episodically rather than durably, which a short battery in a cross sectional frame struggles to capture. Favorable opinions are stubborn when messages look like promotion or when offline conduct feels misaligned, so frequency of touchpoints alone does not move sentiment. Cooperation is a practical decision tied to expected

usefulness and safety. If the paths to action are opaque, if the stakes feel high, online attitude does not convert.

The analysis calls for a restrained interpretation. In the current environment, legitimacy is most responsive to transparency practices that make the rulebook legible. Satisfaction is marginally responsive to regular and useful visibility. Image valence and cooperation resist simple levers. This is not a counsel of despair. It is an invitation to direct resources where returns are demonstrable and to redesign the places where returns are elusive. Communication should be engineered around explanation rather than spectacle, and service pathways should be designed so that an invitation to cooperate maps to an easy and safe action. This approach builds on what the data showed and on what interviewees said matters, while acknowledging the structural limits of platform dynamics.

The study makes three contributions. Conceptually, it translates a broad debate on visibility into a testable pathway that distinguishes satisfaction, legitimacy, and image and separates these attitudes from cooperation as a behavioral intention. Empirically, it demonstrates that transparency is a lever for legitimacy and that routine exposure is a lever for satisfaction, in a sample that is cautious rather than enthusiastic. Methodologically, it shows how qualitative evidence can guide the construction and interpretation of quantitative indices, and how an explicit link between interviews and models can prevent over reading small coefficients and under reading what is not measured.

At the same time, several limits temper the claims that can be made. The sample is modest, and the survey is cross sectional, which restricts causal language and makes small effects harder to detect. Several constructs central to the initial model do not have dedicated items in the instrument, informal contact, neighborhood cohesion and disorder, propaganda perception, and online offline coherence could not be tested directly. Indices were built from short batteries, which introduces measurement error and reduces reliability, even when internal consistency is acceptable. Some predictors and outcomes are close in meaning, which may compress discriminant validity. Finally, cooperation is modeled as an attitude in a controlled frame, while in practice it is a decision under context, cost, and risk. These limits are not incidental, they structure what any study of communication and policing can claim at this scale and with this design.

The implications are straightforward. First, investments in transparency are likely to pay dividends for legitimacy, particularly when explanations are timely, verifiable, and written in accessible terms. Second, routine visibility can improve satisfaction at the margin, but format, cadence, and perceived sincerity matter more than volume. Third, the cooperation pathway

should be treated as a design problem as much as a communication problem. If a post invites cooperation, it must point to a friction light process, a clear next step, and where relevant a statement of protections. Fourth, measurement should be refined where the current survey under detects theoretically expected links. Negative exposure could be separated into episodic reaction and durable evaluation, conversational practices could be distinguished from perceived authenticity, and coherence could be measured directly rather than inferred. A larger sample would improve power, and a longitudinal design would allow a test of change rather than a snapshot.

The broader conclusion concerns the conditions under which legitimacy and cooperation can be sustained in a world where everyone holds a camera and a comment box. The interviews and the data converge on a simple norm, institutions earn credibility when they show what they can show, explain what they have done, and refrain from promising what they cannot deliver. Citizens who are not closed off a priori respond to steady, plain language, and verified content. Citizens who are distrustful will not be persuaded by promotion, they will only be persuaded by coherence between message and practice, and by channels that convert contact into usefulness. The institution decides whether it speaks in order to be seen or in order to be understood. The former optimizes for impressions. The latter optimizes for legitimacy.

In that sense, social media are not a threat or a solution in themselves. They are a field in which communication rules have changed. Authority is no longer a given, it is argued for and tested in public. The study shows that two elements of that argument remain within institutional control, transparency that clarifies the law and the sequence of decisions, and a communication craft that privileges pedagogy over spectacle. It also shows that cooperation does not follow automatically from attitude. It follows when the bridge from evaluation to action is designed with care. The most effective responses are then not flashy. They are consistent, measurable, and connected to service.

The closing message is pragmatic. A conservative tone, centered on explanation and on verified facts, strengthens legitimacy. A steady calendar of instructive content supports satisfaction. The rest of the distance must be covered by coherence and by service pathways that turn intention into action. Future work can deepen the measurement of transformation, negative exposure, and coherence, extend the sample, and test interventions experimentally. Even without those expansions, the present study offers a workable map. It identifies where communication levers grip, where they slip, and why, and it shows how online and offline practices must meet if cooperation is to grow.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Ashcroft, J., Daniels, D. J., & Hart, S. V. (2003, June). *Factors that influence public opinion of the police*. National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice. https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/197925.pdf

Bouté, É. (2021). La mise en visibilité des forces de l'ordre sur Twitter pendant le mouvement des Gilets jaunes. *Questions de communication*. https://doi.org/10.4000/questionsdecommunication.25524

Brodeur, J.-P. (2003). *Les visages de la police*. Presses de l'Université de Montréal. https://doi.org/10.4000/books.pum.13617

Bullock, K. (2016). (Re)presenting order online: The construction of police presentational strategies on social media. *Policing & Society, 28*(3), 345–359. https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2016.1177529

Bullock, K. (2018). The police use of social media: Transformation or normalisation. *Social Policy & Society, 17*(2), 245–258. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474746417000112

Burstein, P. (2003, March). The impact of public opinion on public policy: A review and an agenda. *Political Research Quarterly, 56*(1), 29–40. https://scispace.com/papers/the-impact-of-public-opinion-on-public-policy-a-review-and-1yzb70a2is

Carr, J. (2023). Social media strategies for transparency. *Police Chief Magazine*. https://www.policechiefmagazine.org/social-media-transparency/

Dawkins, S. M. (2023). Law enforcement and social media: Strengthening the bond. *Police1.com*. https://www.police1.com/social-media-for-cops/articles/law-enforcement-and-social-media-strengthening-the-bond-2LlrtDOVay1Cw7Bv/

Huré, I., & Le Saulnier, G. (n.d.). La communication de la police nationale sur les réseaux sociaux numériques : De la quête de likes aux techniques de gouvernementalité [Version auteurs]. ELLIADD – Université de Franche-Comté ; CARISM – Université Panthéon-Assas ; CÉREP – URCA. https://hal.science/hal-04479791v1/document

Lancia, A. (2023). *"We have to make sure that we get it right": Organizational impression management by a police service confronted by controversy* (Doctoral dissertation, McMaster University). McMaster University. https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/28813

Le Saulnier, G. (2012). La médiatisation de la police du point de vue des policiers : Le ressort professionnel de la réception des médias. In M. Meyer (Ed.), *Polices de la communication : Enjeux professionnels* (pp. 163–175). Antipodes. https://hal.science/hal-04478575v1

Lev-On, A., & Yavetz, G. (2020, December 19). Police in social media: To protect and share? *First Monday*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348116174_Police_in_social_media_To_protect_and_share

Meyer, M. (2013). Policer l'image : Nouvelles trajectoires professionnelles et risques médiatiques dans la communication policière en Suisse. *Politiques de communication, 1*(1), 59–94. https://doi.org/10.3917/pdc.001.0059

Mutz, D. C., & Young, L. (2011). Communication and public opinion. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 75*(5), 1018–1044. https://academic.oup.com/poq/article/75/5/1018/1825647

N'Da, P. (2005). *Recherche et méthodologie en sciences sociales et humaines*. Les Classiques Ivoire / Presses Africaines. http://livre21.com/LIVREF/F33/F033004.pdf

Nieto, C. (2024, September). *Public perception of policing* (Leadership White Paper, Leadership Command College). Bill Blackwood Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas. https://shsu-ir.tdl.org/items/dd3c6b89-996f-48fd-99f7-cfd1855eb8a6

Peyton, K., Sierra-Arévalo, M., & Rand, D. G. (2019). A field experiment on community policing and police legitimacy. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 116*(40), 19894–
19898. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335865906_A_field_experiment_on_community_policing_and_police_legitimacy

Samples, J. (2019, April 9). Why the government should not regulate content moderation of social media. *Cato Institute*. https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/why-government-should-not-regulate-content-moderation-social-media

Schneider, C. J. (2021). Police use of social media as bureaucratic propaganda: Comments on state violence and law enforcement use of social media in 2020. *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society, 22*(2), 25–32. https://ccjls.scholasticahq.com/article/26975-police-use-of-social-media-as-bureaucratic-propaganda-comments-on-state-violence-and-law-enforcement-use-of-social-media-in-2020

Williams, C. B., & Fedorowicz, J. (2019). Does social media promote the public's perception of the police? In *Proceedings of the 52nd Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332085273_Does_social_media_promote_the_public's_perception_of_the_police_Survey_results_on_trust_cultivation

9. APPENDIXES

Appendix A: Interviews (FR;EN)

Citoyen 1 (C1) :

1. Pouvez-vous décrire la fréquence et la manière dont vous rencontrez du contenu lié aux forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Bon, alors moi, je consulte les réseaux sociaux, principalement LinkedIn d'ailleurs, quasiment tous les jours, peut-être même toutes les heures, parfois. Alors le contenu… le contenu police, le contenu forces de l'ordre… En fait non, qu'est-ce que je dis ? Sur Facebook aussi. Sur Facebook, je suis les comptes d'un policier qui appartient, je crois, à la BRAV-M, si je ne dis pas de bêtises, et qui montre un petit peu les exercices, effectivement, les entraînements, comment ça se passe en intervention, etc. Et je suis aussi les comptes de deux personnes. Il y en a un, c'est un dirigeant d'une école de police, donc ça permet de voir un petit peu comment il forme les recrues. Et une deuxième, c'est une influenceuse tout simplement, qui montre un petit peu la vie dans les postes de police, etc., sur des sujets généralement de sensibilisation.

2. Quel type de contenu lié aux forces de l'ordre trouvez-vous le plus engageant ou le plus percutant et pourquoi ?

Alors, il y a des contenus qui montrent souvent les interceptions, par exemple quand il y a des refus d'obtempérer, etc., qui rappellent un petit peu tout ça. Mais moi, ce que je trouve qui marche le mieux sur les réseaux sociaux, pour ne pas trop enclencher de contestation ou de débat où il peut y avoir un peu de violence des deux bords – c'est-à-dire des gens qui vont être violents envers les policiers et des gens qui voudront être violents envers des délinquants – je pense que les meilleurs, ce sont ceux de sensibilisation. Rappeler effectivement comment conduire, rappeler ce qui est grave : l'alcool, la drogue au volant ; rappeler également les priorités ; rappeler qui est prioritaire – le piéton, le cycliste, la voiture – enfin, dans l'ordre de priorité. Voilà, des éléments plutôt de sensibilisation. Ça permet de rappeler que les forces de l'ordre sont là aussi pour faire de la pédagogie, d'accord ? Et pas pour faire que de la répression, ce que certains ont tendance à réduire en pensant qu'il n'y a que la répression, etc., alors que justement, non, ce n'est pas ça le but.

3. Et comment les réseaux sociaux influencent-ils votre perception de la légitimité des forces de l'ordre ?

Bah, ça permet de les voir à l'œuvre. Parce que soyons clairs, les forces de l'ordre, on ne les voit jamais à l'œuvre. La seule façon que vous avez de les voir, c'est d'aller dans la rue, et vous entendez le "pimpon", le gyrophare, et puis vous vous dites : « Ah bah tiens, il y a des policiers en intervention ». Je crois que toutes les situations que j'ai vécues à Bordeaux où j'ai appris qu'il y avait eu un problème – c'est-à-dire, par exemple, des assassinats, des choses comme ça – en réalité, je les ai, heureusement pour moi d'ailleurs je pense, jamais vus en intervention. Ça s'est toujours passé loin, là où j'étais. Donc c'est difficile de savoir ce qui se fait dans l'ombre, en fait. Donc ça permet de mettre un petit peu en évidence les travaux qui sont faits, les actions qui sont faites, les entraînements aussi, voilà, pour montrer effectivement les recrutements. Ça permet de comprendre un petit peu mieux ce qui se passe dans les forces de l'ordre, qui sont quand même assez discrètes.

4. En quoi pensez-vous que la présence des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux diffère de leur représentation dans les médias traditionnels ?

Bah, les médias traditionnels, quand vous entendez parler des policiers, c'est généralement juste pour vous dire qu'il y a eu justement un problème. Donc les policiers ont dû intervenir parce que, effectivement, c'est les débuts des départs en vacances, il y a eu un attentat, il y a eu une attaque, etc. Donc, en fait, on ne voit pas la partie pédagogique du travail des policiers. On ne voit pas la partie formation, on ne voit pas la partie entraînement. On ne voit pas toute cette partie-là, qui montre justement le niveau d'implication que peut avoir un officier des forces de l'ordre dans son quotidien. On voit juste, en fait, la partie répressive. Voilà. Et c'est dommage de ne voir que la partie répressive dans les médias. Alors que les médias sociaux permettent justement de parler plus librement, peut-être, d'autres aspects des forces de l'ordre.

5. Et pouvez-vous décrire une situation où un contenu positif sur les forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux a influencé votre perception de ces forces-là ?

Oui, ben c'est ce que je vous disais tout à l'heure. C'est-à-dire, souvent, les… quand il y a eu beaucoup de communication qui a été faite au moment des attentats, les attentats des années 2000… Je vais être sûr de ne pas me tromper, je crois que c'était 2013 et 2015 si je ne me trompe pas. Donc, où justement on avait pu voir les forces de l'ordre à l'œuvre, etc. Il y a eu aussi la communication qui avait été faite sur… comment il s'appelle… Beltrame, si je ne dis pas de bêtises. Je crois que c'était un gendarme, d'ailleurs, qui a échangé sa place sur un théâtre terroriste, qui a échangé sa place contre celle d'une otage, et qui a été assassiné d'ailleurs. Donc voilà, ça, c'était très puissant comme image, comme message que ça envoyait. Les médias en

ont bien évidemment parlé aussi, mais les réseaux sociaux ont permis aussi d'en faire écho. Et surtout de le rappeler. Parce qu'aujourd'hui, on ne les lit plus trop, les médias traditionnels. Moi, je n'achète plus de journaux papier, moi je lis LinkedIn. Donc si sur LinkedIn ça n'y est pas, je ne le vois pas. Donc ça permet de le rappeler, effectivement, même si c'était il y a deux ans, trois ans, dix ans. Voilà, ce n'est pas des petits événements, quand même.

6. Et comment réagissez-vous généralement lorsque vous voyez des incidents négatifs impliquant les forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Alors le problème, c'est que ça va dépendre, je pense, des personnes à qui vous posez la question. Moi, j'ai tendance à avoir un petit peu plus de recul, parce que je ne sais pas ce que je peux croire en matière d'images diffusées sur les réseaux sociaux. D'accord ? Effectivement, si j'ai une image d'un policier qui frappe quelqu'un sans raison apparente, qui est totalement désarmé, qui est au sol et autres, là, oui, j'en déduirai effectivement qu'il a été au-delà de ce qu'il aurait dû faire. Mais le problème, c'est que dans des scènes, par exemple, d'affrontements urbains, on vous dit : il y a eu telle attaque, telle réaction, etc. Ce sont des bribes. Moi, je ne sais pas… si ça se trouve, il y a peut-être quelqu'un qui a sorti un couteau, qui a menacé les gens ; il y a peut-être quelqu'un qui a porté atteinte à la sécurité de quelqu'un, qui se comporte d'une certaine manière. Le policier, lui, l'a vu. Moi, je ne l'ai pas vu. Donc juger sur la base des fragments qui circulent sur Internet, c'est dangereux. Dans les deux cas, ça peut soit vous faire passer l'éponge sur un comportement policier qui n'aurait pas dû avoir lieu, soit, au contraire, faire passer l'éponge à un comportement délinquant qui aurait pu… lui non plus. Donc voilà, c'est très important de ne pas réagir à chaud sur les images qu'on voit sur Internet, dans ces cas-là. D'accord ? C'est précisément ce qui fait faire le buzz. Mais il ne faut pas réagir comme ça, justement. Il faut attendre d'avoir plus d'explications sur ce qui s'est passé.

7. Et du coup, dans quelle mesure pensez-vous que les réseaux sociaux influencent la confiance ou la méfiance du public, en réalité ?

Bah malheureusement, je pense qu'il y a beaucoup trop de gens qui se fient à ce qu'ils voient sur les réseaux sociaux. La preuve, là, on était le premier avril. Il y a quand même des gens qui ont réussi à croire ce qu'ils voyaient publié le premier avril, alors que c'était… effectivement. D'ailleurs, c'est paradoxal : c'est quand même le premier jour de l'année où les gens se mettent à vérifier les sources, tellement ils ont peur que ce qu'on leur dise soit faux, alors que le reste de l'année, ils ne vérifient pas. Alors qu'ils auraient pu les vérifier. Donc voilà. Je pense qu'il

y a beaucoup de gens qui prennent au premier degré les informations qui circulent sur les réseaux sociaux. À tort, d'ailleurs.

8. Et pouvez-vous partager des expériences où votre opinion sur les forces de l'ordre a changé grâce à une exposition aux réseaux sociaux ?

A changé en bien ou en mal ? Peu importe. Je dirais que… de base, moi, je n'ai pas une mauvaise opinion. Donc pour l'instant, il n'y a pas de médias sociaux qui aient pu altérer la vision. En outre, il ne faut pas confondre deux choses. On peut avoir une mauvaise opinion à un moment donné d'un agent des forces de l'ordre, d'un représentant dont on estime effectivement qu'il n'a pas eu un bon comportement. Quand vous aviez eu George Floyd – et je dis « vous » parce que moi, j'ai vu cette vidéo comme tout le monde – voilà, le gars, il n'était pas bien offensif. Au pire, il aurait pu être tasé ou autre chose. Il est resté dix minutes sur son cou à l'étouffer. Donc là, évidemment, c'est inadmissible, d'accord ? C'était inadmissible. Cet homme-là méritait effectivement d'être poursuivi et jugé. Après, on voit pour les suites, d'accord, ça on voit ça comme on veut. Mais là, j'avais la capacité de juger qu'effectivement ce qu'il faisait était inapproprié et n'était absolument pas proportionné. OK ? Par contre, ça n'empêche pas que je n'ai pas de mépris pour le corps policier américain. Je me doute bien que, les pauvres, ils sont exposés à beaucoup de situations. Ils font ce qu'ils peuvent, et je ne suis pas sûr que les policiers américains étaient très fans de voir une personne faire ça. D'accord ? Parce que derrière, ils se disent : « C'est nous qui allons prendre. Encore plus. » Donc ce n'était pas une bonne idée. Mais ça ne change pas le sentiment pour la police en général. Par contre, effectivement, c'est sûr que ça dégrade considérablement l'image pour cette personne.

9. Et que pensez-vous de la manière dont les forces de l'ordre interagissent avec le public via les réseaux sociaux ?

Je trouve qu'il faut éviter. Il faut éviter de se lancer dans du débat. C'est-à-dire qu'il ne faut pas forcément… Malheureusement, il y en a certains qui le font. Ou alors, il faut essayer de le faire le moins possible. Il ne faut pas trop lancer de sujets qui sont matière à débat, d'accord ? Les forces de l'ordre, sur les réseaux sociaux, doivent être, comme je disais tout à l'heure, dans la pédagogie : rappeler les choses, instruire les gens, leur montrer. Tiens, pensez à faire ça. Des petits réflexes pour se garer, des petits trucs de sécurité. Par exemple, quand vous êtes au volant, d'accord ? Je sais que j'avais vu une vidéo où il y avait un policier qui rappelait : « Attention, en cas d'accident, quand vous mettez vos jambes sur le tableau de bord parce qu'il fait chaud et tout ça, pendant que le conducteur conduit… » Si jamais demain il y a un accident et que

l'airbag se déclenche, vous êtes encastré dans votre propre corps. Tout bête, mais c'était un exemple. Petite pédagogie toute simple. Voilà. Présenter un peu les forces de l'ordre, montrer quelques événements. Et en fait, essayer surtout de montrer de la pédagogie, du positif. Pas forcément trop montrer les interventions, parce que là, ça peut toujours donner matière à interprétation. Alors que la pédagogie, il n'y a pas matière à interprétation. Si vous respectez la loi, vous la respectez. Sinon, vous ne la respectez pas. Voilà. Et c'est pour votre sécurité. Donc il n'y a pas matière à dire : « C'est bien » ou « Ce n'est pas bien », d'accord ?

10. Quel type de contenu lié aux forces de l'ordre renforce votre confiance en elles, et quels types, au contraire, la diminuent ?

Alors, la diminuer… Il n'y a pas grand-chose qui va la diminuer, dans ma conception en tout cas. Il n'y a pas grand-chose qui va altérer la confiance dans les forces de l'ordre. On a confiance dans les forces de l'ordre. On ne se lève pas le matin, et quand on les voit, on se cache. Ça relève quand même de régimes très particuliers, cette tendance à réagir aux forces de l'ordre, et heureusement, on n'est pas dans cette situation. Donc il n'y a rien qui va altérer véritablement. Par contre, ce qui peut éventuellement – pas forcément toucher, mais – me faire réagir, c'est quand je juge que des réactions ont été disproportionnées. Elles sont rarement le fait d'un corps tout entier, mais elles sont plutôt le fait d'une instruction. Par exemple, je me souviens que, lors des manifestations des Gilets jaunes, il y a eu tout ce litige sur les LBD, les lanceurs de balles de défense, dont on peut effectivement se dire qu'à un moment donné, les instructions qui sont montées ou descendues – je ne sais pas dans quel sens – ont été de dire : « Il faut y aller, il faut y aller fort, pour dissuader le mouvement. » D'accord ? Ça a été traduit, ça a été illustré dans plusieurs médias, et ça, c'est vrai que ce n'est pas bon. Mais ce n'est pas de nature à altérer la perception des forces de l'ordre. C'est de nature à dire : « La direction de ces forces, c'est-à-dire les préfectures, n'a pas fait ce qu'il fallait. » C'est plutôt la préfecture. Parce que le policier, au final, il suit une instruction. Il est là aussi pour ça. Il suit une instruction. Et si l'instruction qui lui est donnée est disproportionnée, ce n'est pas à lui de la juger. Ce n'est pas son boulot. Lui, il est là pour appliquer une règle. Par contre, beaucoup de policiers, quand on les interroge après – souvent dans des entretiens face caméra ou visage flouté – ont tendance à dire qu'eux-mêmes n'apprécient pas du tout de suivre ces instructions, parce qu'ils ont l'impression, effectivement, qu'on les envoie « casser du manifestant », alors que ce n'est pas leur vocation. D'accord ? Donc on est plus dans cette logique-là. En fait, c'est la machine administrative derrière qu'il faut regarder de près, pas tant le corps de police en exécution.

11. Et selon vous, quelle est l'importance de la transparence dans les communications sur les réseaux sociaux pour renforcer la confiance du public envers les droits de l'homme ?

Le problème de la transparence, comme vous êtes en train d'en parler, c'est que si on communique tout de suite à chaud sur un événement, vous allez automatiquement tomber sur le bon vieux triptyque : celui qui soutient, celui qui va dire que les policiers sont tous des ********, et celui qui va dire que les policiers sont à soutenir quoi qu'ils fassent. Ce qui ne change pas grand-chose au final. En fait, personne ne va prendre le temps de réfléchir, parce que vous communiquez directement sur quelque chose, alors qu'il faut peut-être parfois prendre un petit peu de temps de réflexion. Voilà, laisser la tension retomber et essayer effectivement d'illustrer ce qui s'est passé, ou autre chose. Voilà, c'est toujours pareil, effectivement. Par contre, il y a des éléments sur lesquels on peut communiquer sur le coup, d'accord ? Quand on dit par exemple… oui, il y a eu… c'était quoi l'image ? Je me souviens, c'était… oui, les délits de fuite. Voilà, les délits de fuite. Effectivement, on peut communiquer sur le fait qu'il y a eu un délit de fuite, mais je me souviens qu'il y avait des gens qui disaient : « Oh là là, les policiers, ils tuent, ils tuent tout le temps. » Eh bien, le problème, c'est que là encore : qu'est-ce qui s'est passé comme délit de fuite ? C'était quoi ? Un délit de fuite à 2 km/h, ils étaient à vélo et on leur a tiré dessus dans le dos ? Ou est-ce que c'était un délit de fuite où ils ont foncé comme des brutes avec une BMW sur deux policiers qui étaient en attente ? C'est, une fois de plus, toujours pareil : le manque de contexte fait que les gens vont réagir, toujours de bonne ou de mauvaise façon. Ça, ça ne servira à rien, quoi qu'il en soit, dans le jeu.

12. Et comment interprétez-vous les réponses des forces de l'ordre aux critiques publiques ou aux incidents viraux sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Bah… pour l'instant, il n'y a pas eu… Justement, ils ont la sagesse, pour la plupart, de ne pas trop répondre. Ça ne sert à rien de répondre. D'abord, parce que si vous répondez, c'est que vous sentez que vous avez besoin de vous justifier. D'accord ? Ce n'est pas à eux de répondre. Les policiers sont en exécution, ils ont fait ce qu'il fallait en jugeant que la réponse était proportionnée. Après, c'est la justice qui va juger si effectivement la réponse était proportionnée. Pour l'instant, a priori, quand vous voyez les délits de fuite qui ont eu lieu – pour ne citer que cela – quand vous voyez les attaques, effectivement… ouais, c'est bon… Quand vous voyez les attaques qui ont eu lieu, à chaque fois, ils ont proportionné leur réponse. Et il ne me semble pas qu'il y ait eu de jugement plus que ça sur le sujet. Ils ne se sont pas justifiés. En tout cas, ils ne se sont pas justifiés de ça. Puis, est-ce qu'ils sont vraiment là pour

se justifier de leurs actions ? Si vous commencez à vous justifier, c'est que vous estimez que vous avez à le faire. Moi, je trouve qu'il ne faut pas le faire, justement.

13. Et selon vous, quel rôle jouent les contenus émotionnels ou engageants, par exemple les récits de sauvetage ou les initiatives communautaires, dans la formation du sentiment du public envers les forces de l'ordre ?

Bah, c'est ce que je disais tout à l'heure : la pédagogie, la démonstration qu'il n'y a pas que du répressif. Non, c'est ce que je disais : c'est de la pédagogie. Les gens, ils voient la façade répressive. Ils n'ont pas besoin qu'on leur rappelle, ils la comprennent : ils se prennent des amendes, ils se font réprimander sur l'autoroute, etc., jusqu'à effectivement les réponses les plus extrêmes, quand il y a des actes, etc. Mais par contre, c'est vrai que ce qui est bien, c'est qu'ils ne voient pas ce qui se passe : des policiers qui ont sauvé ceci, des policiers qui sont intervenus à tel endroit, des gendarmes qui sont intervenus à tel endroit, des militaires, même des fois, qui sont sollicités pour intervenir dans des endroits, etc. Le GIGN qui est mobilisé parce que le voisin a pété un câble, etc. Mine de rien, c'est tous les jours. Tous les jours, il y a le GIGN, le GIPN, tout ça, qui sont mobilisés pour des petites situations anodines, hein, mais qui vont peut-être dégénérer. Donc c'est important de montrer qu'il y a aussi cette action-là, d'accord ?

14. Et pensez-vous qu'une exposition répétée à certains types de contenus des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux normalise certains comportements, et si oui, de quelle manière ?

Bah, si vous regardez bien, le problème de l'exposition, c'est que les réseaux sociaux sont basés sur des algorithmes. Donc, en réalité, quand vous consultez, par exemple, un certain type de média, vous allez retomber sur le même type de média, parce que l'algorithme en déduit que ça vous plaît. Je me souviens que, sur LinkedIn par exemple, il y avait une personne que j'avais moi-même signalée – mais je pense que d'autres l'ont signalée aussi – qui n'arrêtait pas, constamment, d'en appeler, plus ou moins directement ou indirectement, à la violence contre les forces de l'ordre. D'accord ? Ce n'était pas direct, c'était indirect. Bon, il a été… Parce qu'il n'a pas le droit, effectivement, d'inciter à la violence. Il n'a pas le droit, ce n'est pas légal de vociférer ça. Bon, comme tous, il le fait, et il le fait. Mais on ne peut rien dire pour ça. Par contre, le fait de le faire de manière répétitive, etc., ça, c'est un vrai problème. Parce que ça veut donc dire que ça peut devenir, derrière, incitatif, etc. Et donc, il n'y a plus de neutralité, là où on est censé l'avoir dans le discours, avec les deux façades.

15. Et si vous pouviez suggérer une modification à la façon dont les forces de l'ordre interagissent avec le public sur les réseaux sociaux, quelle serait-elle et pourquoi ?

J'avais bien aimé un format de communication qui était fait – mais c'était dans des reportages – où, effectivement, on a des seniors, c'est-à-dire des policiers expérimentés, des gens qui ont vraiment de l'expérience du public, pas des jeunes qui débutent, qui… voilà, qui utilisaient la caméra de leur casque ou autre chose, leur caméra à eux, pour justement montrer des situations et faire un peu de pédagogie, comme toujours, avec des gens. Voilà, ce n'était pas de la grosse répression, mais c'était histoire de sensibiliser, en disant : « Ça pourrait être plus grave », d'accord ? Mais peut-être le faire plus régulièrement, justement, un peu dans toutes les villes. Et voilà, éveiller aussi les communications qui sont peut-être un peu plus… signalées ? Les communications qui sont… comment est-ce que je peux dire… Éviter les communications à chaud. Il y a eu aussi beaucoup de personnes qui, des fois, font des communications à chaud sur les réseaux sociaux, et les gens réagissent, malheureusement, sans se poser la question de ce qui se passe sur les réseaux sociaux.

Traduction

<u>Citizen 1 (C1):</u>

1. Can you describe the frequency and manner in which you encounter law enforcement-related content on social media?

Okay, so I check social media, mainly LinkedIn, almost every day, maybe even every hour sometimes. So the content... police content, law enforcement content... Actually, no, what am I saying? On Facebook too. On Facebook, I follow the accounts of a police officer who, I think, belongs to the BRAV-M, if I'm not mistaken, and who shows a little bit of the exercises, indeed, the training, how it goes during operations, etc. And I also follow the accounts of two people. One of them is the director of a police academy, so it allows you to see a little bit of how he trains recruits. And the second is simply an influencer, who shows a little bit about life in police stations, etc., usually on awareness-raising topics.

2. What type of law enforcement-related content do you find most engaging or impactful, and why?

So, there's content that often shows traffic stops, for example, when there are refusals to comply, etc., which is a bit reminiscent of all that. But what I find works best on social media, to avoid sparking too much protest or debate where there could be a bit of violence on both sides—that is, people who are going to be violent towards police officers and people who want to be violent towards offenders—I think the best ones are awareness-raising ones. Effectively reminding people how to drive, reminding them of what's serious: drinking and driving under the influence of drugs; also reminding them of priorities; reminding them who has priority—pedestrians, cyclists, cars—well, in order of priority. So, these are rather awareness-raising elements. It serves as a reminder that law enforcement is also there to educate, okay? And not just to repress, which some people tend to reduce by thinking that there's only repression, etc., when in fact, no, that's not the point.

3. And how do social media influence your perception of the legitimacy of law enforcement?

Well, it allows you to see them at work. Because let's be clear, we never see law enforcement at work. The only way you can see them is to go out into the street, and you hear the "pimpon," the flashing light, and then you think to yourself, "Oh, well, there are police officers on duty." I think that all the situations I experienced in Bordeaux where I learned that there had been a problem—that is, for example, assassinations, things like that—in reality, I never saw them, fortunately for me, I think. It always happened far away, where I was. So it's difficult to know what's going on behind the scenes, actually. So it allows us to highlight a little the work that's being done, the actions that are being carried out, the training too, to actually show recruitment. It allows us to understand a little better what's happening in the police force, which is quite discreet.

4. How do you think the presence of law enforcement on social media differs from their representation in traditional media?

Well, in traditional media, when you hear about the police, it's generally just to tell you that there's been a problem. So the police had to intervene because, yes, it was the beginning of the vacation period, there was an attack, there was an attack, etc. So, in fact, we don't see the educational aspect of the police's work. We don't see the training aspect, we don't see the drill. We don't see all of that aspect, which shows precisely the level of involvement that a law

enforcement officer can have in their daily life. We only see, in fact, the repressive aspect. That's it. And it's a shame to only see the repressive aspect in the media. When social media actually allows us to talk more freely, perhaps, about other aspects of law enforcement.

5. And can you describe a situation where positive content about law enforcement on social media influenced your perception of these forces?

Yes, well, that's what I was telling you earlier. That is to say, often, the... when there was a lot of communication that was done at the time of the attacks, the attacks of the 2000s... I'll be sure I'm not mistaken, I think it was 2013 and 2015 if I'm not mistaken. So, where we could see the police at work, etc. There was also the communication that was done about... what's his name... Beltrame, if I'm not mistaken. I think he was a police officer, by the way, who swapped places at a terrorist scene, who swapped places with a hostage, and who was murdered by the way. So there you go, that was a very powerful image, the message that it sent. The media obviously talked about it too, but social networks also allowed it to be echoed. And above all, to remind people of it. Because these days, we don't read traditional media much anymore. I don't buy newspapers anymore; I read LinkedIn. So if it's not there on LinkedIn, I don't see it. So it helps remind people of it, even if it was two, three, or ten years ago. These are not minor events, after all.

6. And how do you generally react when you see negative incidents involving law enforcement on social media?

The problem is, I think it will depend on the people you ask. I tend to have a little more perspective, because I don't know what to believe when it comes to images shared on social media. Okay? Indeed, if I have an image of a police officer hitting someone for no apparent reason, who is completely unarmed, who is on the ground and so on, then yes, I will indeed deduce that he went beyond what he should have done. But the problem is that in scenes, for example, of urban clashes, you are told: there was such an attack, such a reaction, etc. These are snippets. I don't know... maybe someone took out a knife, who threatened people; maybe someone threatened someone's safety, who behaved in a certain way. The police officer saw it. I didn't see it. So judging based on fragments circulating on the Internet is dangerous. In both cases, it can either make you forgive police behavior that shouldn't have happened, or, conversely, forgive criminal behavior that might have... either. So, it's very important not to react too quickly to the images we see on the internet in these cases. Okay? That's precisely

what creates a buzz. But we shouldn't react like that, precisely. We need to wait until we have more explanations about what happened.

7. And so, to what extent do you think social media actually influences public trust or mistrust?

Well, unfortunately, I think there are far too many people who trust what they see on social media. The proof is, it was April Fools' Day. There are still people who managed to believe what they saw published on April Fools' Day, even though it was... in fact. Besides, it's paradoxical: it's the first day of the year when people start checking sources, so afraid are they that what they're told is false, whereas the rest of the year, they don't check. Even though they could have checked. So there you have it. I think there are a lot of people who take the information circulating on social media at face value. Wrongly, in fact.

8. And can you share any experiences where your opinion of law enforcement has changed thanks to exposure to social media?

Has it changed for the better or for the worse? It doesn't matter. I would say that... basically, I don't have a bad opinion. So for the moment, there's no social media that could have altered the view. Furthermore, we mustn't confuse two things. We can have a bad opinion at a given moment of a law enforcement officer, of a representative who we actually believe hasn't behaved well. When you had George Floyd - and I say "you" because I saw that video like everyone else - well, the guy wasn't very offensive. At worst, he could have been tasered or something else. He stayed on his neck for ten minutes, suffocating him. So, obviously, that's unacceptable, okay? It was unacceptable. That man definitely deserved to be prosecuted and tried. Then we'll see what happens next, okay, we can see that as we want. But there, I had the capacity to judge that what he was doing was indeed inappropriate and was absolutely not proportionate. OK? On the other hand, that doesn't prevent me from having contempt for the American police force. I'm sure that, poor things, they are exposed to a lot of situations. They do what they can, and I'm not sure that American police officers were very keen on seeing someone do that. OK? Because behind the scenes, they say to themselves: "We're the ones who are going to take it. Even more." So it wasn't a good idea. But that doesn't change the feeling for the police in general. On the other hand, yes, it's sure that it considerably degrades the image for that person.

9. And what do you think of the way law enforcement interacts with the public via social media?

I think we should avoid it. We should avoid getting into debate. That is to say, we shouldn't necessarily... Unfortunately, there are some who do. Or we should try to do it as little as possible. We shouldn't bring up too many topics that are open to debate, okay? Law enforcement, on social media, must be, as I said earlier, educational: reminding people of things, educating them, showing them. Think about doing that. Little habits for parking, little safety tips. For example, when you're driving, okay? I know I saw a video where a police officer was reminding us: "Be careful, in the event of an accident, when you put your legs on the dashboard because it's hot and all that, while the driver is driving..." If there's an accident tomorrow and the airbag deploys, you're stuck inside your own body. It's silly, but it was an example. A simple little teaching exercise. There you go. Introduce the police a little, show a few events. And in fact, try above all to show some teaching, some positive things. Not necessarily showing too much of the interventions, because that can always give rise to interpretation. Whereas with teaching, there's no room for interpretation. If you respect the law, you respect it. If not, you don't respect it. There you go. And it's for your safety. So there's no room for saying: "That's good" or "That's not good," okay?

10. What type of content related to law enforcement strengthens your trust in them, and what types, on the contrary, diminish it?

So, diminishing it... There's not much that will diminish it, at least in my view. There's not much that will alter trust in law enforcement. We trust law enforcement. We don't get up in the morning, and when we see them, we hide. This tendency to react to law enforcement is still a matter of very specific regimes, and fortunately, we're not in that situation. So there's nothing that will truly alter it. On the other hand, what can possibly—not necessarily affect, but—make me react is when I judge that reactions have been disproportionate. They are rarely the work of an entire body, but rather the work of an instruction. For example, I remember that during the Yellow Vest demonstrations, there was this whole dispute over LBDs, the defense ball launchers, which we can actually say that at a given moment, the instructions that went up or down – I don't know in which direction – were to say: "We have to go, we have to go hard, to dissuade the movement." Okay? It was translated, it was illustrated in several media, and that, it's true, is not good. But it's not likely to alter the perception of the police. It's likely to say: "The leadership of these forces, that is to say the prefectures, did not do what was necessary." It's rather the prefecture. Because the police officer, in the end, is following an instruction. That's also why he's there. He's following an instruction. And if the instruction given to him is disproportionate, it's not up to him to judge it. That's not his job. He's there to enforce a rule.

On the other hand, many police officers, when we question them afterwards – often in interviews on camera or with their faces blurred – tend to say that they themselves don't appreciate following these instructions at all, because they have the impression, indeed, that they're being sent to "beat up protesters," when that's not their vocation. Okay? So we're no longer in that logic. In fact, it's the administrative machine behind it that we need to look at closely, not so much the police force in execution.

11. And in your opinion, how important is transparency in social media communications to build public trust in human rights?

The problem with transparency, as you're talking about, is that if you immediately communicate about an event, you'll automatically fall back on the old triptych: the one who supports it, the one who says the police are all idiots, and the one who says the police should be supported no matter what they do. Which doesn't change much in the end. In fact, no one will take the time to think, because you're communicating directly about something, when sometimes it's necessary to take a little time to reflect. So, let the tension subside and actually try to illustrate what happened, or something else. So, it's always the same, yes. However, there are elements that we can communicate about right away, okay? When we say, for example... yes, there was... what was the image? I remember, it was... yes, hit-and-runs. There you go, hit-and-runs. Indeed, we can communicate on the fact that there was a hit-and-run, but I remember that there were people who said: "Oh dear, the police, they kill, they kill all the time." Well, the problem is that again: what kind of hit-and-run happened? What was it? A hit-and-run at 2 km/h, they were on a bike and they were shot in the back? Or was it a hit-and-run where they drove like brutes with a BMW at two police officers who were waiting? It's, once again, always the same: the lack of context means that people will react, always in a good or bad way. That won't serve any purpose, in any case, in the game.

12. And how do you interpret the responses of law enforcement to public criticism or viral incidents on social media?

Well... for now, there haven't been any... In fact, most of them are wise enough not to respond too much. There's no point in responding. First, because if you respond, it's because you feel you need to justify yourself. Okay? It's not up to them to respond. The police are executing; they did what was necessary by judging that the response was proportionate. Afterwards, it's up to the courts to decide whether the response was indeed proportionate. For now, a priori, when you see the hit-and-runs that have taken place—to name just a few—when you see the attacks,

yes... yeah, that's good... When you see the attacks that have taken place, each time, they've been proportionate in their response. And it doesn't seem to me that there's been any more judgment than that on the subject. They haven't justified themselves. In any case, they haven't justified that. And then, are they really there to justify their actions? If you start justifying yourself, it's because you feel you have to. I think that's precisely why we shouldn't do it.

13. And in your opinion, what role do emotional or engaging content, for example rescue stories or community initiatives, play in shaping public sentiment toward law enforcement?

Well, that's what I was saying earlier: education, demonstrating that it's not all repression. No, that's what I was saying: it's education. People see the repressive facade. They don't need to be reminded, they understand it: they get fined, they get reprimanded on the highway, etc., up to the most extreme responses, when there are acts, etc. But on the other hand, it's true that what's good is that they don't see what's happening: police officers who saved this, police officers who intervened in such and such a place, gendarmes who intervened in such and such a place, soldiers, even sometimes, who are called upon to intervene in places, etc. The GIGN who are mobilized because the neighbor has lost it, etc. It doesn't seem like it, it's every day. Every day, there's the GIGN, the GIPN, all that, which are mobilized for small, innocuous situations, eh, but which might escalate. So it's important to show that there's also this action, okay?

14. And do you think that repeated exposure to certain types of law enforcement content on social media normalizes certain behaviors, and if so, in what way?

Well, if you look closely, the problem with exposure is that social media is based on algorithms. So, in reality, when you consult, for example, a certain type of media, you'll come across the same type of media again, because the algorithm deduces that you like it. I remember that, on LinkedIn, for example, there was a person I reported myself—but I think others reported him too—who kept, constantly, calling, more or less directly or indirectly, for violence against law enforcement. Okay? It wasn't direct, it was indirect. Well, he was... Because he doesn't have the right, indeed, to incite violence. He doesn't have the right, it's not legal to shout that out. Well, like everyone else, he does it, and he does it. But there's nothing we can say about that. On the other hand, doing it repeatedly, etc., that's a real problem. Because that means it can become, behind the scenes, inciting, etc. And so, there's no longer neutrality, where we're supposed to have it in the discourse, with the two facades.

15. And if you could suggest one change to the way law enforcement interacts with the public on social media, what would it be and why?

I really liked a communication format that was done – but it was in reports – where, indeed, we have seniors, that is to say experienced police officers, people who really have experience with the public, not young people who are starting out, who... well, who used the camera on their helmet or something else, their own camera, to show situations and do a bit of education, as always, with people. So, it wasn't major repression, but it was about raising awareness, saying: "It could be more serious," okay? But perhaps do it more regularly, precisely, a bit in all the cities. And there you have it, also raising awareness of communications that are perhaps a bit more... reported? Communications that are... how can I say... Avoiding hot-button communications. There have also been many people who sometimes make rash communications on social networks, and people react, unfortunately, without asking themselves what is happening on social networks.

<u>Citoyen 2 (C2) :</u>

1. Pouvez-vous décrire la fréquence et la manière dont vous rencontrez du contenu lié aux forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Tous les jours. Littéralement. Que ce soit sur Twitter, TikTok, ou Instagram, il y a toujours une vidéo d'interpellation musclée, de contrôle abusif, ou de violence non justifiée. C'est devenu banal. Et je ne parle même pas des vidéos qui disparaissent comme par magie. J'ai l'impression que ces plateformes sont devenues les seuls endroits où on peut documenter ce que les médias traditionnels taisent.

2. Quel type de contenu lié aux forces de l'ordre trouvez-vous le plus engageant ou le plus percutant, et pourquoi ?

Les vidéos brutes. Celles filmées par des citoyens, pas les montages lissés des comptes officiels. Ce que je veux voir, c'est ce qui se passe vraiment : pas les mises en scène avec musique émotive et drapeaux en fond. Ce qui me marque, ce sont les cris, les courses poursuites, les insultes, les baffes qui partent trop vite. C'est là qu'on voit la vérité, pas dans les communiqués.

3. Comment les réseaux sociaux influencent-ils votre perception de la légitimité des forces de l'ordre ?

Ils la sapent. Et c'est justifié. Je ne parle pas de l'uniforme ou de la fonction en soi, je parle de ce qu'on voit : des abus, des comportements agressifs, une posture arrogante. Les réseaux permettent d'enfin montrer ce que beaucoup vivent depuis longtemps : le mépris, l'humiliation, la violence gratuite parfois. La légitimité ne se décrète pas, elle se mérite. Et franchement, y'a du boulot.

4. En quoi pensez-vous que la présence des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux diffère de leur représentation dans les médias traditionnels ?

Les médias traditionnels les couvrent. Ils relaient les versions officielles, ils attendent les "communiqués de presse", ils parlent de "débordements" au lieu de parler de violences policières. Sur les réseaux, les gens prennent la parole eux-mêmes. Et là, on voit que la réalité est tout autre. Il y a un décalage énorme entre la com' bien propre et ce qu'on vit dans certains quartiers.

5. Pouvez-vous décrire une situation où un contenu positif sur les forces de l'ordre a influencé votre perception d'elles ?

Franchement ? Non. J'en vois, oui, des policiers qui dansent, qui distribuent des masques, qui jouent au foot avec des gamins. Mais pour moi, c'est du marketing. Un geste sympa ne gomme pas des décennies de méfiance, de contrôle au faciès, de bavures non sanctionnées. Ce n'est pas une vidéo virale de câlin qui va effacer le reste.

6. Comment réagissez-vous généralement lorsque vous voyez des incidents négatifs impliquant les forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Je les partage. Immédiatement. Parce que sinon, ça passe à la trappe. Je commente, je tague des journalistes, des comptes militants. C'est la seule manière d'exister face au rouleau compresseur de la version officielle. Et ça me met en colère. Pas seulement à cause de ce qu'on voit, mais parce que je sais que, derrière, il y aura rarement des sanctions.

7. Dans quelle mesure pensez-vous que les réseaux sociaux influencent la confiance ou la méfiance du public envers les forces de l'ordre ?

Énormément. Et tant mieux. Pendant trop longtemps, les gens croyaient que les policiers étaient irréprochables. Maintenant, ils voient autre chose. Les réseaux permettent de documenter, de créer des archives, de faire pression. La méfiance augmente, c'est vrai. Mais ce n'est pas la faute des réseaux, c'est la faute de ceux qui se font filmer en train de déraper.

8. Pouvez-vous partager une expérience où votre opinion sur les forces de l'ordre a changé grâce à une exposition sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Mon opinion ne change pas vraiment, elle se confirme. Je pensais déjà que certaines pratiques étaient violentes et discriminatoires. Les vidéos que je vois, les témoignages que je lis, ça ne fait que renforcer ce que je sais déjà. Il n'y a pas eu de "révélation", juste une accumulation de preuves.

9. Que pensez-vous de la manière dont les forces de l'ordre interagissent avec le public via les réseaux sociaux ?

C'est creux. Ça communique, mais ça n'écoute pas. Ils postent des vidéos, des chiffres, des bilans, mais jamais de réponses aux vraies questions. Jamais de reconnaissance d'erreurs. C'est du monologue, pas du dialogue. Et en plus, ça bloque les comptes critiques. C'est une communication de façade.

10. Quel type de contenu lié aux forces de l'ordre renforce votre confiance en elles, et quel type la diminue ?

Renforce ? Aucun. Peut-être, à la rigueur, un témoignage sincère, pas scénarisé, d'un agent qui parle des difficultés sans nier les problèmes internes. Mais c'est rare. Ce qui la diminue ? Tout ce qui ressemble à de la propagande, à des vidéos d'intervention musclée postées comme des trophées. Ce besoin de montrer la force, la toute-puissance, c'est inquiétant.

11. Selon vous, quelle est l'importance de la transparence dans les communications des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

C’est fondamental. Et totalement absente. La transparence, ce n’est pas poster trois photos d’une opération ou une infographie. C’est assumer quand il y a une faute, expliquer, montrer qu’il y a une volonté de justice. Aujourd’hui, c’est l’opacité qui domine. Et quand les vidéos circulent, la stratégie, c’est le silence ou le déni. C’est ça le vrai scandale.

12. Comment interprétez-vous les réponses des forces de l’ordre aux critiques publiques ou aux incidents viraux ?

Comme des tentatives d’étouffement. Soit ils ignorent, soit ils minimisent, soit ils cherchent à décrédibiliser la personne qui a filmé ou porté plainte. On attend des excuses, on a des justifications. On attend des sanctions, on a des classements sans suite. À ce stade, ce n’est plus de la communication, c’est de la dissimulation.

13. Quel rôle jouent les contenus émotionnels ou engageants, comme les récits de sauvetage, dans la perception du public ?

Ils jouent un rôle, c’est sûr. Mais c’est dangereux si ça devient une diversion. Montrer un sauvetage pour faire oublier une bavure, c’est malhonnête. Le public est capable de faire la part des choses. On peut saluer un geste courageux et en même temps exiger des comptes sur des dérapages. L’un ne compense pas l’autre.

14. Pensez-vous qu’une exposition répétée à certains contenus des forces de l’ordre sur les réseaux sociaux normalise certains comportements ?

Oui, complètement. À force de voir des interpellations violentes, on finit par croire que c’est normal, que ça fait “partie du métier”. Non. Ce n’est pas parce qu’on voit quelque chose souvent que c’est acceptable. Et c’est là que les réseaux sociaux ont une responsabilité : ils doivent être utilisés pour alerter, pas pour banaliser.

15. Si vous pouviez suggérer une modification à la façon dont les forces de l’ordre interagissent avec le public sur les réseaux sociaux, quelle serait-elle et pourquoi ?

Arrêter de faire de la com’. Commencer à faire de la vérité. Dire les choses, assumer les erreurs,

répondre aux vraies questions. Et surtout, arrêter de se cacher derrière “l’institution” pour ne jamais nommer les fautifs. La confiance se gagne par la vérité, pas par des vidéos de chiens policiers mignons ou de policiers qui distribuent des chocolats.

Traduction

Citizen 2 (C2):

1. Can you describe how often and how you encounter law enforcement-related content on social media?

Every day. Literally. Whether on Twitter, TikTok, or Instagram, there's always a video of violent arrests, abusive checks, or unjustified violence. It's become commonplace. And I'm not even talking about the videos that magically disappear. I feel like these platforms have become the only places where we can document what traditional media keeps quiet about.

2. What type of law enforcement-related content do you find most engaging or impactful, and why?

Raw videos. The ones filmed by citizens, not the polished edits on official accounts. What I want to see is what's really happening: not the staged scenes with emotive music and flags in the background. What strikes me are the shouting, the chases, the insults, the slaps that come too quickly. That's where we see the truth, not in the press releases.

3. How do social media influence your perception of the legitimacy of law enforcement?

They undermine it. And rightly so. I'm not talking about the uniform or the position itself, I'm talking about what we see: abuse, aggressive behavior, an arrogant posture. Social media finally reveals what many have experienced for a long time: contempt, humiliation, and sometimes gratuitous violence. Legitimacy can't be decreed; it must be earned. And frankly, there's work to be done.

4. How do you think the presence of law enforcement on social media differs from their portrayal in traditional media?

Traditional media cover them. They relay official versions, they wait for "press releases," they talk about "excesses" instead of talking about police violence. On social media, people speak out for themselves. And then we see that the reality is quite different. There's a huge gap between clean communication and what we experience in certain neighborhoods.

5. Can you describe a situation where positive content about law enforcement influenced your perception of them?

Honestly? No. I see them, yes: police officers dancing, distributing masks, playing soccer with kids. But for me, that's marketing. One kind gesture doesn't erase decades of mistrust, racial profiling, and unpunished blunders. A viral hug video isn't going to erase the rest.

6. How do you generally react when you see negative incidents involving law enforcement on social media?

I share them. Immediately. Because otherwise, they fall by the wayside. I comment, I tag journalists, activist accounts. It's the only way to survive the onslaught of the official version. And it makes me angry. Not just because of what we see, but because I know that, behind it, there will rarely be any sanctions.

7. To what extent do you think social media influences public trust or distrust in law enforcement?

Enormously. And so much the better. For too long, people believed the police were beyond reproach. Now they see something else. Social media allows us to document, create archives, and apply pressure. Distrust is growing, it's true. But it's not the networks' fault, it's the fault of those who are filmed doing things wrong.

8. Can you share an experience where your opinion of law enforcement changed thanks to exposure on social media?

My opinion doesn't really change, it's confirmed. I already thought that certain practices were violent and discriminatory. The videos I see, the testimonies I read, only reinforce what I already knew. There was no "revelation," just an accumulation of evidence.

9. What do you think of the way law enforcement interacts with the public via social media?

It's hollow. They communicate, but they don't listen. They post videos, figures, and reports, but never answer the real questions. There's never any acknowledgement of mistakes. It's monologue, not dialogue. And what's more, they block critical accounts. It's a facade of communication.

10. What type of content related to law enforcement strengthens your trust in them, and what type diminishes it?

Strengthens? None. Perhaps, at a pinch, a sincere, unscripted account from an officer who talks about the difficulties without denying the internal problems. But that's rare. What diminishes it? Anything that resembles propaganda, videos of heavy-handed interventions posted like trophies. This need to display strength, omnipotence, is worrying.

11. In your opinion, how important is transparency in law enforcement communications on social media?

It's fundamental. And completely absent. Transparency isn't posting three photos of an operation or an infographic. It's taking responsibility when there's a mistake, explaining, and showing that there's a desire for justice. Today, opacity dominates. And when videos circulate, the strategy is silence or denial. That's the real scandal.

12. How do you interpret law enforcement's responses to public criticism or viral incidents?

As attempts to cover up. They either ignore, minimize, or seek to discredit the person who filmed or filed a complaint. We expect apologies, we get justifications. We expect sanctions, we get closures. At this point, it's no longer communication; it's cover-up.

13. What role do emotional or engaging content, such as rescue stories, play in public perception?

They certainly play a role. But it's dangerous if they become a distraction. Showing a rescue to make people forget a blunder is dishonest. The public is capable of discerning the facts. We can applaud a courageous act and at the same time demand accountability for blunders. One doesn't compensate for the other.

14. Do you think that repeated exposure to certain law enforcement content on social media normalizes certain behaviors?

Yes, absolutely. By seeing violent arrests so often, we end up believing it's normal, that it's "part of the job." No. Just because we see something often doesn't mean it's acceptable. And this is where social media has a responsibility: it must be used to raise awareness, not trivialize.

15. If you could suggest one change to the way law enforcement interacts with the public on social media, what would it be and why?

Stop hyping things up. Start telling the truth. Tell the truth, own up to mistakes, answer real questions. And above all, stop hiding behind "the institution" and never name the culprits. Trust is earned through truth, not through videos of cute police dogs or police officers handing out chocolates.

<u>Citoyen 3 (C3) :</u>

1. Pouvez-vous décrire la fréquence et la manière dont vous rencontrez du contenu lié aux forces de l’ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Fréquemment, mais c'est rarement flatteur. Moi, je suis sur Facebook, parfois Twitter, et un peu TikTok à cause des jeunes. Le souci, c'est que ce que je vois, ce sont souvent des extraits tronqués, des vidéos sorties de leur contexte, avec une narration biaisée. À force, on a l'impression que les policiers sont toujours les méchants, alors qu'ils font juste leur travail. C'est usant.

2. Quel type de contenu lié aux forces de l'ordre trouvez-vous le plus engageant ou le plus percutant, et pourquoi ?

Ce qui me parle, ce sont les vidéos pédagogiques. Quand un policier explique pourquoi tel geste est nécessaire, pourquoi une interpellation se passe d'une certaine manière, ça remet les choses au clair. Malheureusement, ce contenu-là ne circule pas autant que les clashs, parce que les gens préfèrent le buzz à la vérité. Et ça, c'est bien la preuve que l'opinion est manipulée par l'algorithme et certains médias.

3. Comment les réseaux sociaux influencent-ils votre perception de la légitimité des forces de l'ordre ?

Ils ne l'influencent pas : ils tentent de la détruire. Heureusement, je ne suis pas naïf. Moi, je pars du principe que si les forces de l'ordre interviennent, c'est qu'il y a une raison. La plupart du temps, ceux qu'on voit en vidéo ont quelque chose à se reprocher. Mais les réseaux en font des victimes. C'est devenu un sport national de taper sur la police, alors que sans eux, ça serait vite le chaos.

4. En quoi pensez-vous que la présence des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux diffère de leur représentation dans les médias traditionnels ?

Les deux sont problématiques, mais les réseaux, c'est pire. Au moins, à la télé, il y a encore une forme de filtre, un semblant de vérification. Sur les réseaux, c'est la foire à la désinformation. Tout le monde se prend pour un journaliste, sauf qu'il n'y a ni rigueur, ni recoupement. Et les vraies infos ? Elles se perdent dans le bruit.

5. Pouvez-vous décrire une situation où un contenu positif sur les forces de l'ordre a influencé votre perception d'elles ?

Je n'ai pas attendu une vidéo pour respecter la police. Mais j'ai vu des reportages où des policiers allaient dans les écoles, expliquaient leur métier, discutaient avec des jeunes. Ça, c'est utile. Ça montre qu'ils sont là pour servir, pas pour taper. Le reste, c'est de la propagande anti-flic, montée de toutes pièces par des militants ou des pseudos lanceurs d'alerte.

6. Comment réagissez-vous généralement lorsque vous voyez des incidents négatifs impliquant les forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Je me méfie. Je regarde, mais je prends du recul. Parce que j'ai bien compris le manège : on filme la fin, jamais le début. On oublie de dire qu'il y a eu provocation, insultes, jets de projectiles. Et puis les "témoins", ce sont souvent les potes de celui qui se fait interpeller. Donc non, je ne me laisse pas manipuler. Et j'en parle autour de moi pour remettre les pendules à l'heure.

7. Dans quelle mesure pensez-vous que les réseaux sociaux influencent la confiance ou la méfiance du public envers les forces de l'ordre ?

Ils instillent la méfiance, clairement. Surtout chez les plus jeunes, qui ne croisent pas souvent la police mais qui voient passer des centaines de vidéos négatives. Et après, ils flippent ou détestent les flics, sans jamais avoir eu affaire à eux. C'est grave. C'est comme si on leur apprenait à se méfier de ceux qui les protègent. À un moment, il faudra tirer les conséquences de cette manipulation organisée.

8. Pouvez-vous partager une expérience où votre opinion sur les forces de l'ordre a changé grâce à une exposition sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Elle n'a pas changé, elle s'est consolidée. Chaque fois que je vois une vidéo censée "accabler" la police, je me rends compte à quel point les gens sont malhonnêtes. Ils commentent sans rien savoir, partagent sans vérifier. Et à côté de ça, quand un policier se fait agresser, pas un mot, pas une vidéo, pas un hashtag. Ça m'a renforcé dans l'idée qu'ils font un boulot ingrat, avec peu de reconnaissance.

9. Que pensez-vous de la manière dont les forces de l'ordre interagissent avec le public via les réseaux sociaux ?

Ils sont trop timides. Je comprends qu'ils aient peur de mal faire, mais il faudrait qu'ils reprennent la main. Qu'ils répondent, qu'ils montrent leur quotidien, qu'ils rectifient les intox. Sinon, le terrain est occupé par ceux qui les détestent. Et ça fausse tout. Il ne faut pas laisser les réseaux devenir une arme contre la police.

10. Quel type de contenu lié aux forces de l'ordre renforce votre confiance en elles, et quel type la diminue ?

Ce qui renforce, ce sont les images d'entraînement, les interventions réussies, les gestes de secours, les opérations de terrain. Ce qui diminue, ce sont les montages mensongers, les fausses accusations, les "témoignages" sans preuve, relayés à la chaîne. Le danger, c'est que le mensonge se propage plus vite que la vérité.

11. Selon vous, quelle est l'importance de la transparence dans les communications des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Elle est importante, bien sûr. Mais il ne faut pas non plus que la police passe son temps à se justifier. À force de vouloir "expliquer", on donne du crédit à des accusations infondées. La transparence, oui. Mais pas la repentance permanente. La police doit rester ferme, digne, et ne pas rentrer dans le jeu de ceux qui cherchent le buzz.

12. Comment interprétez-vous les réponses des forces de l'ordre aux critiques publiques ou aux incidents viraux ?

Elles sont trop discrètes à mon goût. Parfois, j'aimerais qu'ils tapent du poing sur la table, qu'ils disent clairement : "C'est faux", "C'est tronqué", "C'est diffamatoire". Mais je comprends qu'ils soient tenus à une réserve. Le problème, c'est que cette retenue est exploitée par ceux qui veulent nuire. Il faudrait un vrai contre-discours, assumé, structuré.

13. Quel rôle jouent les contenus émotionnels ou engageants dans la formation de l'opinion publique ?

Un rôle énorme. Et c'est bien là le danger. L'émotion prend le pas sur la raison. Une vidéo qui fait pleurer ou qui choque aura plus d'impact qu'un rapport de 50 pages. Mais l'émotion, ça trompe. La réalité, elle, est complexe. Elle demande du temps, de l'analyse. Et ça, les réseaux ne le permettent pas.

14. Pensez-vous qu'une exposition répétée à certains contenus des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux normalise certains comportements ?

Oui. Et pas les bons. On banalise la contestation, l'insolence, le refus d'obtempérer. On présente ça comme un "acte de résistance". Résultat : des jeunes qui filment au lieu d'obéir, qui provoquent pour passer sur TikTok. On est en train de fabriquer une génération qui confond droit et caprice. Et ça va nous exploser à la figure.

15. Si vous pouviez suggérer une modification à la façon dont les forces de l'ordre interagissent avec le public sur les réseaux sociaux, quelle serait-elle et pourquoi ?

Être plus offensifs. Pas violents, mais offensifs dans le discours. Répondre. Rétablir les faits. Ne plus laisser les réseaux devenir une poubelle à rumeurs. Et surtout, valoriser les réussites, les sacrifices, les actions du quotidien. La majorité silencieuse soutient la police. Il est temps qu'on l'entende.

Traduction

<u>Citizen 3 (C3):</u>

1. Can you describe how often and how you encounter law enforcement-related content on social media?

Frequently, but it's rarely flattering. I'm on Facebook, sometimes Twitter, and a little TikTok because of the young people. The problem is that what I see are often truncated clips, videos taken out of context, with a biased narrative. Eventually, we get the impression that the police are always the bad guys, when they're just doing their job. It's tiring.

2. What type of law enforcement-related content do you find most engaging or impactful, and why?

What resonates with me are educational videos. When a police officer explains why a certain action is necessary, why an arrest is carried out in a certain way, it clarifies things. Unfortunately, this content doesn't circulate as much as the clashes, because people prefer buzz to the truth. And that's clear proof that public opinion is manipulated by algorithms and certain media outlets.

3. How do social media influence your perception of the legitimacy of law enforcement?

They don't influence it: they try to destroy it. Fortunately, I'm not naive. I assume that if law enforcement intervenes, it's for a reason. Most of the time, those we see on video have something to hide. But the networks make them victims. It's become a national sport to attack the police, whereas without them, chaos would quickly ensue.

4. How do you think the presence of law enforcement on social media differs from their representation in traditional media?

Both are problematic, but the networks are worse. At least on TV, there's still some form of filter, a semblance of verification. On social media, it's a veritable disinformation fair. Everyone thinks they're a journalist, except there's no rigor or cross-checking. And the real news? It gets lost in the noise.

5. Can you describe a situation where positive content about law enforcement influenced your perception of them?

I didn't wait for a video to respect the police. But I've seen reports where police officers went to schools, explained their job, and talked with young people. That's useful. It shows they're there to serve, not to beat up. The rest is anti-cop propaganda, fabricated by activists or pseudo-whistleblowers.

6. How do you generally react when you see negative incidents involving law enforcement on social media?

I'm wary. I watch, but I take a step back. Because I understand the trick: they film the end, never the beginning. They forget to mention that there was provocation, insults, and projectiles thrown. And then the "witnesses" are often the friends of the person being arrested. So no, I don't let myself be manipulated. And I talk about it with those around me to set the record straight.

7. To what extent do you think social media influences public trust or distrust of law enforcement?

It clearly instills distrust. Especially among younger people, who don't often encounter the police but see hundreds of negative videos. And then, they freak out or hate the cops, without ever having had any contact with them. It's serious. It's as if they're being taught to distrust those who protect them. At some point, they'll have to draw the consequences of this organized manipulation.

8. Can you share an experience where your opinion of law enforcement changed thanks to exposure on social media?

It didn't change, it was consolidated. Every time I see a video supposedly "blaming" the police, I realize how dishonest people are. They comment without knowing anything, share without verifying. And on top of that, when a police officer is attacked, not a word, not a video, not a hashtag. It reinforced my belief that they do a thankless job, with little recognition.

9. What do you think of the way law enforcement interacts with the public via social media?

They're too timid. I understand that they're afraid of doing wrong, but they need to take control. They need to respond, they need to show their daily lives, they need to correct the false information. Otherwise, the field is occupied by those who hate them. And that distorts everything. We must not let social media become a weapon against the police.

10. What type of content related to law enforcement strengthens your trust in them, and what type diminishes it?

What strengthens it is footage of training, successful interventions, rescue operations, and field operations. What diminishes it is the false fabrications, the false accusations, the unsubstantiated "testimonies" relayed in a chain. The danger is that lies spread faster than the truth.

11. In your opinion, how important is transparency in law enforcement communications on social media?

It's important, of course. But the police must also not spend their time justifying themselves. By constantly trying to "explain," we give credence to unfounded accusations. Transparency, yes. But not constant repentance. The police must remain firm, dignified, and not play the game of those seeking buzz.

12. How do you interpret the responses of law enforcement to public criticism or viral incidents?

They are too discreet for my taste. Sometimes, I wish they would bang their fists on the table, to clearly say: "It's false," "It's distorted," "It's defamatory." But I understand that they are required to maintain restraint. The problem is that this restraint is exploited by those who want to cause harm. We need a real counter-narrative, assertive, and structured.

13. What role do emotional or engaging content play in shaping public opinion?

A huge role. And that's the danger. Emotion trumps reason. A video that makes people cry or shocks will have more impact than a 50-page report. But emotion is deceptive. Reality is complex. It requires time and analysis. And social media doesn't allow for that.

14. Do you think that repeated exposure to certain law enforcement content on social media normalizes certain behaviors?

Yes. And not the right kind. We trivialize protest, insolence, and refusal to comply. We present it as an "act of resistance." The result: young people who film instead of obeying, who provoke others to get on TikTok. We're creating a generation that confuses right with whim. And it's going to blow up in our faces.

15. If you could suggest one change to the way law enforcement interacts with the public on social media, what would it be and why?

Be more offensive. Not violent, but offensive in your discourse. Respond. Restate the facts. Stop letting social media become a rumor mill. And above all, celebrate successes, sacrifices, and everyday actions. The silent majority supports the police. It's time we heard them.

Policier municipale #1 (LEO1) :

1. Pouvez-vous décrire comment votre service utilise actuellement les réseaux sociaux pour interagir avec le public ?

Alors d'abord, permettez-moi de vous présenter un petit peu... Permettez-moi de vous présenter un petit peu le service. Bon, nous, on n'a pas à proprement parler un service de communication. Imaginez bien, d'accord ? On a juste, effectivement, une partie — une petite partie — de l'effectif, environ deux personnes, qui ont des aptitudes, dirons-nous, sur tout ce qui est réseaux sociaux. Et dans le cadre un petit peu, si vous voulez, de la démocratisation de l'image des forces de l'ordre auprès des publics, il a été décidé de mettre à profit ces connaissances-là pour faire de la communication. Alors bien sûr, ce sont toujours des communications sur ce que l'on fait sur le terrain : de la sensibilisation, etc. Voilà, on n'est pas là pour alimenter, ce n'est pas

pour faire du buzz, ce n'est pas pour faire quoi que ce soit de cet ordre. Il faut quand même préserver l'image de la police.

2. Quels sont vos principaux objectifs de la stratégie de communication sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Alors pour faire simple, comme je l'ai dit tout à l'heure, c'est : pédagogie. L'objectif, c'est d'abord de sensibiliser les citoyens à nos opérations, c'est-à-dire aux opérations qu'on mène. Parce qu'une bonne partie de ce que l'on fait, eh bien… ils ne le voient pas forcément. Ils ne voient pas les interventions nocturnes, ils ne voient pas l'assistance portée éventuellement à des personnes en difficulté. Ils ne voient pas ce qui se passe quand on escorte, par exemple, des cortèges dans le cadre de manifestations. Voilà, ils ne voient pas tout ça. Il faut aussi les sensibiliser à ce qui se passe sur les routes. D'accord, ça peut être, à un moment donné, montrer ce qui se passe… je ne sais pas, sur un point de contrôle routier — pas forcément autoroutier, ça, ce sont nos collègues de la gendarmerie. Mais plutôt voilà, faire de la pédagogie, les sensibiliser, leur rappeler les comportements à adopter, notamment par exemple lors des grands week-ends. Pendant l'été, quand on prend la voiture pour partir en vacances. Je rappelle : c'est protéger, communiquer et sensibiliser.

3. De quelle manière pensez-vous que l'engagement sur les réseaux sociaux influence la perception du public quant à la légitimité des forces de l'ordre ?

Alors, je ne suis pas sûr d'avoir totalement compris la question, mais… La légitimité, si vous voulez : plus on montre effectivement que l'on est présent sur les théâtres d'opération — comme je vous l'ai dit : dans la rue, auprès des gens, sur des lieux de festivités, etc. — plus on montre qu'on est présent, bien sûr. Et on montre notre action, qui est à la fois, je rappelle, principalement à vocation passive. On est censés être, dans un premier temps, présents pour justement d'abord dissuader ceux qui auraient envie de causer des troubles. Et réprimer, éventuellement, ceux qui en causent. Mais surtout aussi pour rassurer, et montrer effectivement que l'événement peut se dérouler dans de bonnes conditions. D'accord ? Donc la légitimité, elle vient en montrant justement notre action. Et comme j'ai dit, l'action première de la police, c'est surtout une action de… rassurer, communiquer, orienter, voilà, et dissuader. Et sinon, bien évidemment, intercepter — forcément, si vous avez des troubles évidents à l'ordre public ou des violences.

4. Comment évaluez-vous l'impact positif ou négatif de votre présence sur les réseaux sociaux sur la perception du public ?

C'est difficile de l'évaluer, mais dans l'ensemble, d'après ce que montrent les enquêtes, a priori, les citoyens n'ont pas de mauvaise image de la police. Mais effectivement, il y a une partie des personnes qui écoutent beaucoup ce qui circule dans les médias — c'est-à-dire, l'image qui peut être donnée parfois des forces de l'ordre sur certaines opérations. Je pense notamment à ce qui s'est passé pendant les Gilets jaunes, etc. Ils écoutent aussi un petit peu tout ce qui ressort sur certains réseaux sociaux. Parfois, c'est très décontextualisé : on ne montre pas la réalité de ce qui se passe réellement sur le terrain. Donc on a des personnes qui sont… Je dirais qu'il y a un impact positif. Moi, je pars du principe qu'on a de bons retours quand on publie. Maintenant, est-ce que ça influence, en général, l'opinion ? Je ne suis pas sûr que ça fera changer d'avis une personne qui pense que les forces de l'ordre sont violentes, une personne qui pense qu'elles sont trop nombreuses, qu'elles abusent de leur pouvoir, etc. Vous voyez ce que je veux dire ? Je ne sais pas… une personne comme ça, je ne sais pas si on peut la faire changer d'avis en montrant ce que l'on fait réellement. Et pas en réduisant notre intervention à un contexte qui nécessitait une intervention forte — qui a été oublié — ou à une dérive qui a eu lieu dans le corps de police.

5. Quel type de contenu génère généralement l'engagement le plus positif, et pourquoi ?

Eh bien, ce sont souvent les contenus, vous savez, qui sont en lien avec les missions d'assistance, les missions de protection, les missions de sensibilisation. Parce que justement, les gens… c'est le dénominateur commun de tout le monde : protéger les gens. Donc ils finissent par être réceptifs à ça, ils sont assez réceptifs. Et c'est quelque chose qui, généralement, passe assez bien.

6. Pouvez-vous donner un exemple où l'engagement sur les réseaux sociaux a amélioré la coopération du public avec les forces de l'ordre ?

Les engagements sur les réseaux sociaux… Vous savez, les communications… Alors moi, je touche du bois, on n'en a pas eu nous, à proprement parler. Mais vous savez, quand vous avez des enlèvements, quand vous avez des disparitions inquiétantes, etc., le fait de voir sur les

réseaux sociaux les publications… D'abord, ça rappelle aux gens qu'on est là. Voilà, les forces de l'ordre sont à leurs côtés. Et généralement, il y a un grand taux d'engagement parce que les gens comprennent qu'il ne faut pas plaisanter : il y a vraiment quelqu'un qui, derrière, est peut-être en danger, etc. Donc il faut… Voilà, les signalements inquiétants, ça a souvent beaucoup d'écho. Et ça rappelle aux gens que, ben, on est là. Voilà, vous voyez ? On est là, quelle que soit l'heure. S'il y a un problème, vous appelez. Évitez de faire les marioles parce que, bon, ben voilà : il y a des appels intempestifs juste pour faire des signalements bidons. Ça fait perdre du temps à tout le monde, de l'énergie. Et ça donne de l'espoir, peut-être, à des gens qui, eux, veulent vraiment des bonnes nouvelles.

7. Comment réagissez-vous généralement aux représentations négatives ou aux critiques virales des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Je pense qu'il ne faut pas y aller dans ces perspectives… Ce n'est pas qu'il ne faut pas y réagir… La meilleure façon de réagir à ces propos, c'est qu'on a des institutions représentatives qui sont chargées de nous défendre, de défendre l'image de la police, bien sûr. Mais nous, nous — nous, on ne doit pas y réagir. Un policier ne doit pas réagir. Un policier, il doit continuer sa mission, toujours être là pour protéger les personnes, y compris celles qui crachent sur l'image de la police. Il doit être là pour les protéger. Dans tous les cas, justement, c'est la meilleure façon de montrer aux gens qu'ils ont tort : c'est de leur montrer qu'on est toujours là, en opération, etc. Quelle que soit l'heure de la soirée ou de la journée, on est là pour protéger les citoyens. Donc il ne faut pas réagir à ça. D'abord parce que si on réagit, c'est qu'on estime que cette personne avait, a priori, quelque chose à nous reprocher. Très souvent, les images sont décontextualisées : on vous montre un policier qui surréagit sur une vidéo. Oui, mais bon… Il est en plein milieu d'une manif violente, il y a des jets de pierres, etc. C'est plus une réaction de protection et de défense que d'agression. Et ça, c'est décontextualisé. Vous voyez ce que je veux dire ? On vous montre une image où il y a un policier qui réagit. On vous montre des lycéens qui sont à genoux, les mains sur la tête, dans une cour de récréation, et on vous dit : « Ah ben, ce sont de méchants policiers. » Non, c'est peut-être juste des policiers qui ont fait une opération de maintien de l'ordre parce qu'il y avait des trouble-fêtes, voilà, et qui ont remis un petit peu d'ordre dans tout ça. C'est décontextualisé. Alors que, quand on recontextualise, il n'y a pas de raison de se reprocher quoi que ce soit. Donc non, pas de réaction : il ne faut pas réagir à ça.

8. Quel impact pensez-vous que l'exposition répétée à des incidents négatifs impliquant les forces de l'ordre a sur la confiance du public ?

C'est toujours pareil… La confiance du public, vous savez, est à double sens. Évidemment, que voulez-vous que je vous dise ? Imaginons : demain, il y a une agression, il y a un problème. Qui vous appelez ? De toute façon, vous allez appeler la police. Eh bien, c'est bien que vous avez confiance en elle. Je veux dire, sinon, vous ne les appelleriez pas : vous feriez justice vous-même, etc. Donc les gens appellent quand même. Donc la confiance, ils l'ont. Mais c'est juste que la connotation ne nous aide pas — et pas seulement au regard du public, mais aussi au regard des forces elles-mêmes. Vous savez, chaque année, on a des collègues… On a des suicides dans la profession, on a des personnes en dépression, en burn-out. Pourquoi ? Parce qu'ils ont l'impression qu'en fait, on ne les aime pas. Ils ont l'impression que ce qu'ils font, ce n'est pas ce qu'il faudrait faire. Ils n'ont pas de souci… Bien. Donc donner une image négative, ça aggrave la situation des policiers. Ça n'aggrave pas tant la confiance des personnes. Les personnes, au final, si elles ont un problème, la première chose qu'elles font, c'est composer le 17 — ou, s'il y a un incendie, le 18. Donc, dans tous les cas, elles savent qu'elles peuvent compter sur nous. Donc la confiance, c'est un faux sujet. La confiance envers les forces de l'ordre, elle existe. Maintenant, c'est vrai qu'une mauvaise image entretient aussi de mauvaises relations, de mauvais propos. Et nous, on a des policiers qui les lisent, ces propos-là. On a des forces de l'ordre qui les lisent, et qui, donc, vont se sentir directement atteintes.

9. Quels sont les principaux défis auxquels vous êtes confronté pour maintenir la transparence dans la gestion des relations publiques sur les réseaux sociaux ?

La transparence… On ne peut pas tout montrer. On ne peut pas tout montrer. Moi, d'abord, je suis très défavorable au fait de montrer des photos de collègues en intervention, parce que… ben, ce sont des images… On a quand même eu des collègues qui ont été agressés, je rappelle, il n'y a pas si longtemps que ça. Donc ce sont quand même des images violentes, et ce sont des images qui peuvent être source de violence. On peut les repérer, on peut les traquer… Après, je ne sais pas ce qui peut se passer. Donc pour moi, déjà, diffuser des visages : je ne suis pas trop pour. Deuxièmement, on ne va pas tout diffuser. On ne va pas diffuser des interventions où l'on sait que ça peut être potentiellement violent, où il peut y avoir de la gestuelle, des réactions… Voilà, le but n'est pas de diffuser ça. Parce que sinon, là, vous montrez le policier dans son rôle répressif. La répression, je rappelle, c'est la dernière limite. C'est-à-dire : si vous ne me donnez

pas le choix, je suis obligé de réprimer, je suis obligé de me défendre, je suis obligé d'attaquer, peut-être, à un moment donné. Je rappelle que ce n'est jamais le policier qui tire en premier. C'est toujours la menace en face qui tire la première. Et donc le policier réagit. Bon… Donc montrer le rôle répressif, je trouve que ce n'est pas une bonne idée, parce que les gens vont forcément voir la façade négative de la répression, sans voir le contexte en face, l'armement en face, le danger en face. Voilà. Il vaut mieux montrer des situations de pédagogie. La pédagogie, moi, ça ne me dérange pas de montrer, par exemple, des vacanciers qui font des dépassements dangereux, qui vont trop vite sur l'autoroute. Parce qu'au final, qui est-ce qui met le plus en danger ? Ben, c'est eux. Alors après, s'ils ont envie de dire : « Ouais, les policiers nous ont encore mis des amendes », eh bien OK, soit, il n'y a pas de problème. Ceci étant, vous êtes toujours en vie. Moi, je préfère que vous preniez 135 € d'amende et un retrait de permis, mais que vous rentriez chez vous en vie avec vos enfants. Là, j'estime que c'est bien de communiquer et de montrer. Parce que justement, on rappelle aux gens ça. Mais montrer les policiers en intervention — sauf dans certains cas — ce n'est pas nécessaire, parce que ça va peut-être entretenir des clivages. Les gens vont dire : « Ah, ils interviennent en cité ! » Ça ne veut pas dire qu'on intervient en cité. Ça ne veut pas dire que les gens en cité sont tous dangereux. Non. Ça veut dire qu'il y a eu, à un moment donné, une intervention ici. Vous voyez ? Toujours veiller à protéger aussi l'image, l'interprétation qui peut être faite. Pas de buzz, quoi.

10. Comment conciliez-vous la nécessité de promouvoir une image positive des forces de l'ordre avec la garantie de crédibilité et de responsabilité ?

Comme je vous l'ai dit, en ne touchant pas à l'aspect répressif. On est là pour communiquer sur de la sensibilisation, pour montrer qu'on est là. Et c'est la meilleure façon d'être crédible, hein. Vous voyez ? C'est de montrer qu'on sensibilise les gens. Un policier, il est d'autant plus crédible qu'il n'a pas besoin d'utiliser l'arme de la répression. Je veux dire, justement, il est dans la pédagogie. C'est toujours plus efficace de rappeler quelqu'un à l'ordre, à un moment donné, en lui faisant bien comprendre que, si jamais il recommence, effectivement, il y aura pénalité. Il y aura amende, il y aura retrait, tout ce que vous voulez. Et pas que ça. Plutôt que d'être dans le répressif. Donc au contraire, on montre la légitimité des forces de l'ordre en étant justement dans l'accompagnement du citoyen. En lui rappelant, à un moment donné, les règles — mais en ne les lui rappelant qu'une fois. On lui rappelle que bon, il a fauté une fois… On va voir. Mais la deuxième fois, il n'y aura pas de passe-droit. Point.

11. Pensez-vous que les médias sociaux influencent la perception du public quant au rôle et aux responsabilités des forces de l'ordre, et si oui, comment ?

Bah, les réseaux sociaux… Si vous voulez, vous avez des affrontements de… vous avez des camps, entre guillemets. Vous avez un camp, a priori, qui est du genre à dire : « Soutien à la police », etc. Et puis vous avez un autre camp qui a tendance à dire : « Les policiers, c'est… violents », etc. Voilà. Je n'ai pas vraiment l'impression que, sur les réseaux sociaux, il y ait un soutien plus que ça du corps de police. Vous avez un affrontement. Ceux qui disent « total soutien », oui, c'est vrai qu'a priori, ça semble être bien… mais quand on demande des moyens supplémentaires, des financements supplémentaires, on ne les a pas. Parce que ça coûte des impôts, etc. Quand il faudrait une police de proximité pour être au plus proche des jeunes dans les quartiers — exemple — voilà, un policier, il est très à sa place au milieu des citoyens. Vous voyez ce que je veux dire ? Pour socialiser avec eux, pour développer du lien, etc. C'est très important. Ça participe au calme. Je veux dire, pour créer de l'activité aussi, etc. Il est là pour ça. Et quand on demande des moyens, on ne les a pas. Donc ceux qui nous soutiennent, a priori, nous soutiennent par les paroles… mais ils ne nous soutiennent pas dans les actions. Autre chose : vous avez ceux, par contre, qui ne nous aiment pas. Donc qui ont l'intention de nous critiquer, etc. Moi, ce que je ne veux pas, dans ces publications, c'est qu'on laisse tout dire. Il faut impérativement, à chaque fois, que ce soit défendu. Mais ça ne peut pas être le fait de notre communication à nous. Ça, c'est des communications… C'est le ministère qui doit réagir. C'est le ministère qui doit peut-être sanctionner certains diffuseurs qui exagèrent, qui jettent un discrédit sur les forces de l'ordre. C'est les syndicats. Mais ce n'est pas nous, en tant que tels. Nous, on continue notre mission de pédagogie, de sensibilisation.

12. Comment les conversations directes avec les citoyens sur les réseaux sociaux influencent-elles la confiance du public et les relations communautaires ?

Alors, ça, ça va être une question de moyens. Mais je vous rappelle que nous, on n'a pas beaucoup de moyens et on n'a pas beaucoup de temps. Donc on anime un petit peu quelques publications, mais pas trop. Donc ça signifie quoi ? Ça signifie qu'on n'a pas les moyens d'alimenter de la discussion avec tout le monde. Nous, c'est plutôt : on diffuse. Les gens discutent sur le sujet, il n'y a pas de souci. On voit qu'il y a des soutiens, qu'il n'y en a pas. Bon, OK, soit, peu importe. Mais si on a fait une erreur de communication, on recorrige en dessous, on commente éventuellement. Mais on n'a pas le temps de le faire. Ça prend beaucoup

de temps de commenter, surtout si on est sur des postes locaux. Vous avez plusieurs abonnés sur la page… Imaginez : vous avez, je ne sais pas, 50 commentaires. On doit répondre aux 50 ? C'est problématique.

13. D'après votre expérience, quel rôle jouent les contenus émotionnellement engageants, par exemple les témoignages humains, les actes héroïques, dans la formation de l'opinion publique ?

Ah, ben forcément que ça a un impact favorable. C'est un impact favorable. On a effectivement des… C'est… c'est humain. Un policier, à la base, il a une famille, un époux, une femme, des enfants, etc. Donc c'est bien de rappeler, à un moment donné, que le policier est ce qu'il est réellement aussi : c'est-à-dire un humain comme tous les autres. Vous voyez ce que je veux dire ? Il ne s'est pas levé ce matin en se disant : « Tiens, je vais être violent », ou en se disant : « Tiens, je vais me faire agresser. » Il s'est levé ce matin en se disant : « Tiens, je vais aller protéger les personnes, sensibiliser, faire les gros yeux quand c'est nécessaire, sortir le carnet quand c'est vraiment nécessaire aussi, et sortir éventuellement matraque et autres quand c'est vraiment très nécessaire. » Vous voyez ? Donc bien sûr que toute communication est importante. On saisit ces occasions-là, parce qu'elles ne sont pas nombreuses, déjà. Et je vous rappelle qu'une grande partie de notre action est quand même silencieuse. Vous ne nous voyez pas agir. Vous ne voyez pas la police tous les jours dehors. Vous les avez aussi pendant les JO, c'était le cas. Mais parce que, là, c'était un autre dispositif. Ce n'était pas la police qu'on regardait à ce moment-là : c'était le pays. J'imagine que le monde entier regardait le même pays, donc on avait le devoir d'être présent pour montrer : « Regardez la sécurité », etc. Mais sinon, au quotidien, vous ne voyez pas. Vous nous entendez un peu avec les pimpons… Et sinon, c'est tout.

14. Comment voyez-vous l'évolution du rôle des réseaux sociaux dans les relations entre la police et la communauté à l'avenir ?

Je ne suis pas sûr que ça va changer notre relation, parce que dans les faits, de toute façon… Aujourd'hui, le citoyen, quand il a un problème, qui est-ce qu'il appelle ? Ben, il appelle le 17. Ouais, il appelle la police. De toute façon, quel que soit son rapport à la police, il sera très content de nous avoir en face de chez lui, quand il aura un souci, quand il aura un problème. Est-ce que ça va vraiment altérer sa façon de voir les choses ? Est-ce que ça va vraiment altérer

sa perception des services dont il bénéficie ? Je ne pense pas. Le citoyen, il est là pour être ici, pour être protégé par nos soins. Il reçoit, bien sûr, l'attention dont il a besoin… Mais voilà, derrière, c'est pas plus, quoi.

15. Et si vous pouviez apporter une amélioration significative à l'utilisation des réseaux sociaux par les forces de l'ordre, quelle serait-elle et pourquoi ?

Une amélioration ? Bah, on pourrait… Alors, après, le problème, c'est que ce sont des budgets, et je sais très bien que ça ne sera pas possible. Donc… bah… C'est difficile de répondre, c'est difficile de vous répondre. Mais les réseaux sociaux, moi, je pense qu'on a déjà une bonne communication sur les réseaux sociaux, hein. Par contre, ça… ça pourrait être une communication centrale, pour faire connaissance avec les citoyens. Après… le truc, c'est qu'on n'a pas beaucoup de temps. C'est ça, le problème. C'est que, comme on est en effectif réduit, on manque de personnel. Donc il y a beaucoup de choses que j'aimerais vous dire, qu'on pourrait faire… et qu'on ne peut pas faire. Vous voyez ? De la police plus présente à proximité, des matchs le dimanche… Vous voyez ce que je veux dire ? Voilà. Pour créer du lien avec la population locale. C'est le but d'un policier. Un policier, il n'a même pas besoin de dissuader quand il est justement dans l'action avec les gens, avec les jeunes, avec n'importe qui. Parce que, justement, il y a un lien. Vous voyez ce que je veux dire ? Tout le monde sait bien qu'il est policier. Mais voilà, il n'a pas besoin de le rappeler. Donc les activités… Le problème, c'est qu'il faut pouvoir créer ces activités. Il faut avoir du temps. Et on n'en a pas, puisqu'on est peu nombreux.

Traduction

<u>Municipal police officer #1 (LEO1):</u>

1. Can you describe how your department currently uses social media to interact with the public?

So first, let me introduce you a little... Let me introduce you a little bit about the department. Well, we don't have a communications department, strictly speaking. Imagine that, okay? We

only have a portion—a small portion—of the staff, about two people, who have skills, shall we say, in all things social media. And as part of, if you will, the democratization of the image of law enforcement among the public, it was decided to use this knowledge to communicate. Of course, these are always communications about what we do in the field: awareness-raising, etc. So, we're not here to fuel, we're not here to create buzz, we're not here to do anything of that nature. We still need to preserve the police's image.

2. What are your main objectives for your social media communications strategy?

So, to put it simply, as I said earlier, it's: education. The goal is first and foremost to raise public awareness of our operations, that is, the operations we conduct. Because a good part of what we do, well... they don't necessarily see it. They don't see the nighttime interventions, they don't see the assistance we may provide to people in difficulty. They don't see what happens when we escort, for example, processions during demonstrations. So, they don't see all that. We also need to raise their awareness of what's happening on the roads. Okay, it could be, at some point, showing what's happening... I don't know, at a road checkpoint—not necessarily on a motorway, that's our colleagues from the gendarmerie. But rather, here's the thing: educate them, raise awareness, remind them of the behaviors to adopt, especially for example during long weekends. During the summer, when we take the car to go on vacation. I remind you: it's about protecting, communicating, and raising awareness.

3. How do you think social media engagement influences the public's perception of the legitimacy of law enforcement?

So, I'm not sure I fully understand the question, but... Legitimacy, if you will: the more we actually show that we're present in theaters of operation—as I said: in the streets, with people, at venues, etc.—the more we show that we're present, of course. And we demonstrate our action, which is, I repeat, primarily passive. We're supposed to be present, first and foremost, to dissuade those who might want to cause trouble. And, if necessary, to repress those who do cause it. But above all, we also want to reassure and effectively demonstrate that the event can take place under safe conditions. Okay? So legitimacy comes from demonstrating our action. And as I said, the police's primary role is above all to... reassure, communicate, guide, and deter.

And otherwise, of course, intercept—obviously, if there are obvious public order disturbances or incidents of violence.

4. How do you assess the positive or negative impact of your presence on social media on public perception?

It's difficult to assess, but overall, based on what the surveys show, citizens don't have a negative image of the police. But indeed, there is a segment of people who pay close attention to what's circulating in the media—that is, the image that can sometimes be given of law enforcement during certain operations. I'm thinking in particular of what happened during the Yellow Vest protests, etc. They also pay close attention to everything that appears on certain social media platforms. Sometimes it's very decontextualized: we don't show the reality of what's really happening on the ground. So we have people who are... I would say there's a positive impact. I assume we get good feedback when we publish. Now, does it generally influence opinion? I'm not sure it will change the mind of someone who thinks that the police are violent, someone who thinks there are too many of them, that they abuse their power, etc. Do you see what I mean? I don't know... a person like that, I don't know if we can change their mind by showing what we're actually doing. And not by reducing our intervention to a context that required strong intervention—which was forgotten—or to a deviation that took place within the police force.

5. What type of content generally generates the most positive engagement, and why?

Well, it's often content, you know, related to assistance missions, protection missions, awareness-raising missions. Because, precisely, people... that's everyone's common denominator: protecting people. So they end up being receptive to that, they're quite receptive. And it's something that generally goes down quite well.

6. Can you give an example where social media engagement has improved public cooperation with law enforcement?

Social media engagement... You know, communications... Well, touch wood, we haven't had any, strictly speaking. But you know, when you have kidnappings, when you have disturbing disappearances, etc., seeing posts on social media... First of all, it reminds people that we're

there. So, the police are on their side. And generally, there's a high level of engagement because people understand that you can't joke around: there really is someone behind it who might be in danger, etc. So you have to... So, worrying reports often get a lot of traction. And it reminds people that, well, we're here. There you go, you see? We're here, whatever the time. If there's a problem, you call. Avoid being a jerk because, well, there you go: there are unwanted calls just to make bogus reports. It wastes everyone's time and energy. And it gives hope, perhaps, to people who really want good news.

7. How do you generally react to negative portrayals or viral criticism of law enforcement on social media?

I don't think we should approach it from that perspective... It's not that we shouldn't react to them... The best way to react to these comments is that we have representative institutions that are responsible for defending us, for defending the image of the police, of course. But we—we—we shouldn't react to them. A police officer shouldn't react. A police officer must continue his mission, always be there to protect people, including those who criticize the image of the police. He must be there to protect them. In any case, that's precisely the best way to show people they're wrong: to show them that we're still there, on duty, etc. Whatever the time of day or night, we're there to protect citizens. So we shouldn't react to that. First, because if we react, it's because we think that this person had, a priori, something to reproach us for. Very often, the images are decontextualized: we show you a police officer who overreacts on a video. Yes, but well... He's in the middle of a violent demonstration, there are stones being thrown, etc. It's more a reaction of protection and defense than of aggression. And that's decontextualized. Do you see what I mean? We show you an image where there's a police officer who reacts. We show you high school students who are on their knees, hands on their heads, in a playground, and we say to you: "Ah well, they're bad police officers." No, maybe it's just police officers who carried out a law enforcement operation because there were troublemakers, that's it, and who restored a little bit of order to everything. It's decontextualized. Whereas, when you put it back into context, there's no reason to blame yourself for anything. So no, no reaction: you shouldn't react to that.

8. What impact do you think repeated exposure to negative incidents involving law enforcement has on public trust?

It's always the same... Public trust, you know, is a two-way street. Obviously, what do you want me to tell you? Let's imagine: tomorrow, there's an assault, there's a problem. Who do you call? You're going to call the police anyway. Well, it's good that you trust them. I mean, otherwise, you wouldn't call them: you'd take the law into your own hands, etc. So people call anyway. So they have trust. But it's just that the connotation doesn't help us—and not just in the eyes of the public, but also in the eyes of the police themselves. You know, every year, we have colleagues... We have suicides in the profession, we have people suffering from depression, burnout. Why? Because they have the impression that, in fact, we don't like them. They have the impression that what they're doing isn't what should be done. They don't have any problems... Good. So giving a negative image makes the situation worse for the police. It doesn't really worsen people's trust. People, in the end, if they have a problem, the first thing they do is dial 17 - or, if there's a fire, 18. So, in any case, they know they can count on us. So trust is a false subject. Trust in law enforcement exists. Now, it's true that a bad image also fosters bad relationships, bad comments. And we have police officers who read those comments. We have law enforcement officers who read them and who, will feel directly affected.

9. What are the main challenges you face in maintaining transparency in managing public relations on social media?

Transparency... You can't show everything. You can't show everything. First of all, I'm very much against showing photos of colleagues in action, because... well, they're images... We did have colleagues who were assaulted, I remind you, not that long ago. So these are still violent images, and they are images that can be a source of violence. We can spot them, we can track them... After that, I don't know what could happen. So, for me, first of all, sharing faces: I'm not really in favor of that. Secondly, we're not going to share everything. We're not going to share interventions where we know it could be potentially violent, where there could be gestures, reactions... Well, the goal isn't to share that. Because otherwise, you're showing the police officer in his repressive role. Repression, I remind you, is the last resort. That is to say: if you don't give me a choice, I am obliged to repress, I am obliged to defend myself, I am obliged to attack, perhaps, at some point. I remind you that it is never the police officer who shoots first. It is always the threat in front of them that shoots first. And so the police officer reacts. Well... So showing the repressive role, I don't think it's a good idea, because people will inevitably see the negative facade of repression, without seeing the context in front of them, the weaponry in front of them, the danger in front of them. There you go. It's better to show

educational situations. As for education, I don't mind showing, for example, holidaymakers who overtake dangerously, who go too fast on the motorway. Because in the end, who is putting the most danger? Well, it's them. So then, if they want to say: "Yeah, the police fined us again," well, OK, fine, there's no problem. That being said, you're still alive. I'd rather you get a €135 fine and have your license revoked, but that you get home alive with your children. In that case, I think it's good to communicate and show. Because we're reminding people of that. But showing the police in action—except in certain cases—isn't necessary, because that might fuel divisions. People will say: "Ah, they're intervening in a housing project!" That doesn't mean that we're intervening in a housing project. It doesn't mean that people in housing projects are all dangerous. No. It means that there was, at some point, an intervention here. You see? Always be careful to protect the image, the interpretation that can be made. No hype, then.

10. How do you reconcile the need to promote a positive image of law enforcement with ensuring credibility and accountability?

As I told you, by not touching on the repressive aspect. We're here to communicate about awareness, to show that we're there. And that's the best way to be credible, right? You see? It's to show that we're raising awareness. A police officer is all the more credible because he doesn't need to use the weapon of repression. I mean, precisely, he's in the business of education. It's always more effective to call someone to order, at a given moment, making it clear to him that, if he ever does it again, there will indeed be a penalty. There will be a fine, there will be a suspension, whatever you want. And not only that. Rather than being repressive. So, on the contrary, we demonstrate the legitimacy of law enforcement by supporting citizens. By reminding them, at a given moment, of the rules—but only reminding them once. We remind them that, well, they've done wrong once... We'll see. But the second time, there won't be any special treatment. Period.

11. Do you think social media influences public perceptions of the role and responsibilities of law enforcement, and if so, how?

Well, social media... If you will, you have clashes of... you have camps, so to speak. You have one camp, a priori, that's the type to say: "Support the police," etc. And then you have another camp that tends to say: "The police are... violent," etc. That's it. I don't really get the impression

that, on social media, there's much support for the police force. You have a clash. Those who say "total support," yes, it's true that a priori, it seems good... but when we ask for additional resources, additional funding, we don't get them. Because it costs taxes, etc. When we need community policing to be closer to young people in neighborhoods—for example—well, a police officer is very much at home among the citizens. You see what I mean? To socialize with them, to develop connections, etc. It's very important. It contributes to calm. I mean, to create activity too, etc. It's there for that. And when we ask for resources, we don't have them. So those who support us, a priori, support us with words... but they don't support us in actions. Another thing: you have those, on the other hand, who don't like us. So who intend to criticize us, etc. What I don't want in these publications is for anything to be said. It is imperative, each time, that it be defended. But that can't be due to our own communication. That's communications... It's the ministry that must react. It's the ministry that must perhaps sanction certain broadcasters who exaggerate, who discredit the police. It's the unions. But that's not us, as such. We continue our mission of education and awareness.

12. How do direct conversations with citizens on social media influence public trust and community relations?

So, that's going to be a question of resources. But I remind you that we don't have a lot of resources and we don't have a lot of time. So we moderate a few posts a little, but not too much. So what does that mean? It means we don't have the means to fuel a discussion with everyone. For us, it's more like: we disseminate. People discuss the topic, there's no problem. We see that there's support, that there isn't. Okay, fine, whatever. But if we made a communication error, we correct it below, we comment if necessary. But we don't have time to do that. It takes a lot of time to comment, especially if you're on local posts. You have several followers on the page... Imagine: you have, I don't know, 50 comments. Do you have to respond to all 50? That's problematic.

13. In your experience, what role do emotionally engaging content, for example, human testimonies, heroic acts, play in shaping public opinion?

Ah, well, of course it has a positive impact. It's a positive impact. We do have... It's... it's human. A police officer, basically, has a family, a husband, a wife, children, etc. So it's good to remind people, at some point, that the police officer is what he really is too: that is, a human like any other. Do you see what I mean? He didn't get up this morning thinking, "Hey, I'm going to be

violent," or thinking, "Hey, I'm going to get attacked." » He got up this morning saying to himself: "Hey, I'm going to go protect people, raise awareness, make a big face when necessary, take out the notebook when it's really necessary too, and possibly take out the baton and other things when it's really very necessary." You see? So of course all communication is important. We seize these opportunities, because they aren't numerous, already. And I remind you that a large part of our action is still silent. You don't see us acting. You don't see the police outside every day. You also have them during the Olympics, that was the case. But because, there, it was a different system. It wasn't the police we were looking at at that time: it was the country. I imagine that the whole world was looking at the same country, so we had a duty to be there to show: "Look at the security", etc. But otherwise, on a daily basis, you don't see. You hear us a little with the chimes... And otherwise, that's it.

14. How do you see the role of social media evolving in police-community relations in the future?

I'm not sure it's going to change our relationship, because in reality, anyway... Today, when a citizen has a problem, who do they call? Well, they call 911. Yeah, they call the police. In any case, whatever their relationship with the police, they'll be very happy to have us in front of their house when they have a problem, when they have a problem. Will it really alter their way of seeing things? Will it really alter their perception of the services they receive? I don't think so. Citizens are there to be here, to be protected by us. They receive, of course, the attention they need... But that's all there is to it, really.

15. And if you could make one significant improvement to the use of social media by law enforcement, what would it be and why?

An improvement? Well, we could... Well, the problem is that these are budgets, and I know very well that it won't be possible. So... well... It's difficult to answer, it's difficult to answer you. But social media, I think we already have good communication on social media, right. On the other hand, that... that could be central communication, to get to know the citizens. But... the thing is, we don't have much time. That's the problem. Since we're short-staffed, we're short on personnel. So there are a lot of things I'd like to tell you, things we could do... and can't do. You see? More police presence nearby, games on Sundays... You see what I mean? There you go.

To create a bond with the local population. That's the goal of a police officer. A police officer doesn't even need to dissuade when he's actually in action with people, with young people, with anyone. Because, precisely, there's a bond. You see what I mean? Everyone knows he's a police officer. But there's no need to remind people. So the activities... The problem is that you have to be able to create these activities. You have to have time. And we don't have any, since there are few of us.

Policier municipale #2 (LEO2) :

1. Pouvez-vous décrire comment votre service utilise actuellement les réseaux sociaux pour interagir avec le public ?

Écoutez, on utilise les réseaux sociaux parce qu'on n'a pas trop le choix. Aujourd'hui, si vous n'y êtes pas, on vous reproche d'être opaque. Mais soyons clairs : c'est un terrain piégé. On y publie ce qu'on peut, des opérations de prévention, un peu de sensibilisation, mais toujours avec une extrême prudence. Pourquoi ? Parce que la moindre image, le moindre mot, est récupéré, déformé, décontextualisé. On a deux personnes qui gèrent ça en plus de leur travail habituel, ce ne sont pas des community managers, ce sont des agents formés au terrain. Donc l'usage est limité, cadré, et franchement… quand je vois ce qui circule, je me dis qu'on a intérêt à rester sobres.

2. Quels sont vos principaux objectifs de la stratégie de communication sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Notre seul objectif, c'est de rétablir un minimum de vérité. Aujourd'hui, on est noyés dans des flots de commentaires haineux, de vidéos montées à charge, et de récits complètement biaisés. On essaie donc d'apporter un peu de contexte, de pédagogie, de montrer aussi ce qu'on fait réellement : assistance, prévention, protection. Mais ce n'est pas facile. Dès qu'on publie une action un peu visible, il y a toujours quelqu'un pour hurler à la propagande. Alors on reste mesurés, on rappelle les règles, on alerte sur certains comportements dangereux, et surtout, on fait le maximum pour ne pas tomber dans la polémique. Même si parfois, franchement, ça démange.

3. De quelle manière pensez-vous que l'engagement sur les réseaux sociaux influence la perception du public quant à la légitimité des forces de l'ordre ?

À force de laisser les réseaux faire la loi, on est en train de laisser la légitimité de l'uniforme se faire démolir à coups de tweets et de vidéos tronquées. On montre un extrait, on oublie le contexte, et derrière, on balance à la vindicte populaire. Résultat : le public voit ce qu'on veut bien lui montrer, rarement la réalité complète. La légitimité, elle ne vient pas des réseaux sociaux. Elle vient de la loi, de la République, de la mission qu'on remplit tous les jours, et souvent dans le silence. Mais comme le silence ne fait pas de buzz, il ne fait pas d'audience. Et ça, forcément, ça biaise la perception. Drastiquement.

4. Comment évaluez-vous l'impact positif ou négatif de votre présence sur les réseaux sociaux sur la perception du public ?

L'impact positif, il existe, mais il est maigre par rapport à la violence verbale qu'on s'y prend dans la figure. C'est à se demander pourquoi on continue. Il y a des citoyens qui nous remercient, heureusement. Mais on est surtout confrontés à une avalanche de soupçons permanents. Il suffit qu'un policier hausse un sourcil pour que ça devienne un scandale national sur Twitter. On a des collègues qui n'osent plus intervenir ou qui évitent certaines situations pour ne pas finir en boucle dans des vidéos « choc ». Alors l'impact ? Il est là, mais il est à double tranchant. Et le fil est très coupant.

5. Quel type de contenu génère généralement l'engagement le plus positif, et pourquoi ?

Ce qui marche le mieux, c'est quand on montre notre humanité. Un secours à une personne âgée, un enfant perdu qu'on retrouve, une opération de sensibilisation sur les dangers de la route. Là, les gens répondent, ils remercient, ils likent. Mais c'est trop rare dans l'algorithme. Ce qui génère le plus d'engagement, ce sont les clashs, les conflits, les polémiques. Et devinez quoi ? C'est rarement nous qui les déclenchons. Donc on fait ce qu'on peut avec ce qu'on a, mais faut pas rêver : les réseaux préfèrent le sang à la solidarité. Et ça, on le sait tous.

6. Pouvez-vous donner un exemple où l'engagement sur les réseaux sociaux a amélioré la coopération du public avec les forces de l'ordre ?

Oui, ça arrive. Quand on lance un appel à témoins pour une disparition inquiétante ou une alerte enlèvement, là, ça fonctionne. Les gens relayent, s'impliquent, et parfois ça sauve une vie. Mais soyons lucides : c'est l'exception, pas la règle. Le reste du temps, on se fait insulter parce qu'on a verbalisé un automobiliste qui roulait à 150 en ville. Ou parce qu'on a osé contrôler quelqu'un qui refusait d'obtempérer. Et là, pas de coopération. Juste du mépris. Alors oui, les réseaux peuvent aider, mais c'est quand ça ne touche pas aux sujets "sensibles". Dès qu'on touche à l'autorité ou à la loi, ça explose.

7. Comment réagissez-vous généralement aux représentations négatives ou aux critiques virales des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

On serre les dents. On regarde passer la tempête. Parce qu'on n'a pas le droit de répondre, et même si on le pouvait, on sait que ce serait perdu d'avance. Une vidéo tronquée, diffusée des milliers de fois, fera toujours plus de bruit que notre version des faits. C'est frustrant. Très frustrant. Parce que pendant que certains nous accusent de tous les maux, nous, on continue à bosser. On protège aussi ceux qui nous insultent, faut pas l'oublier. Alors oui, ça pique. Mais on garde le cap. Et surtout, on ne s'abaisse pas à répondre à chaud sur un terrain qui n'est pas le nôtre.

8. Quel impact pensez-vous que l'exposition répétée à des incidents négatifs impliquant les forces de l'ordre a sur la confiance du public ?

Énorme. C'est une lessiveuse mentale. À force de matraquer des images violentes, sorties de leur contexte, le public finit par croire que c'est la norme. Mais ce n'est pas la réalité. C'est un montage. Une mise en scène. On ne montre jamais les insultes, les jets de projectiles, les contextes tendus. Non, on montre juste un policier qui "réagit". Et on oublie tout le reste. Résultat : une partie de la population n'a plus confiance. Mais ce qui est encore plus grave, c'est que certains policiers n'ont plus confiance non plus dans leur capacité à être protégés par l'institution ou par l'opinion. Et ça, c'est dangereux.

9. Quels sont les principaux défis auxquels vous êtes confronté pour maintenir la transparence dans la gestion des relations publiques sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Le principal défi, c'est qu'on ne peut pas tout dire, ni tout montrer. Et ça, les gens ne veulent pas l'entendre. Ils veulent du direct, de l'instantané, des explications dans la minute. Mais dans notre métier, ce n'est pas possible. On a des enquêtes, des procédures, des risques pour les agents, pour les victimes. Montrer un collègue en intervention, c'est l'exposer. Et croyez-moi, certains se sont fait traquer pour moins que ça. Alors la transparence, oui, mais encadrée. Raisonnable. Sinon, on devient une émission de télé-réalité sécuritaire, et ça, très peu pour nous.

10. Comment conciliez-vous la nécessité de promouvoir une image positive des forces de l'ordre avec la garantie de crédibilité et de responsabilité ?

En restant fidèles à ce qu'on est : des agents de terrain. Pas des influenceurs. Pas des VRP de la sécurité. On fait notre boulot, on le fait bien, on essaie de le montrer sans en rajouter. La crédibilité, elle vient de l'action juste, pas de la mise en scène. Mais aujourd'hui, si vous ne communiquez pas, on vous accuse de vous cacher. Et si vous communiquez trop, on vous accuse de manipuler. Alors on marche sur un fil. Mais tant qu'on reste droits, qu'on fait preuve de sang-froid et de professionnalisme, on est dans notre rôle. Et ça, c'est ce qui compte vraiment.

11. Pensez-vous que les médias sociaux influencent la perception du public quant au rôle et aux responsabilités des forces de l'ordre, et si oui, comment ?

Évidemment qu'ils influencent la perception. Et pas toujours dans le bon sens. Les réseaux sociaux ont transformé des sujets sérieux en terrains de clashs idéologiques. La moindre intervention devient une affaire d'État, un hashtag, une polémique. Le rôle des forces de l'ordre, c'est de faire respecter la loi, d'intervenir en cas de danger, pas de gérer leur image sur Instagram. Et pourtant, on y est contraints, parce que la moindre séquence peut être retournée contre nous. Résultat : une vision totalement biaisée de notre métier. Les gens pensent qu'on passe nos journées à verbaliser à l'aveugle ou à user de la force. C'est faux, mais ça fait plus de vues que la réalité.

12. Comment les conversations directes avec les citoyens sur les réseaux sociaux influencent-elles la confiance du public et les relations communautaires ?

Franchement ? Elles influencent peu. Parce qu'on n'a ni le temps, ni les moyens d'être dans le dialogue constant. Et quand on tente d'y être, c'est souvent pour se faire agresser verbalement ou se retrouver pris dans des débats interminables. Certains pensent que les forces de l'ordre doivent "rendre des comptes" en commentaire comme si on était à la télé. Mais notre job, ce n'est pas d'animer un forum, c'est d'assurer la sécurité. Alors oui, on répond quand il faut rectifier une erreur ou un malentendu. Mais croire qu'on va construire la confiance uniquement à coups de likes, c'est illusoire.

13. D'après votre expérience, quel rôle jouent les contenus émotionnellement engageants, par exemple les témoignages humains ou les actes héroïques, dans la formation de l'opinion publique ?

Ils jouent un rôle positif, évidemment. Mais soyons clairs : ils sont trop rares, trop vite oubliés. Un sauvetage, une intervention délicate, une assistance à une personne vulnérable, ça touche. Mais ça ne buzze pas autant qu'un face-à-face musclé ou qu'une interpellation filmée au mauvais angle. Et encore une fois, les gens retiennent ce qui les choque, pas ce qui les rassure. Alors oui, ces contenus ont un rôle. Mais dans un monde où l'indignation fait plus de clics que la compassion, leur portée reste limitée.

14. Comment voyez-vous l'évolution du rôle des réseaux sociaux dans les relations entre la police et la communauté à l'avenir ?

Si on ne met pas de cadre rapidement, on va droit dans le mur. Les réseaux sociaux devraient être un espace de dialogue, d'explication. Aujourd'hui, c'est souvent un champ de bataille. Si la tendance continue, on va avoir une police obligée de "penser communication" à chaque intervention. Ce n'est pas notre mission. Ce n'est pas sain. Il faut rétablir une frontière entre le temps de l'action et le temps de la communication. L'avenir doit passer par une stratégie plus institutionnelle, plus posée, moins dépendante du buzz immédiat. Sinon, on va finir par perdre le lien avec la réalité de notre métier.

15. Si vous pouviez suggérer une amélioration significative à la manière dont les forces de l'ordre interagissent avec le public sur les réseaux sociaux, quelle serait-elle et pourquoi ?

Ce qu'il faut, c'est reprendre la main. Avoir une cellule dédiée, formée, capable de répondre avec rigueur et sang-froid. Pas laisser ça au bon vouloir d'un agent débordé qui doit gérer ça entre deux patrouilles. Il faut aussi que les plateformes prennent leurs responsabilités. On ne peut pas laisser circuler des appels à la haine contre les policiers sans modération. Il y a des limites à la liberté d'expression quand elle devient toxique et dangereuse. Et surtout, il faut arrêter de se justifier en permanence. Une communication forte, assumée, basée sur des faits, des explications pédagogiques et fermes. C'est ça, la voie à suivre.

Traduction

Municipal police officer #2 (LEO2):

1. Can you describe how your department currently uses social media to interact with the public?

Listen, we use social media because we don't really have a choice. Today, if you're not on it, you're criticized for being opaque. But let's be clear: it's a tricky place. We publish what we can, prevention operations, a little awareness-raising, but always with extreme caution. Why? Because the slightest image, the slightest word, is reclaimed, distorted, and decontextualized. We have two people who manage this in addition to their regular work; they're not community managers; they're field-trained agents. So its use is limited, regulated, and frankly... when I see what's circulating, I tell myself that we'd better remain sober.

2. What are your main objectives for your social media communication strategy?

Our only goal is to reestablish a minimum of truth. Today, we're drowning in a flood of hateful comments, fabricated videos, and completely biased narratives. So we try to provide some context, some education, and also to show what we're actually doing: assistance, prevention, protection. But it's not easy. As soon as we publish a slightly visible action, there's always someone to cry propaganda. So we remain measured, we remind people of the rules, we warn against certain dangerous behaviors, and above all, we do our utmost to avoid falling into controversy. Even if sometimes, frankly, it's itchy.

3. How do you think social media engagement influences the public's perception of the legitimacy of law enforcement?

By constantly letting social media rule the roost, we're allowing the legitimacy of the uniform to be demolished with tweets and truncated videos. We show a clip, forget the context, and then throw it all out to public condemnation. The result: the public sees what we want to show them, rarely the full reality. Legitimacy doesn't come from social media. It comes from the law, from the Republic, from the mission we fulfill every day, and often in silence. But since silence doesn't create a buzz, it doesn't generate an audience. And that, inevitably, skews perception. Drastically.

4. How do you assess the positive or negative impact of your presence on social media on public perception?

The positive impact exists, but it's meager compared to the verbal violence we receive in our faces. It makes you wonder why we continue. There are citizens who thank us, fortunately. But above all, we're faced with an avalanche of constant suspicion. All it takes is a police officer to raise an eyebrow for it to become a national scandal on Twitter. We have colleagues who no longer dare intervene or who avoid certain situations so as not to end up in a series of "shocking" videos. So the impact? It's there, but it's double-edged. And the edge is very sharp.

5. What type of content generally generates the most positive engagement, and why?

What works best is when we show our humanity. Helping an elderly person, finding a lost child, raising awareness about road hazards. Then people respond, they thank you, they like. But that's too rare in the algorithm. What generates the most engagement are clashes, conflicts, and controversies. And guess what? We're rarely the ones who start them. So we do what we can with what we have, but let's not kid ourselves: social media prefers bloodshed to solidarity. And we all know that.

6. Can you give an example where social media engagement has improved public cooperation with law enforcement?

Yes, it happens. When we put out a call for witnesses to a disturbing disappearance or a kidnapping alert, it works. People relay the information, get involved, and sometimes it saves a life. But let's be clear: that's the exception, not the rule. The rest of the time, we get insulted because we ticketed a driver who was going 150 km/h in the city. Or because we dared to stop someone who refused to comply. And then, there's no cooperation. Just contempt. So yes, social media can help, but that's when it doesn't touch on "sensitive" issues. As soon as it touches on authority or the law, it explodes.

7. How do you generally react to negative portrayals or viral criticism of law enforcement on social media?

We grit our teeth. We watch the storm pass. Because we don't have the right to respond, and even if we could, we know it would be a lost cause. A truncated video, shared thousands of times, will always generate more noise than our version of events. It's frustrating. Very frustrating. Because while some accuse us of every evil, we continue to work. We also protect those who insult us, let's not forget that. So yes, it stings. But we stay the course. And above all, we don't stoop to responding in the heat of the moment on territory that isn't ours.

8. What impact do you think repeated exposure to negative incidents involving law enforcement has on public trust?

Huge. It's a mental drain. By constantly bombarding people with violent images, taken out of context, the public ends up believing it's the norm. But it's not reality. It's a fabrication. A staged performance. We never show the insults, the throwing of projectiles, the tense situations. No, we just show a police officer "reacting." And we forget everything else. As a result, part of the population no longer trusts them. But what's even worse is that some police officers also no longer trust their ability to be protected by the institution or by public opinion. And that's dangerous.

9. What are the main challenges you face in maintaining transparency in managing public relations on social media?

The main challenge is that you can't say or show everything. And people don't want to hear that. They want live coverage, instantaneous updates, and instant explanations. But in our profession, that's not possible. We have investigations, procedures, and risks for officers and victims. Showing a colleague in action exposes them. And believe me, some have been hounded for less than that. So transparency, yes, but within limits. Reasonable. Otherwise, we become a security reality TV show, and that's not for us.

10. How do you reconcile the need to promote a positive image of law enforcement with ensuring credibility and accountability?

By remaining true to who we are: field officers. Not influencers. Not security salespeople. We do our job, we do it well, we try to show it without exaggerating. Credibility comes from doing the right thing, not from showmanship. But today, if you don't communicate, you're accused of hiding. And if you communicate too much, you're accused of manipulating. So we're walking a tightrope. But as long as we remain upright, calm, and professional, we're doing our job. And that's what really matters.

11. Do you think social media influences public perception of the role and responsibilities of law enforcement, and if so, how?

Of course, they influence perception. And not always in a good way. Social media has transformed serious issues into arenas for ideological clashes. The slightest intervention becomes a matter of state, a hashtag, a controversy. The role of law enforcement is to enforce the law, to intervene in cases of danger, not to manage their image on Instagram. And yet, we're forced to do so because the slightest video can be used against us. The result: a completely biased view of our profession. People think we spend our days issuing blind tickets or using force. This isn't true, but it generates more views than reality.

12. How do direct conversations with citizens on social media influence public trust and community relations?

Honestly? They have little influence. Because we don't have the time or the means to engage in constant dialogue. And when we try to do so, we often end up verbally assaulted or caught up

in endless debates. Some people think that law enforcement must be "accountable" in the comments, as if we were on TV. But our job isn't to host a forum; it's to ensure security. So yes, we respond when a mistake or misunderstanding needs to be corrected. But believing that we'll build trust solely through likes is illusory.

13. In your experience, what role do emotionally engaging content, such as human testimonies or heroic acts, play in shaping public opinion?

They play a positive role, obviously. But let's be clear: they are too rare, too quickly forgotten. A rescue, a delicate intervention, assistance to a vulnerable person—these things are moving. But it doesn't generate as much buzz as a heated standoff or an arrest filmed from a bad angle. And once again, people remember what shocks them, not what reassures them. So yes, this content has a role to play. But in a world where outrage gets more clicks than compassion, its reach remains limited.

14. How do you see the role of social media evolving in police-community relations in the future?

If we don't establish a framework quickly, we're heading straight for disaster. Social media should be a space for dialogue and explanation. Today, it's often a battlefield. If this trend continues, we'll have a police force forced to "think about communication" with every intervention. That's not our mission. It's not healthy. We need to reestablish a boundary between the time for action and the time for communication. The future must involve a more institutional, more measured strategy, less dependent on immediate buzz. Otherwise, we'll end up losing touch with the reality of our profession.

15. If you could suggest a significant improvement to the way law enforcement interacts with the public on social media, what would it be and why?

What's needed is to take back control. Have a dedicated, trained unit capable of responding with rigor and composure. Not leave it to the whim of an overwhelmed officer who has to manage it between patrols. Platforms also need to take responsibility. We can't allow hate speech against police officers to circulate unchecked. There are limits to freedom of expression when it

becomes toxic and dangerous. And above all, we need to stop constantly justifying ourselves. Strong, assertive communication, based on facts, and clear, educational explanations. That's the way forward.

Gendarme (LEO3) :

1. Pouvez-vous décrire comment votre service utilise actuellement les réseaux sociaux pour interagir avec le public ?

Bien sûr. Aujourd'hui, les réseaux sociaux sont devenus un levier fondamental dans notre stratégie de communication et de proximité. En tant que gendarmerie, on les utilise à la fois pour informer, rassurer, prévenir et parfois alerter. Nous avons un community manager, formé aux techniques de communication numérique, qui alimente nos comptes officiels avec des publications régulières : conseils de sécurité, retours sur intervention, portraits de gendarmes, actions de terrain. Cela nous permet d'humaniser notre institution, de faire comprendre notre quotidien et de déconstruire les stéréotypes. Ce n'est pas une vitrine aseptisée : on montre ce qu'on fait vraiment, avec sincérité, et ça crée du lien. Notre objectif n'est pas de buzzer, mais de parler vrai, de manière régulière et pédagogique.

2. Quels sont vos principaux objectifs de la stratégie de communication sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Trois objectifs essentiels : visibilité, pédagogie et proximité. La visibilité, c'est fondamental, car une gendarmerie silencieuse est une gendarmerie invisible, et l'invisibilité alimente les fantasmes. La pédagogie, ensuite, parce que notre rôle ne se limite pas à intervenir après les faits ; on a aussi un devoir de prévention. Les réseaux nous offrent un canal direct pour rappeler les comportements à adopter, les démarches à suivre, les sanctions encourues, sans passer par des intermédiaires. Enfin, la proximité : on veut que chaque citoyen sache que derrière l'uniforme, il y a des femmes et des hommes disponibles, à l'écoute, investis. Les réseaux sociaux sont un outil formidable pour créer cette relation de confiance, surtout dans les zones rurales ou isolées, où la gendarmerie reste parfois le seul service public de proximité.

3. De quelle manière pensez-vous que l'engagement sur les réseaux sociaux influence la perception du public quant à la légitimité des forces de l'ordre ?

L'engagement positif construit notre légitimité. C'est très simple : plus on communique de manière transparente, cohérente et respectueuse, plus on renforce la perception que notre action est justifiée, utile, équilibrée. Les citoyens attendent de la clarté et de la constance. Lorsqu'on publie un retour d'intervention bien expliqué, qu'on détaille nos missions avec des mots accessibles, on montre que la force publique n'agit pas arbitrairement mais avec discernement. On n'a rien à cacher, donc on explique. Et ce faisant, on consolide notre autorité, non pas par l'usage de la force, mais par la compréhension de notre rôle. Le silence alimente la défiance ; la parole, maîtrisée et pédagogique, renforce la légitimité.

4. Comment évaluez-vous l'impact positif ou négatif de votre présence sur les réseaux sociaux sur la perception du public ?

Dans notre expérience, l'impact est majoritairement positif. Les retours qu'on reçoit sont très souvent constructifs, parfois même enthousiastes. Des citoyens nous remercient pour la clarté des informations, pour la réactivité lors d'alertes ou pour les conseils de sécurité. Cela montre que notre présence est perçue comme utile et rassurante. Évidemment, il y a parfois des critiques, mais tant qu'elles sont formulées avec respect, elles permettent le débat et l'amélioration. L'impact négatif, quand il existe, vient généralement de la viralité de contenus hors contexte, mal interprétés ou volontairement détournés. Mais c'est justement parce que ces risques existent qu'il est impératif d'occuper le terrain numérique, de répondre, de rectifier, et de ne jamais laisser un vide de communication.

5. Quel type de contenu génère généralement l'engagement le plus positif, et pourquoi ?

Les contenus qui suscitent le plus d'engagement sont ceux qui touchent l'humain : les interventions réussies, les sauvetages, les portraits de gendarmes engagés, les messages de prévention clairs et concrets. Quand on partage une histoire authentique – un gendarme qui aide une personne âgée à rentrer chez elle en pleine tempête, une brigade qui retrouve un enfant perdu – les réactions sont immédiates, bienveillantes et nombreuses. Ces récits rappellent que notre métier est avant tout un service, qu'il est fait de proximité, de sens du devoir, de solidarité.

Ils remettent l'uniforme à hauteur d'homme. Et dans une société où l'image a souvent plus d'impact que les statistiques, ces récits incarnés ont une puissance exceptionnelle.

6. Pouvez-vous donner un exemple où l'engagement sur les réseaux sociaux a amélioré la coopération du public avec les forces de l'ordre ?

Absolument. Je pense à une affaire récente de disparition inquiétante d'un adolescent dans notre secteur. Dès la publication de notre alerte sur les réseaux sociaux, nous avons reçu des dizaines de signalements dans les heures qui ont suivi. L'un d'eux s'est révélé décisif. Sans cet écho numérique, l'enquête aurait pris beaucoup plus de temps. Ce genre d'exemple montre la puissance du réseau social comme outil de mobilisation citoyenne. Il crée une boucle immédiate entre les forces de l'ordre et la population. Ce n'est plus un canal de diffusion passif : c'est un levier d'action. Et c'est précieux dans des situations d'urgence où chaque minute compte.

7. Comment réagissez-vous généralement aux représentations négatives ou aux critiques virales des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Il faut garder la tête froide. On ne peut pas empêcher les critiques, surtout dans un espace aussi libre que les réseaux sociaux. Mais tout ne mérite pas une réponse. Lorsqu'il s'agit de désinformation manifeste ou de mise en cause injustifiée, la stratégie est simple : rétablir les faits, calmement, avec des éléments concrets. En revanche, quand la critique est fondée ou constructive, on la prend en compte. On est là pour servir les citoyens, pas pour s'auto-justifier en permanence. Il y a une ligne à maintenir entre la fermeté et l'écoute. Ce qui est certain, c'est qu'on ne doit jamais entrer dans l'émotionnel ou dans le conflit. Le terrain numérique doit rester maîtrisé et professionnel.

8. Quel impact pensez-vous que l'exposition répétée à des incidents négatifs impliquant les forces de l'ordre a sur la confiance du public ?

Elle peut éroder la confiance, surtout quand les faits sont sortis de leur contexte ou sur-représentés. Si la seule chose qu'un citoyen voit chaque semaine, ce sont des vidéos de tensions, forcément, son image de la police ou de la gendarmerie va s'altérer. C'est une question d'équilibre. Il faut que la population ait aussi accès à ce qu'on fait de positif, à ce qu'on accomplit dans l'ombre, aux vies qu'on protège ou sauve. L'enjeu, c'est de ne pas laisser ces

images isolées faire oublier que 99 % de notre travail s'effectue dans le calme, avec discernement. Et que dans chaque métier, il y a des erreurs ; mais chez nous, elles sont visibles, publiques, amplifiées. C'est pour cela qu'une communication transparente et régulière est essentielle.

9. Quels sont les principaux défis auxquels vous êtes confronté pour maintenir la transparence dans la gestion des relations publiques sur les réseaux sociaux ?

Le premier défi, c'est la temporalité. Les réseaux sociaux exigent une réactivité immédiate, alors que notre devoir de réserve et notre obligation de vérification imposent du temps. Il faut souvent arbitrer entre vitesse et justesse. Ensuite, il y a la difficulté de rester accessible sans tomber dans le simplisme. Expliquer une opération, une doctrine d'emploi de la force ou une procédure judiciaire en quelques lignes claires, c'est un vrai travail. Enfin, il y a la protection des agents : on ne peut pas tout montrer, ni tout commenter. Certaines images, certains visages, doivent rester confidentiels pour des raisons de sécurité. C'est une ligne de crête permanente entre transparence, pédagogie et responsabilité.

10. Comment conciliez-vous la nécessité de promouvoir une image positive des forces de l'ordre avec la garantie de crédibilité et de responsabilité ?

Justement en refusant la communication "publicitaire". On ne cherche pas à embellir artificiellement notre image. Ce qu'on fait, c'est montrer la réalité de notre mission. Quand un citoyen voit qu'on communique avec honnêteté, qu'on ne cache pas les difficultés, qu'on explique nos décisions, même les plus impopulaires, il nous crédite d'un capital confiance. La crédibilité vient de la cohérence entre les actes et les mots. Il ne s'agit pas de se mettre en scène, mais de montrer qu'on assume notre mission, qu'on agit dans le cadre de la loi, avec humanité et professionnalisme. C'est ce mélange entre transparence et exigence qui, à mon sens, garantit à la fois la légitimité et l'adhésion.

11. Pensez-vous que les médias sociaux influencent la perception du public quant au rôle et aux responsabilités des forces de l'ordre, et si oui, comment ?

Oui, indéniablement. Les réseaux sociaux ne sont pas neutres : ils orientent les représentations. Quand vous avez des vidéos qui tournent en boucle, souvent hors contexte, et qu'elles

deviennent virales avant toute enquête, ça installe une perception faussée. Le public finit par croire que le rôle de la police se résume à la confrontation, alors que notre quotidien, c'est aussi l'écoute, la médiation, l'assistance. Les responsabilités des forces de l'ordre sont multiples, mais les réseaux ne montrent que ce qui choque ou interpelle. C'est à nous de reprendre la main, en racontant aussi les autres dimensions de notre métier. Il faut parler aux citoyens avant que d'autres ne le fassent à notre place.

12. Comment les conversations directes avec les citoyens sur les réseaux sociaux influencent-elles la confiance du public et les relations communautaires ?

Elles peuvent être utiles, mais à condition qu'elles soient bien encadrées. Trop de spontanéité, c'est risquer le dérapage, l'interprétation hasardeuse ou l'attaque ad hominem. En revanche, quand on prend le temps de répondre, de manière professionnelle, claire, respectueuse, on envoie un signal fort : celui d'une institution ouverte au dialogue. Ce n'est pas un réflexe encore généralisé, mais ça progresse. Les relations communautaires se nourrissent de ces interactions. Même un simple "merci pour votre vigilance" ou "voici les suites données à votre signalement" peut suffire à créer du lien. Ce n'est pas une révolution, mais c'est un pas vers plus de proximité.

13. D'après votre expérience, quel rôle jouent les contenus émotionnellement engageants (témoignages humains, actes héroïques) dans la formation de l'opinion publique ?

Un rôle très fort. Les citoyens ont besoin de s'identifier, de comprendre que derrière l'uniforme, il y a des femmes et des hommes, des parents, des voisins, des bénévoles. Les témoignages humains, les sauvetages, les gestes de solidarité touchent parce qu'ils parlent à l'émotion, à la dignité, à la part commune. Ce sont ces contenus-là qui cassent les caricatures. Mais il faut les manier avec prudence. L'émotion ne doit pas servir de cache-misère ou de vitrine. Elle doit illustrer une réalité, pas la masquer. Un acte héroïque n'efface pas les critiques légitimes, mais il rappelle que notre mission repose sur des engagements forts, parfois au péril de la vie. Ça remet les choses en perspective.

14. Pensez-vous qu'une exposition répétée à certains types de contenus liés aux forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux normalise certains comportements ? Et si oui, comment ?

Oui, c'est une mécanique connue. À force de voir certaines images – qu'elles soient positives ou négatives – le public finit par intégrer une représentation dominante. Si ce sont toujours des scènes de tension, on associera la police à la répression. Si ce sont uniquement des messages corporatistes, on soupçonnera une volonté de propagande. Il faut donc varier les contenus : du terrain, de l'institutionnel, de l'émotionnel, du pédagogique. Cette pluralité permet d'éviter les biais. Ce qui est normalisé, ce n'est pas tant un comportement qu'un récit, une narration. Et cette narration, si elle est déséquilibrée, peut soit diaboliser, soit idéaliser à tort. L'enjeu, c'est la justesse.

15. Si vous pouviez suggérer une modification à la façon dont les forces de l'ordre interagissent avec le public sur les réseaux sociaux, quelle serait-elle et pourquoi ?

Je proposerais une professionnalisation plus poussée de la communication locale. Trop souvent, ce sont des agents motivés mais non formés qui gèrent les comptes. Il faut les outiller, les former, leur donner des lignes éditoriales claires et les protéger juridiquement. Et surtout, il faudrait assumer une posture plus proactive. Ne pas attendre que la crise éclate pour parler. Construire un fil régulier, humain, rigoureux. Montrer les visages, les gestes du quotidien, les réussites discrètes. Ça demande des moyens, oui, mais c'est un investissement dans la confiance. Et aujourd'hui, la confiance, ça se construit aussi en ligne, pas seulement sur le terrain.

Traduction

<u>Gendarme (LEO3):</u>

1. Can you describe how your department currently uses social media to interact with the public?

Of course. Today, social media has become a fundamental lever in our communication and outreach strategy. As a gendarmerie, we use it to inform, reassure, prevent, and sometimes alert. We have a community manager, trained in digital communication techniques, who updates our

official accounts with regular posts: safety tips, response reports, profiles of gendarmes, and field actions. This allows us to humanize our institution, to explain our daily lives, and to deconstruct stereotypes. It's not a sanitized showcase: we show what we really do, with sincerity, and it creates connections. Our goal isn't to create a buzz, but to speak truthfully, regularly and in an educational manner.

2. What are your main objectives for your social media communication strategy?

Three essential objectives: visibility, education, and outreach. Visibility is fundamental, because a silent police force is an invisible police force, and invisibility fuels fantasies. Second, education is essential, because our role isn't limited to intervening after the fact; we also have a duty of prevention. Social media provides us with a direct channel to remind people of the behaviors to adopt, the procedures to follow, and the penalties incurred, without going through intermediaries. Finally, proximity: we want every citizen to know that behind the uniform, there are women and men who are available, attentive, and committed. Social media is a fantastic tool for building this relationship of trust, especially in rural or isolated areas, where the gendarmerie sometimes remains the only local public service.

3. How do you think engagement on social media influences the public's perception of the legitimacy of law enforcement?

Positive engagement builds our legitimacy. It's very simple: the more transparent, consistent, and respectful we communicate, the more we reinforce the perception that our actions are justified, useful, and balanced. Citizens expect clarity and consistency. When we publish well-explained response reports, when we detail our missions in accessible language, we show that law enforcement doesn't act arbitrarily but with discernment. We have nothing to hide, so we explain. And in doing so, we consolidate our authority, not through the use of force, but through the understanding of our role. Silence fuels mistrust; controlled and informative speech reinforces legitimacy.

4. How do you assess the positive or negative impact of your presence on social media on public perception?

In our experience, the impact is mostly positive. The feedback we receive is very often constructive, sometimes even enthusiastic. Citizens thank us for the clarity of our information, for our responsiveness to alerts, or for our safety advice. This shows that our presence is perceived as useful and reassuring. Of course, there are sometimes criticisms, but as long as they are expressed respectfully, they allow for debate and improvement. The negative impact, when it exists, generally comes from the virality of content that is out of context, misinterpreted, or deliberately misused. But it is precisely because these risks exist that it is imperative to occupy the digital space, respond, correct, and never leave a communication gap.

5. What type of content generally generates the most positive engagement, and why?

The content that generates the most engagement is that which touches the human touch: successful interventions, rescues, portraits of committed police officers, clear and concrete prevention messages. When we share an authentic story—a police officer helping an elderly person get home in the middle of a storm, a police force finding a lost child—the reactions are immediate, kind, and numerous. These stories remind us that our profession is, above all, a service, that it is built on proximity, a sense of duty, and solidarity. They bring the uniform back to human level. And in a society where image often has more impact than statistics, these embodied stories have exceptional power.

6. Can you give an example where social media engagement has improved public cooperation with law enforcement?

Absolutely. I'm thinking of a recent case involving the disturbing disappearance of a teenager in our area. As soon as we posted our alert on social media, we received dozens of reports within hours. One of them proved decisive. Without this digital response, the investigation would have taken much longer. This type of example demonstrates the power of social media as a tool for citizen mobilization. It creates an immediate loop between law enforcement and the public. It's no longer a passive channel for dissemination: it's a lever for action. And that's invaluable in emergency situations where every minute counts.

7. How do you generally react to negative portrayals or viral criticism of law enforcement on social media?

You have to keep a cool head. We can't prevent criticism, especially in a space as free as social media. But not everything deserves a response. When it comes to obvious misinformation or unjustified criticism, the strategy is simple: calmly re-establish the facts, using concrete evidence. However, when the criticism is well-founded or constructive, we take it into account. We are here to serve citizens, not to constantly justify ourselves. There is a fine line to be maintained between firmness and listening. What is certain is that we must never become emotional or conflictual. The digital environment must remain controlled and professional.

8. What impact do you think repeated exposure to negative incidents involving law enforcement has on public trust?

It can erode trust, especially when the facts are taken out of context or overrepresented. If the only thing a citizen sees each week is videos of tension, their image of the police or the gendarmerie will inevitably be tarnished. It's a question of balance. The public must also have access to the positive things we do, to what we accomplish behind the scenes, to the lives we protect or save. The challenge is not to let these isolated images make us forget that 99% of our work is carried out calmly and with discernment. And that in every profession, there are mistakes; but in our case, they are visible, public, and amplified. That's why transparent and regular communication is essential.

9. What are the main challenges you face in maintaining transparency in managing public relations on social media?

The first challenge is temporality. Social media requires immediate responsiveness, while our duty of confidentiality and our obligation to verify require time. You often have to balance speed and accuracy. Then there's the challenge of remaining accessible without being overly simplistic. Explaining an operation, a doctrine for the use of force, or a legal procedure in a few clear lines is a real challenge. Finally, there's the protection of officers: you can't show or comment on everything. Some images, some faces, must remain confidential for security reasons. It's a constant balancing act between transparency, education, and accountability.

10. How do you reconcile the need to promote a positive image of law enforcement with ensuring credibility and accountability?

Precisely by refusing "advertising" communications. We're not trying to artificially embellish our image. What we're doing is showing the reality of our mission. When citizens see that we communicate honestly, that we don't hide difficulties, that we explain our decisions, even the most unpopular, they gain a certain amount of trust in us. Credibility comes from consistency between actions and words. It's not about showing off, but about showing that we're fulfilling our mission, that we're acting within the law, with humanity and professionalism. It's this blend of transparency and rigor that, in my opinion, guarantees both legitimacy and support.

11. Do you think social media influences public perceptions of the role and responsibilities of law enforcement, and if so, how?

Yes, undeniably. Social media is not neutral: it shapes perceptions. When you have videos that are constantly circulating, often out of context, and go viral before any investigation has been carried out, it creates a distorted perception. The public ends up believing that the role of the police is limited to confrontation, when our daily work also involves listening, mediating, and providing assistance. Law enforcement has many responsibilities, but social media only shows what shocks or challenges. It's up to us to regain control by also explaining the other dimensions of our profession. We must talk to citizens before others do it for us.

12. How do direct conversations with citizens on social media influence public trust and community relations?

They can be useful, but only if they are well-structured. Too much spontaneity risks slipping up, misinterpreting, or attacking ad hominem. On the other hand, when we take the time to respond professionally, clearly, and respectfully, we send a strong signal: that of an institution open to dialogue. This isn't yet a widespread reflex, but it's growing. Community relations thrive on these interactions. Even a simple "thank you for your vigilance" or "here are the follow-up actions taken on your report" can be enough to create a bond. It's not a revolution, but it's a step towards greater proximity.

13. In your experience, what role do emotionally engaging content (human testimonies, heroic acts) play in shaping public opinion?

A very strong role. Citizens need to identify with them, to understand that behind the uniform, there are women and men, parents, neighbors, volunteers. Human testimonies, rescues, and gestures of solidarity are touching because they speak to emotion, dignity, and the common good. These are the kinds of content that break down caricatures. But they must be handled with caution. Emotion must not be used as a cover-up or a showcase. It must illustrate a reality, not mask it. A heroic act doesn't erase legitimate criticism, but it does remind us that our mission is based on strong commitments, sometimes at the risk of life. It puts things into perspective.

14. Do you think that repeated exposure to certain types of content related to law enforcement on social media normalizes certain behaviors? And if so, how?

Yes, it's a well-known mechanism. By repeatedly seeing certain images—whether positive or negative—the public ends up internalizing a dominant representation. If these are always tense scenes, the police will be associated with repression. If these are solely corporate messages, we will suspect propaganda. So, it is necessary to vary the content: on-the-ground, institutional, emotional, and educational. This diversity helps avoid bias. What is normalized is not so much behavior as a story, a narrative. And this narrative, if unbalanced, can either demonize or idealize unfairly. The challenge is accuracy.

15. If you could suggest one change to the way law enforcement interacts with the public on social media, what would it be and why?

I would propose greater professionalization of local communications. Too often, motivated but untrained officers manage the accounts. They need to be equipped, trained, given clear editorial guidelines, and legally protected. And above all, we need to adopt a more proactive stance. Don't wait for the crisis to break out before talking. Build a regular, human, and rigorous thread. Show the faces, the everyday gestures, the discreet successes. It requires resources, yes, but it's an investment in trust. And today, trust is also built online, not just on the ground.

Sources: Own elaboration

Appendix B: Questionnaire (FR;EN)

Questionnaire Google Form :

Q1. Quel âge avez-vous ?

- Moins de 18 ans
- 18–24 ans
- 25–34 ans
- 35–44 ans
- 45–54 ans
- 55 ans ou plus

Q2. Quel est votre genre ?

- Femme
- Homme
- Autre – Ne se prononce pas

Q3. Habitez-vous en France ?

- Oui
- Non

Q4. Quelle est votre activité principale ?

- Lycéen·ne
- Étudiant·e
- Salarié·e
- En recherche d'emploi
- Fonctionnaire
- Membre des forces de l'ordre
- Autre

Q5. Passez-vous régulièrement du temps sur les réseaux sociaux ?

- Oui, tous les jours

- Oui, plusieurs fois par semaine
- Rarement
- Jamais

Q6. À quelle fréquence utilisez-vous les médias sociaux ?

- Plusieurs fois par jour
- Une fois par jour
- Quelques fois par semaine
- Quelques fois par mois
- Rarement ou jamais

Q7. Quelle plateforme de réseaux sociaux utilisez-vous le plus fréquemment ?

- Facebook
- Twitter (X)
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Telegram
- Autre

Q8. À quelle fréquence voyez-vous du contenu lié aux forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

- Tous les jours
- Quelques fois par semaine
- Quelques fois par mois
- Rarement
- Jamais

Q9. À quelle fréquence interagissez-vous (aimez, commentez, partagez) avec les contenus liés aux forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux ?

- Très souvent
- Quelques fois
- Rarement

- Jamais

Q10. En général, estimez-vous les actions des forces de l'ordre comme étant légitimes ?

- Très légitimes
- Plutôt légitimes
- Neutre
- Plutôt illégitimes
- Très illégitimes

Q11. À quel point faites-vous confiance aux forces de l'ordre pour agir de manière juste et équitable ?

- Totalement confiance
- Plutôt confiance
- Neutre
- Peu confiance
- Pas du tout confiance

Q12. Le fait de voir des contenus positifs sur les forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux améliore-t-il votre perception de leur légitimité ?

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Neutre
- Pas d'accord
- Pas du tout d'accord

Q13. Quelle est la probabilité que vous coopériez avec les forces de l'ordre en cas de besoin ?

- Très probable
- Assez probable
- Neutre
- Assez improbable
- Très improbable

Q14. Est-ce que le fait de vous engager avec du contenu des forces de l'ordre sur les réseaux sociaux vous rend plus enclin à coopérer avec elles ?

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Neutre
- Pas d'accord
- Pas du tout d'accord

Q15. Dans quelle mesure pensez-vous que les réseaux sociaux améliorent la communication entre le public et les forces de l'ordre ?

- Améliorent grandement
- Améliorent un peu
- Neutre
- Aggravent un peu
- Aggravent grandement

Q16. Lorsque les forces de l'ordre racontent des histoires positives (proximité, aide…), pensez-vous que leur image s'en trouve améliorée ?

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Neutre
- Pas d'accord
- Pas du tout d'accord

Q17. Lorsque des incidents négatifs (violence, mauvaise conduite) sont diffusés, quel est l'impact sur votre perception ?

- Elle aggrave ma perception
- Elle confirme mes préoccupations
- Elle me rend plus sceptique
- Elle n'affecte pas ma perception
- Autre

Q18. L'exposition répétée à des contenus négatifs relatifs à l'application de la loi normalise-t-elle ces comportements négatifs ?

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Neutre
- Pas d'accord
- Pas du tout d'accord

Q19. Dans quelle mesure pensez-vous que les réseaux sociaux contribuent à façonner le sentiment du public à l'égard des forces de l'ordre ?

- Beaucoup
- Un peu
- Neutre
- Très peu
- Pas du tout

Q20. Dans quelle mesure pensez-vous que les forces de l'ordre sont transparentes dans leur communication avec le public ?

- Très transparentes
- Assez transparentes
- Neutre
- Peu transparentes
- Pas du tout transparentes

Q21. La transparence dans la communication des forces de l'ordre améliore-t-elle la confiance que vous leur accordez ?

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Neutre
- Pas d'accord
- Pas du tout d'accord

Q22. Lorsque les forces de l'ordre partagent un contenu émotionnel (actes héroïques, histoires personnelles), quel effet cela a-t-il ?

- Cela améliore mon sentiment
- Cela n'a aucun effet
- Cela me semble manipulateur et détériore mon sentiment
- Autre

Q23. Quel type de contenu relatif à la répression de la criminalité vous semble le plus efficace (2 choix max) ?

- Engagement communautaire
- Prévention & sécurité
- Transparence & responsabilité
- Réponse aux urgences
- Rien
- Autre

Q24. Lorsque les forces de l'ordre s'engagent dans des conversations en temps réel avec le public sur les réseaux sociaux, la confiance du public s'en trouve-t-elle améliorée ?

- Tout à fait d'accord
- D'accord
- Neutre
- Pas d'accord
- Pas du tout d'accord

Q25. Dans l'ensemble, comment votre perception des forces de l'ordre a-t-elle changé en raison de l'exposition aux réseaux sociaux ?

- Plus positive
- Pas de changement significatif
- Plus négative

Traduction :

Questionnaire Google Form:

Q1. How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18–24
- 25–34
- 35–44
- 45–54
- 55 or older

Q2. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other – Prefer not to say

Q3. Do you live in France?

- Yes
- No

Q4. What is your main activity?

- High school student
- University student
- Employee
- Job seeker
- Civil servant
- Member of law enforcement
- Other

Q5. Do you regularly spend time on social media?

- Yes, every day
- Yes, several times a week
- Rarely

- Never

Q6. How often do you use social media?

- Several times a day
- Once a day
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely or never

Q7. Which social media platform do you use most frequently?

- Facebook
- Twitter (X)
- Instagram
- TikTok
- Telegram
- Other

Q8. How often do you see content related to law enforcement on social media?

- Every day
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- Rarely
- Never

Q9. How often do you interact (like, comment, share) with law enforcement content on social media?

- Very often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Q10. In general, do you consider the actions of law enforcement to be legitimate?

- Very legitimate
- Somewhat legitimate
- Neutral
- Somewhat illegitimate
- Very illegitimate

Q11. To what extent do you trust law enforcement to act fairly and equitably?

- Fully trust
- Somewhat trust
- Neutral
- Little trust
- No trust at all

Q12. Does seeing positive content about law enforcement on social media improve your perception of their legitimacy?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q13. How likely are you to cooperate with law enforcement if needed?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

Q14. Does engaging with law enforcement content on social media make you more inclined to cooperate with them?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q15. To what extent do you think social media improves communication between the public and law enforcement?

- Greatly improves
- Somewhat improves
- Neutral
- Somewhat worsens
- Greatly worsens

Q16. When law enforcement shares positive stories (proximity, assistance…), do you think their image improves?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q17. When negative incidents (violence, misconduct) are shared, what is the impact on your perception?

- It worsens my perception
- It confirms my concerns
- It makes me more skeptical
- It does not affect my perception
- Other

Q18. Does repeated exposure to negative content about law enforcement normalize such behaviors?

- Strongly agree
- Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q19. To what extent do you think social media contributes to shaping public sentiment towards law enforcement?

- A lot
- Somewhat
- Neutral
- Very little
- Not at all

Q20. To what extent do you think law enforcement is transparent in its communication with the public?

- Very transparent
- Somewhat transparent
- Neutral
- Not very transparent
- Not at all transparent

Q21. Does transparency in law enforcement communication improve the trust you place in them?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q22. When law enforcement shares emotional content (heroic acts, personal stories), what effect does this have?

- It improves my perception
- It has no effect

- It seems manipulative and worsens my perception
- Other

Q23. Which type of crime-related content seems most effective to you? (2 choices max)

- Community engagement
- Prevention & safety
- Transparency & accountability
- Emergency response
- None
- Other

Q24. When law enforcement engages in real-time conversations with the public on social media, does this improve public trust?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Q25. Overall, how has your perception of law enforcement changed due to exposure on social media?

- More positive
- No significant change
- More negative

Sources: Own elaboration

Appendix C: Descriptive statistics of main study variables

Statistiques descriptives

Statistiques descriptives

	PERCEIVED_LE	COOPERATION	FAVORABLE_OP	SATISFACTION	EXPOSURE_INT	TRANSPARENCY	NEGATIVE_EXP	TRANS_NORM
N	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
Manquants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moyenne	2.44	2.34	2.12	2.29	2.98	3.69	2.28	3.24
Médiane	2.50	2.50	2.00	2.25	3.00	4.00	2.00	3.50
Ecart-type	0.844	0.792	0.488	0.457	1.03	0.726	0.675	0.774
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.00
Maximum	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.25	4.50	5.00	3.50	4.50

Sources: Own elaboration

Appendix D: Linear regression of exposure to police social media interactions predicting satisfaction

Régression linéaire

Mesures de l'ajustement du modèle

Modèle	R	R^2
1	0.193	0.0374

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=113

Coefficients du modèle - SATISFACTION

Prédicteur	Estimation	Erreur standard	t	p
Ordonnée à l'origine	2.0323	0.1300	15.64	<.001
EXPOSURE_INTE	0.0857	0.0413	2.08	0.040

Sources: Own elaboration

Appendix E: Linear regression of transparency perception predicting perceived legitimacy

Régression linéaire

Mesures de l'ajustement du modèle

Modèle	R	R^2
1	0.240	0.0574

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=113

Coefficients du modèle - PERCEIVED_LEGITIMACY

Prédicteur	Estimation	Erreur standard	t	p
Ordonnée à l'origine	1.416	0.402	3.52	<.001
TRANSPARENCY	0.278	0.107	2.60	0.011

Sources: Own elaboration

Appendix F: Linear regression of transformation vs. normalization perception predicting perceived legitimacy

Régression linéaire

Mesures de l'ajustement du modèle

Modèle	R	R^2
1	0.0403	0.00162

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=113

Coefficients du modèle - PERCEIVED_LEGITIMACY

Prédicteur	Estimation	Erreur standard	t	p
Ordonnée à l'origine	2.5848	0.345	7.500	<.001
TRANS_NORM	-0.0440	0.104	-0.425	0.672

Sources: Own elaboration

Appendix G: Linear regression of exposure to negative content predicting perceived legitimacy

Sources: Own elaboration

Régression linéaire

Mesures de l'ajustement du modèle

Modèle	R	R^2
1	0.00489	2.39e-5

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=113

Coefficients du modèle - PERCEIVED_LEGITIMACY

Prédicteur	Estimation	Erreur standard	t	p
Ordonnée à l'origine	2.42853	0.282	8.6034	<.001
NEGATIVE_EXPOSURE	0.00612	0.119	0.0515	0.959

Sources: Own elaboration

Appendix H: Linear regression of exposure/interactions predicting favorable opinions of the police

Régression linéaire

Mesures de l'ajustement du modèle

Modèle	R	R^2
1	0.127	0.0160

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=113

Coefficients du modèle - FAVORABLE_OPINIONS

Prédicteur	Estimation	Erreur standard	t	p
Ordonnée à l'origine	1.9427	0.1403	13.84	<.001
EXPOSURE_INTERACTIONS	0.0599	0.0445	1.34	0.182

Sources: Own elaboration

Appendix I: Linear regression of perceived legitimacy, satisfaction, and favorable opinions predicting cooperation

Régression linéaire

Mesures de l'ajustement du modèle

Modèle	R	R^2
1	0.157	0.0248

Note. Models estimated using sample size of N=113

Coefficients du modèle - COOPERATION

Prédicteur	Estimation	Erreur standard	t	p
Ordonnée à l'origine	2.95984	0.4452	6.6490	<.001
PERCEIVED_LEGITIMACY	-0.10897	0.0888	-1.2271	0.222
SATISFACTION	0.00350	0.2621	0.0134	0.989
FAVORABLE_OPINIONS	-0.17228	0.2454	-0.7021	0.484

Sources: Own elaboration