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Survey on the Use of Social Media by the German Police

**Results of a survey regarding social media utilisation by German police
services and police officers**

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Abstract

This detailed analysis report describes the main findings of a non-representative survey, which was conducted in Germany, about the utilization of social media by police officers for official purposes. These are assessed from the qualitative point of view and put into context with the already published SOMEPE Country Report for Germany.

In total 98 police officers and civil servants participated in the survey. As a result it can be determined, that a considerable difference exists between the opinions regarding the usefulness for individual police officers and police organisations in general and the real use. The survey participants weight the significance of social media for the various fields of policing partially very differently, in particular between “is already being used” and “should be used”. For the most part the participants understand that there is no alternative to the use of social media for preventive and policing purposes.

1. Introduction

The project "Solving Crime through Social Media" (SOMEPE)¹, which was officially launched during the implementation meeting in Kayseri (Turkey) on 23 November 2013, addresses the issue of the possibilities social media can provide to police forces in the context of prevention, information, communication, averting of dangers, crime prevention and intelligence gathering. Social media is becoming increasingly important in all areas of life, digital or real. The law enforcement agencies and police forces cannot simply watch from the side-lines or focus solely on investigating internet- and cybercrimes. The discussion about security on the net should not be left to the debate about Snowden and the unlimited surveillance by intelligence agencies alone, but police forces rather should instead exploit the vast potential of social media in their own interest² and to benefit the community. To reach this goal, the work of the project partners will eventually result in the preparation of an eLearning module and a comprehensive database which can be used to introduce social media to police officers of all ranks and positions, train them in the use of social media and present the opportunities that the use of social media might have for policing purposes in

¹ SOMEPE, 2014

² Deneff et.al 2011; Deneff et.al 2012; Rüdiger, Deneff 2013; Rüdiger, 2013

their daily business, but also regarding special operations and other occasions³. The project will focus specifically on the enhancement of communication between the individual police officer or police organisation and the individual citizen and the public. This discussion should put the police in a position to enable them to be present, accessible and visually recognizable for the citizens on social media. Finally, it can help to communicate to the public that the Internet is no legal vacuum or police-free space and to strengthen legal awareness and trust in the police. This, in turn, can result in a situation where the police win the race for interpretational jurisdiction in social media about police issues and prevent vigilantism and fake police accounts⁴.

In order to orientate police work toward the respective national, geopolitical, and cultural characteristics as well as the specific crime situations and combat and prevention strategies, police organisations should develop strategies for adapting social media into their portfolio. For the future, this also means that police organisations and officers have to be prepared in terms of possibilities but also risks associated with open communication - like "Trolling"⁵ or so called "Shit Storms"⁶. But these risks should not obscure the fact that using social media for policing should become a normal operating resource for police forces across Europe, if not worldwide.

The eLearning module and materials to be developed will not only focus on particular social media platforms and networks, but also on the broad variety available and on its potential and benefits. In fact, the underlying idea for the module is to put police officers in the position to understand the basic mechanisms of social media and to officially use such applications in the future – regardless of the individual backgrounds. Nevertheless, it has to be taken into consideration that different legal provisions in the countries that could use the module and the related materials may limit the usage of social media to policing purposes.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Rogus, Rüdiger 2014 S. 15

⁵ Trolling means the deliberate provocation in social media to shock and trigger a reaction

⁶ Shit Storm means a large number of negative comments, user forum entries or the like, which are caused by an incident like negative press. The huge amount of comments can lead to a complete standstill of the respective accounts

Since SOMEPE is also an innovation transfer project, the research results of the COMPOSITE⁷ project, in which the University of Applied Sciences of the State Police of Brandenburg is also involved, need to be integrated into the project and will influence the outcome significantly. The COMPOSITE results in some way set the direction for SOMEPE. The approach to provide an overview regarding the dissemination in terms of the utilization of social media by German police services was twofold:

Firstly, the utilization of social media by German police services was researched, analysed and in detail illustrated in the “Country Report of Germany on the Use of Social Media by Police Organisations”⁸. This country report describes the current situation regarding the usage of the various social media applications for all kinds of policing purposes⁹. Secondly, a survey among police officers and civil servants of all levels of the State Police of Brandenburg was conducted. The purpose of this survey was to get an inside in terms of how often which social media application is used by what kind of police unit and officer and for what purposes, officially but also privately. Furthermore, the police officers were asked to express their opinion on how useful social media applications could be for all kinds of policing purposes for now or for the future. The results of this survey will influence the shape and content of the eLearning modules.

2. Methodology

This report builds on the already published SOMEPE country report and the result of the survey to gain an overview of the attitude and actual utilization of social media by the police. In the following section the methodology is shown and described.

2.1 Preparation

The survey in Germany was conducted web-based. Parts of the survey form and the strategic framework was kindly provided by Dr Bayerl¹⁰, member of the COMPOSITE team, who has developed a similar survey form for their own researches.

⁷ COMPOSITE, 2014

⁸ Rogus, Rüdiger, 2014

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ <http://www.erim.eur.nl/people/petra-saskia-bayerl/>

It was then amended due to the specific needs and orientation of SOMEPE. This was done by constant exchange of views, ideas and proposals of all SOMEPE partners. The draft survey form was then tried among a pre-test group of 10 police officers to check the comprehensibility of the questions and the logic of the structure. After it was finalized and agreed on, the survey form was hosted on an Ecycris University server and made available online for the use in Germany. The survey form as well as additional illustrative information were provided in German language. This included an introduction about the purpose and reasons for the survey, the assurance of anonymity and information regarding the completion of the survey.

Generally, all police officers of Germany could have participated in the survey since access to the Internet based study was not limited by passwords or any remark which emphasized that only police officers and civil servants of Brandenburg were supposed to take part in it. But mainly police officers and civil servants of the State of Brandenburg were particularly invited to participate.

The participation in the survey was voluntary and carried out anonymously for data protection reasons. Traceable and detailed personal data like names, ranks or age were not collected and only categories used¹¹. Before the survey could have been launched some dogmatic and bureaucratic obstacles had to be overcome. First of all, the potential participants, primarily police officers from Brandenburg (Germany) had to be informed about the survey. This was done, inter alia, by information from the Ministry of Interior of Brandenburg and the respective Police Headquarters as well as personal communication of the authors.

2.2 Study set-up

As already mentioned the survey was aligned to the assessment mechanisms of the COMPOSITE¹² project but was specifically modified to meet the requirements of SOMEPE. Altogether, the survey comprised of 12 items with substantive as well as four demographic questions.

¹¹ cf. i.a. S16

¹² Bayerl, 2012

For the questions addressed in the items S1 to S12 the survey used a five point scale for investigation and classification but some questions also offered the possibility for manual input¹³. Apart from the classical question to shed light on the individual official¹⁴ and private use¹⁵, some questions of the survey also aimed at opinions and attitudes of the participants towards future developments concerning the use of social media for policing.

2.3 Implementation

Requests for taking part in this survey, including the link to the online survey form, were sent to all police officers via their official duty e-Mail accounts. Furthermore, a similar request was posted on the police Intranet¹⁶ webpage. The problem with both communication channels was that the attached Internet link could not directly be used on the duty computers, since they do not have direct Internet access. The respective e-Mail needed to be forwarded to a private e-Mail account to open this link and get access to the survey. This seems to have been too much trouble for most of the officers and civil servants since only 98 out of currently 8221¹⁷ personnel of the State Police of Brandenburg took part in the survey within the dedicated period, which lasted from 02 February till 31 March 2014. Unfortunately only 72 survey forms were correctly completed and could be used for evaluation. Further distribution channels were social media applications and personal communication. That means only one per cent out of 8221 police officers and civil servants successfully participated in the survey.

It has to be clarified that this survey makes no claim to being representative due to the low number of participants and missing sample and random tests. However, there are indications which suggest that the results of this survey can alternatively be used when considering this topic, despite the missing representativeness. The majority (68 %) of the participants were male and 30 % female officers/civil servants. This reflects the ratio between male and female officers/civil servants of 72 % to 28 % quite accurately¹⁸. Further, two per cent have not given any information or have ignored that question.

¹³ cf. S5

¹⁴ cf. S3

¹⁵ cf. S1

¹⁶ Secure internal company network

¹⁷ Ministry of the Interior of Brandenburg, 1 January 2014, see Annex 1

¹⁸ *ibid.*

Also of interest is the fact that the majority of the participants are junior command officers with supervising responsibilities and senior command officers who are mostly in supervising positions. This fact also explains why the majority of participants stated that they have graduated from Universities of Applied Science or other universities¹⁹.

3. Findings for Germany

3.1 Demographic Data

3.1.1 Participants

As already mentioned before, the participants in this survey were mainly police officers and civil servants of police services of the State of Brandenburg of all ranks, positions and fields of policing. The reasons for the low participations are numerous. One of the main reasons is the already discussed fact that not every police officer has constant access to duty computers with Internet connection. The police in Brandenburg use an internal and secured computer network. This means the distributed survey link could not directly be opened and the questionnaire completed. It seems that forwarding the link to their own private accounts was too much trouble for most of the police officers. It is also assumed that patrol officers did not have the time to take part in the survey. There is one more issue which should not be neglected. Germany has to deal with demographic changes which also have impact on the police. A material effect on the police in Brandenburg is the fact that the average employee age is 45²⁰ years of age. This means that a large proportion of them belong to the generation which is referred to as “digital immigrants²¹”.

This aging problem could have resulted in a lower interest regarding social media in all aspects and the Internet. This also could have had an impact on the interest of taking part in voluntary surveys in such a matter.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰ Ministry of the Interior Brandenburg, 1 January 2014, see Annex 1

²¹ Digital immigrants are persons who have not grown up using digital media but have learned it in later life.

The reasons for the relative great number of non-completed questionnaires are also manifold. Some of the potential participants expressed in personal discussions, that filling in this comprehensive survey form was too time consuming and partly too boring. In connection to the last point the officers said the repetition of quite similar questions irritated them²². Another simple reason could have been constant interruptions on duty or at home.

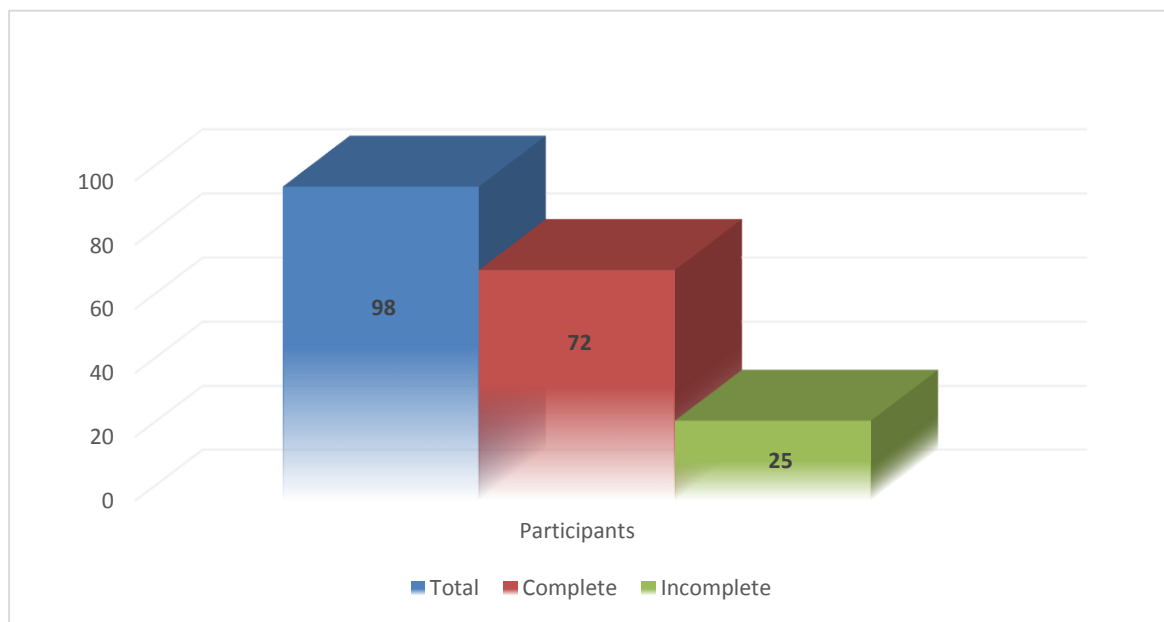


Chart 1: Participants

3.1.2 Gender ratio of the participant

Out of the 72 (countable) participants 21 (29 %) were female and 50 (69 %) male officers or civil servants. The gender ratio in the Brandenburg police is 27.2 % female to 72.8 %²³ male police officers and civil servants. This means that the representation of both genders is almost exactly proportional in comparison to the total personnel working in the police. One participant did not answer this particular question.

²² cf. i.a. S2-S4

²³ Ministry of the Interior of Brandenburg, 1 January 2014, see Annex 1

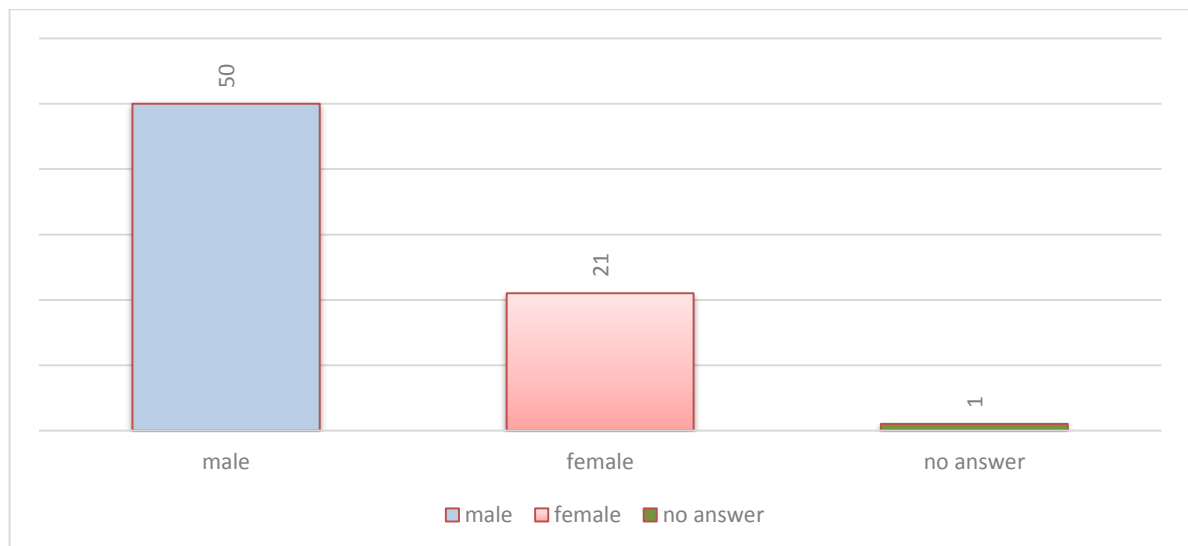


Chart 2: Gender of Participants

3.1.3 Age of participants

The chart about the age categories of the participants shows that the biggest group (22; 30 %) is at the age between 40 to 50 years. This is not surprising since the average age of the personnel working for the Brandenburg police is currently 45.6 years. The second and third largest groups are participants at the age between 30 to 40 years (19; 26 %) and 50 to 60 (16; 22 %). What is worth mentioning, is the fact that the staff at the age between 20 to 30 years is not very well represented in the survey. Especially, this age group is particularly active on the Internet and in social media and for this reason called “digital natives”²⁴. There is only one (two per cent) participant younger than 21 years of age. This is not surprising since students and trainees were not invited to take part in the survey.

There are only six (eight per cent) participants over 60 years of age which also comes as no surprise since the retirement age for police officers is still approximately 60 years of age. Only one (two per cent) participant did not want to reveal their age. Since there is no data regarding the age groups of the whole personnel available, no conclusions can be drawn whether the participants in the survey truly represent their age groups.

²⁴ Digital natives are persons brought up during the age of digital technology and are familiar with the Internet, digital media and the associated technical equipment from early age.

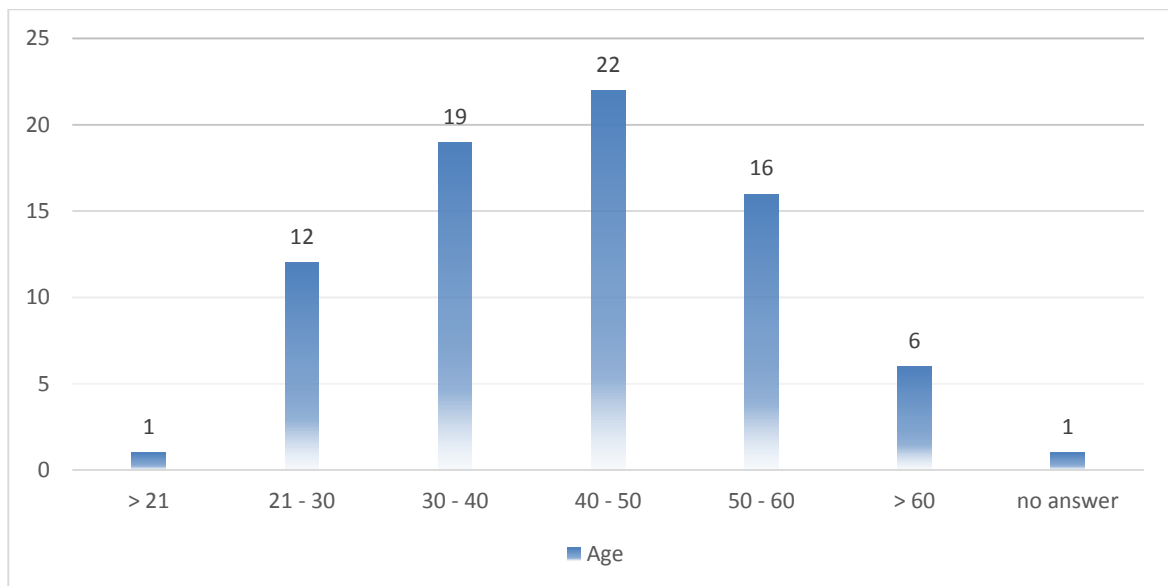


Chart 3: Age of participants

3.1.4 Hierarchical level

The results of question S12 regarding rank and position of the participants are really revealing. Ten participants (14 %) said that they are senior command officers which actually account for only 3%²⁵ of the whole workforce of the police in Brandenburg. The vast majority, 36 out of 72 (52 %) of the participants belong to the junior command level with or without leadership responsibilities. This group is also slightly overrepresented. In reality only 48 %²⁶ of the personnel belong to this group. Only 34 % of the employees who took part in the survey were general police officers like patrol officers, criminal investigators or civil servants working in administration and support units. This group is quite underrepresented since employees of this level account for 49 %²⁷. The high number of participants from the junior but especially senior management, which is not proportional to the number of personnel working at the various levels, indicates a higher interest from managers in this topic. This could be explained by the fact that the project SOMEPE is being implemented by the University of Applied Sciences of the Police of Brandenburg where a much higher number of management staff work as permanent lectures and professors, all be it some also on temporary assignments.

²⁵ Ministry of the Interior of Brandenburg, 1 January 2014, see Annex I

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*

For that reason the chances to get in contact with the project itself and to raise attention for the survey amongst those managers might have been much higher in comparison to other police organisations and units and could have led to a higher participation.

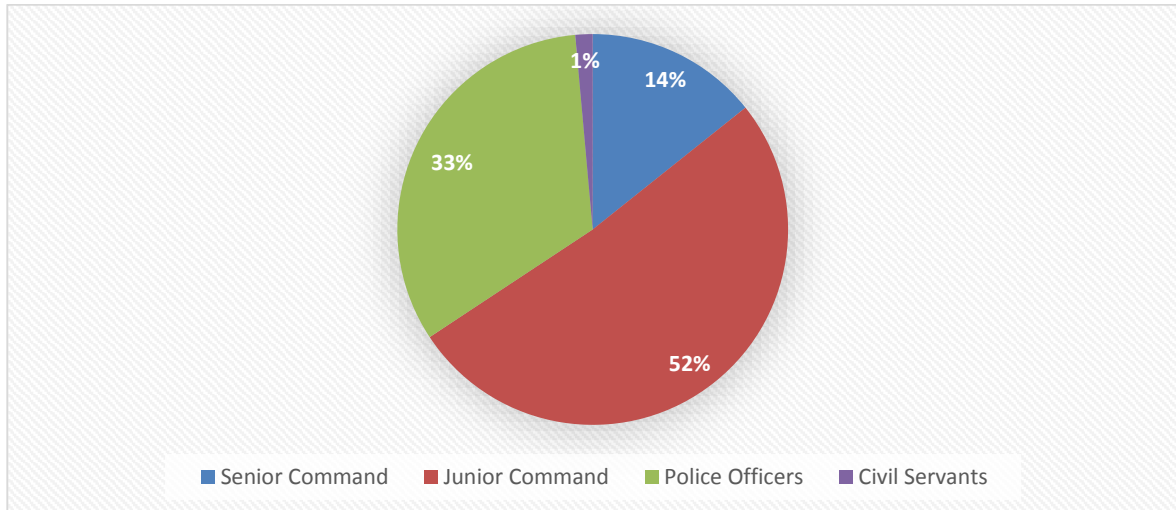


Chart 4: Hierarchical level

3.1.5 Academic background

The demographic question block S13 was intended to shed light on the educational background of the participants. All in all, 82 % of the participants say they have a Bachelor or an even higher academic degree.

Responsible for this high number of Bachelor degrees, is the current recruitment and educational approach of the Brandenburg Police which has been in place since 2005. The majority of the students are high school graduates who study at the University of Applied Sciences of the Police and finish their basic police education with a Bachelor degree. The same applies for police services of other German states.

However, there are also civil servants like IT, finance or logistics experts who graduated from other universities and received a Bachelor or Master degree. Eleven percent of the participants said they have a Bachelor degree from another university. The results of this survey also show that 12 % of the participants have only basic educational background. All of this shows that the vast majority of the employees who took part in the survey were higher educated police officers and civil servants.

Since there is no data regarding the academic backgrounds of the personnel available no conclusions can be drawn whether the participants in the survey truly represent their respective groups.

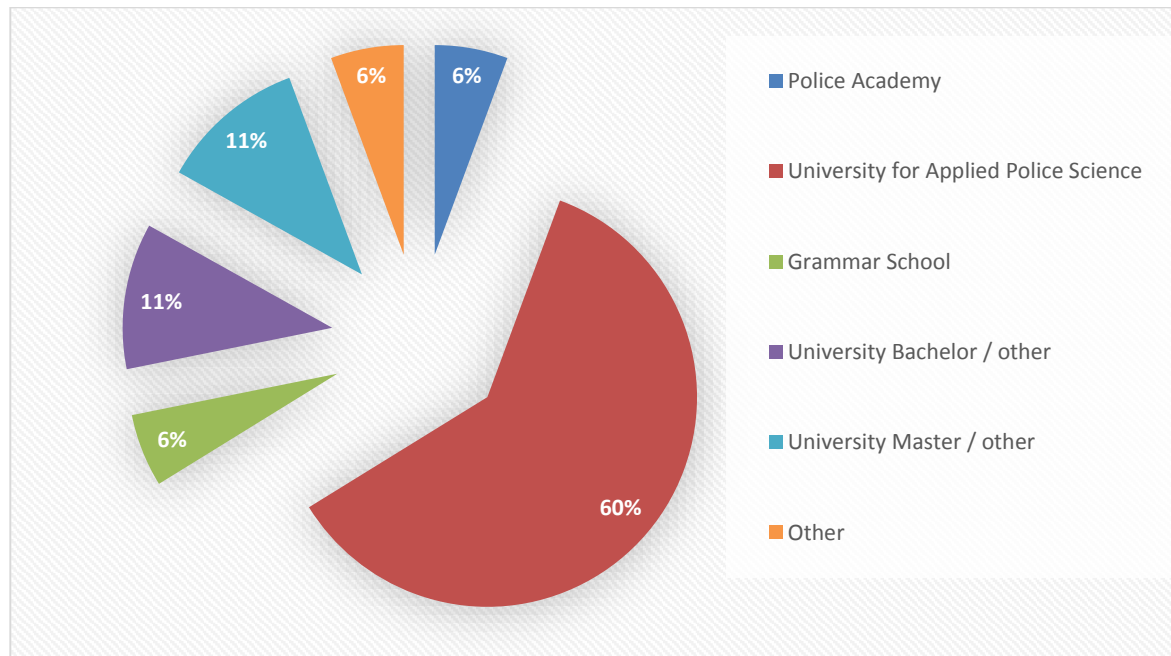


Chart 5: Academic background

3.1.6 Fields of policing in which the participants work

The demographic group of questions S7 sheds light on the various working fields, departments and units the participants work in. The reason for this question was to determine if there are different attitudes towards social media depending on the field of activity of the participants. The results of the survey identified that the participants mostly work with criminal police (23 %) or uniformed police (49 %) - all inclusive 72 %.

Noteworthy, however, is that almost one third of the participants (approx. 30 %) do not work in the branches listed in the question. Interestingly, participants working in cybercrime and community policing are barely (each one per cent) represented. This may well be due to the fact that only a small number of police officers work in those specific cybercrime units. The relatively high average of age of the officers working in community policing could have negatively influenced the probability of participation.

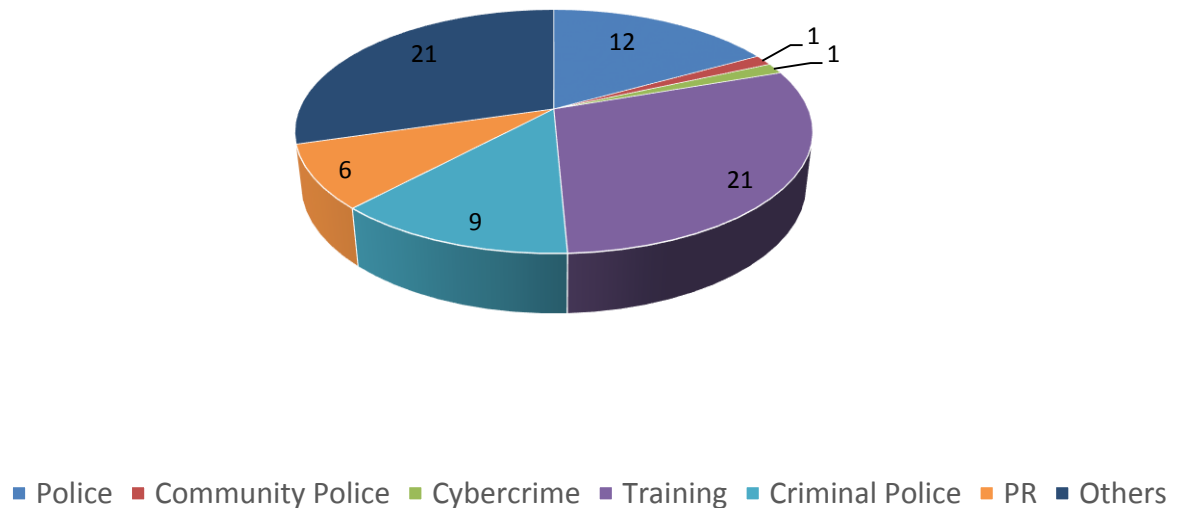


Chart 6: Working fields of participants

3.2 Summary of demographic findings

In summary, it can be concluded that mainly well-educated and trained police officers in the age group up to 50 years of age took part in the survey. Surprisingly, the participant's gender ratio coincides with the real situation in the Brandenburg police. Due to the small number of personnel which took part no claim to representatively can be made. Nevertheless, the results can serve as indications for the purpose of evaluating the use of social media by police officers.

3.3 Substantive results of the survey

Two sets of questions S2 and S11 were intended to gather information about the knowledge of social media. First, the questions focused on the private knowledge and use of social media. Secondly, the participants were asked questions about the possibilities social media provide for policing purposes but also about associated risks.

3.3.1 Comparison of knowledge and experience

The first set of questions under S2 collected data regarding the participants' personal view about their knowledge (S2 - SQ1) and experience (S2 - SQ2) with social media. They mainly assess both experience (75.35 % - 3.22Ø) and level of knowledge (82.2 % - 3.4Ø) as at least average to good. Of particular note is that 20.55 % assess their personal experience with social media as low but only 10.96 % evaluate their level of knowledge as low. This suggests that police officers have sufficient knowledge about social media but lack the practical experience. This result could be explained by the traditional scepticism towards new technologies.

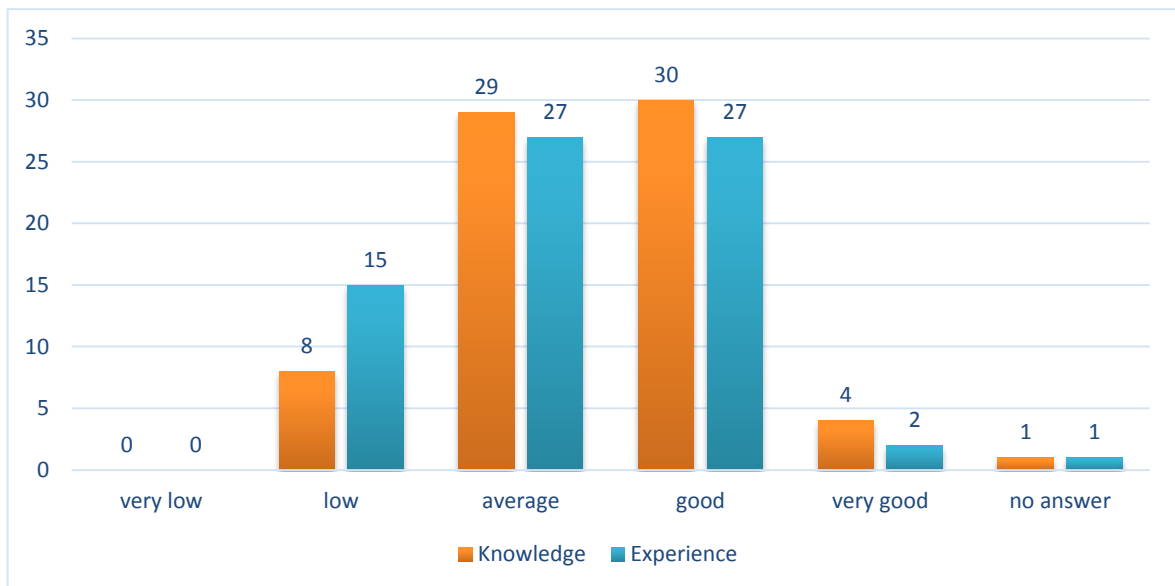


Chart 7: Comparison of knowledge and experience

3.3.2 Knowledge about social media

In contrast to S2 the set of questions S11 focussed on the level of knowledge about the opportunities (SQ1) and risks (SQ) of social media for police work. As a result it can be determined that both knowledge (Ø 3.11) and associated risks (Ø3.08) are assessed as slightly above average. In total 79.46 % of the participants state their knowledge about the possibilities of social media for police work is better than average.

Exactly 75.35 % say the same about their knowledge about the risks social media can pose. However, 24.66 % feel inadequately informed about the risk and 20.55 % about the promising possibilities.

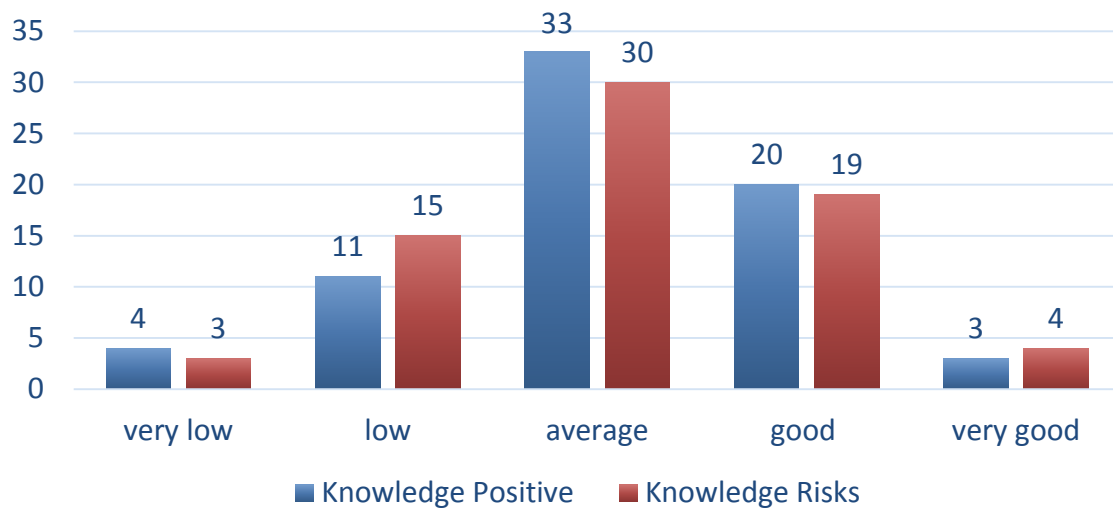


Chart 8: Knowledge about social media

3.3.3 Training received by the participants

Questions S9 and S10 put emphasis on advanced education in order to estimate if and to what extend police officers have already received official training for social media. 17 % say they have already taken part in an e-learning and eight per cent participated in a classroom course. This is very surprising because to the authors knowledge there is not such a thing as an e-learning course for police officers available which covers these topics? This may have been due to the fact that the survey participants did not pay attention to the fact that there is a difference between cybercrime and social media and possibly confused the available cybercrime e-learning application with one for social media.

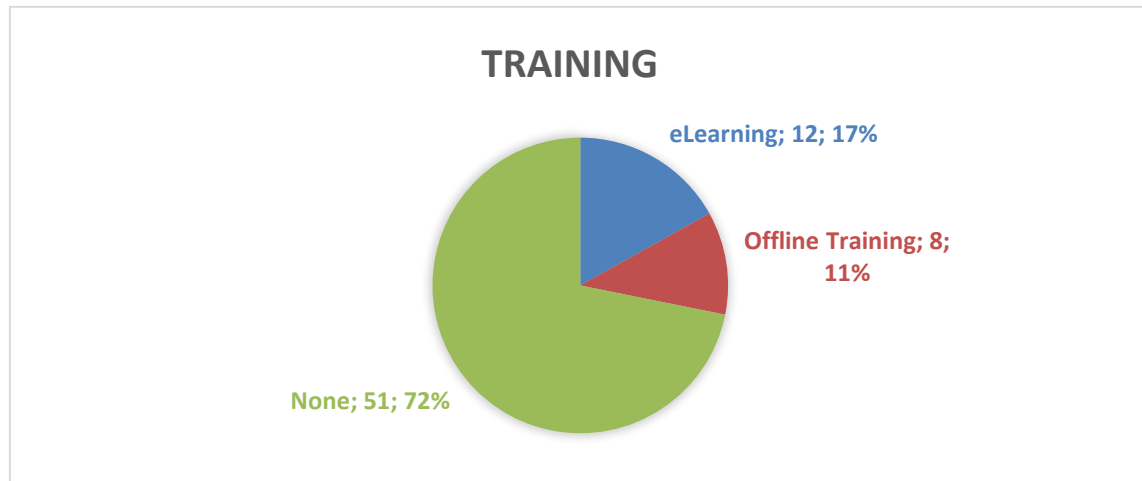


Chart 9: Training received by participants

3.3.4 Usability of social media for the police

The attitude towards usability and effectiveness of social media for police work was evaluated within question set S3 (SQ1 to SQ4). Participants were in particular asked if social media are useful for police activities (SQ1), if they can increase the efficiency of police organisations (SQ2), improve the reputation and image (SQ3), and the effectiveness (SQ4). The questions relate to general contents. The usefulness is rated with a high agreement level of 4.22 (91.81 %), whereby 63.01 % agree with the statement and 28.77 % strongly agree. The answers to the attitude questions SQ2 to SQ4 are essentially identical. Question SQ2 (increasing effectiveness) is rated with a high agreement level of 3.97, SQ3 (improving reputation) with an almost identical agreement level of 3.96, and SQ4 (improving efficiency) with 3.92. Nevertheless, it has to be stated that 23.29 % (SQ2) and 21.92 % (SQ3) of the participants do not or agree or agree less with the respective statements. Most of them seem to be convinced about the usability of social media but the possible implications for police work are not recognised.

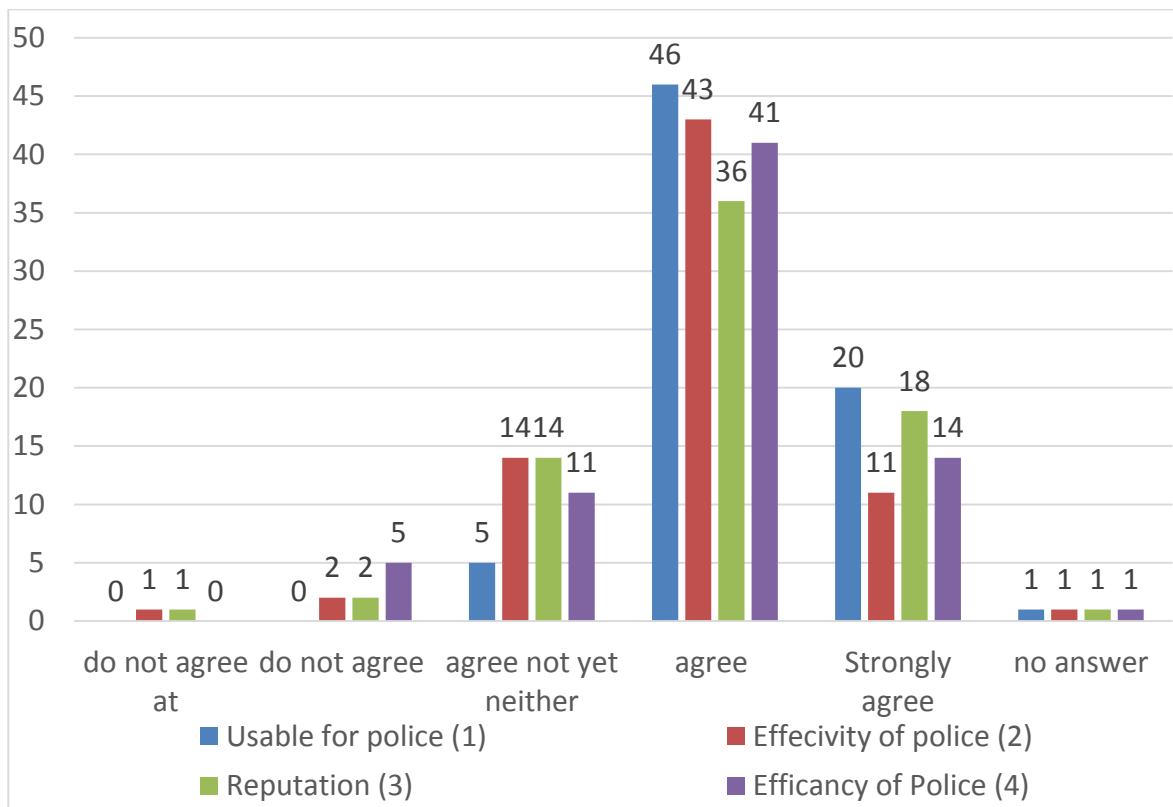


Chart 10: Usability of social media for the police

3.3.5 Usability and effectiveness for the police units of the participants

In addition to question S3 regarding the usability of social media for the police in general the participants were asked (S4) about the implications of social media usage for themselves as an individual police officer. Again, the questions were directed on usability for their specific working fields (SQ1) and their organisation (SQ4), improvement of efficiency (SQ2 and SQ5) as well as enhancement of effectivity (SQ3 and SQ6). The results are similar to question block S3. Hereby, question SQ3 got the highest agreement level with 3.8. According to the participants' opinion social media are very useful for their organisations. In contrast, question SQ2 got the lowest agreement level with 3.2. This means that they do not believe that using social media can improve their own personal efficiency. Summarizing, the majority of participants see lots of benefits of social media usage for their organisations but not necessarily for themselves as an individual employee.

S4	Statements	Ø
SQ1	Social media are useful for my own job as police officer.	3,6
SQ2	Social media enhance my performance as police officer	3,2
SQ3	Social media enhance the effectiveness of my own work as police officer	3,4
SQ4	Social media are useful for my own police force	3,8
SQ5	Social media enhance the performance of my police force	3,4
SQ6	Social media enhance the effectiveness of my own police force	3,5

Chart 11: Average usability of social media for individual police officers

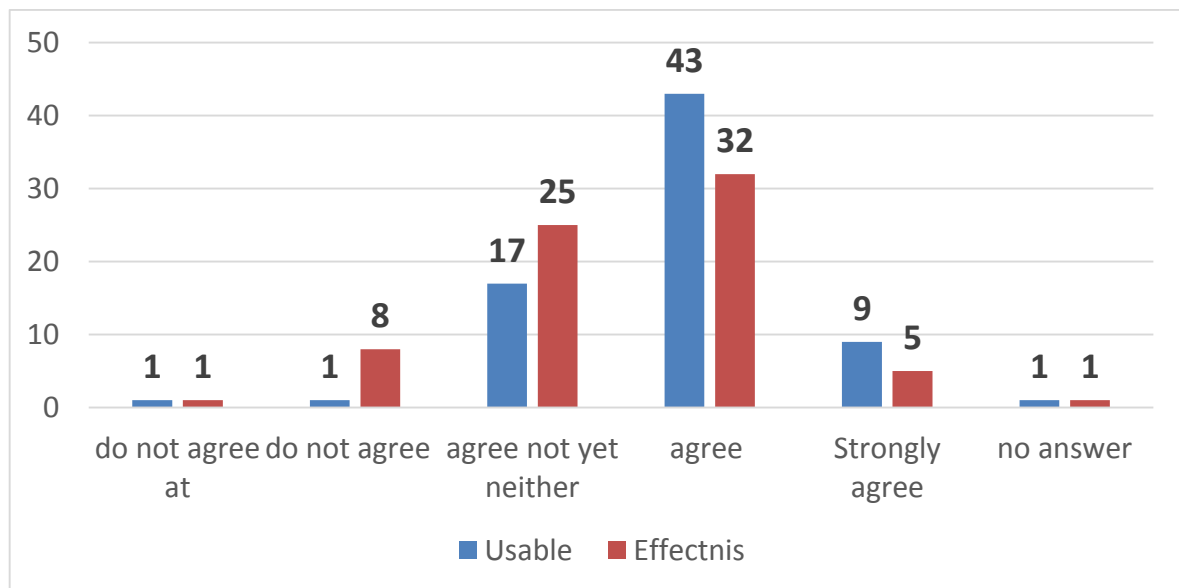


Chart 12: Usability of social media for individual police officers

3.3.6 Purposes for which social media could be useful

Question block S5 focused on fields of policing and activities for which social media could be important and useful. The participants were asked to evaluate the importance of social media for 11 pre-chosen fields/activities (see chart 13). The statement that social media can be useful for intelligence gathering purposes to combat crime and criminal phenomena (SQ3) got the highest agreement level of 4.4. The low score of 3.2 indicates that there is doubt about whether a clever social media strategy could strengthen the corporate identity of the organisation (SQ10). Furthermore, it is noticeable that two other statements (SQ6 and SQ10) got agreement levels below 4.0. The participants do not seem to believe that social media can be especially useful for informing the public about criminal activities (3.7) and for advanced training for police employees (3.4).

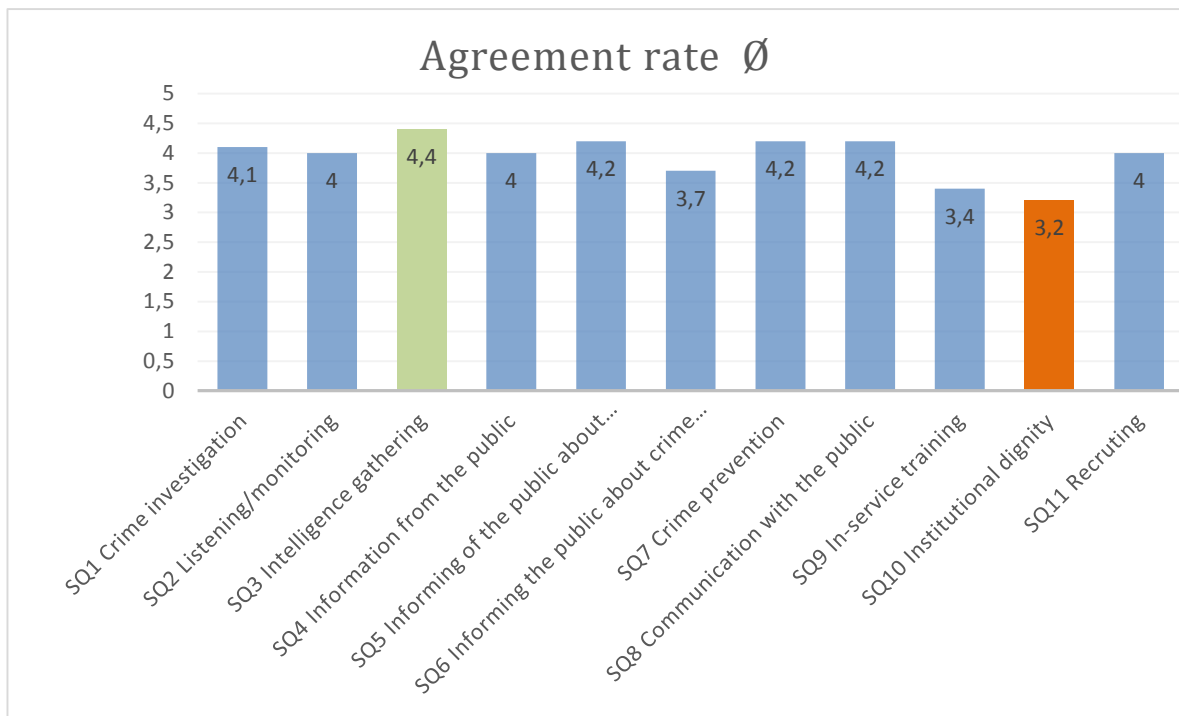


Chart 13: Usability for various policing activities

3.3.7 Social media applications which could be used for policing purposes

After asking questions about the individual and institutional usability of social media, in general question block S6 focused on the importance of various applications as a means for policing.

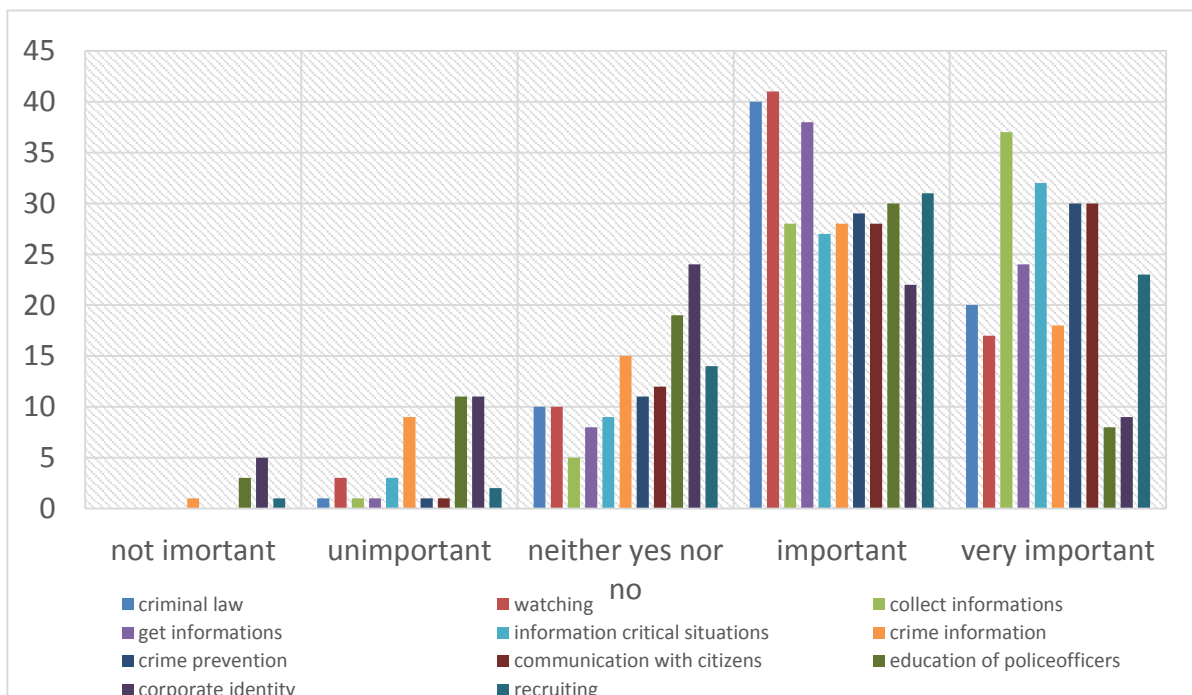


Chart 14: Usability for various fields of policing

Only Facebook (4.3) got an agreement level above 4.0. Wikipedia (SQ5; 3.9), Twitter (SQ2; 3.8) and YouTube (SQ3; 3.7) got rather high agreement levels too. The six applications Flickr (SQ6), Instagram (SQ8), Snapchat (SQ10), Pinterest (SQ13), Gaming Services (SQ14), and Online games (SQ15) were evaluated with an agreement level lower than 3.0.

S 6	Social media platforms	Ø
SQ1	Facebook	4,3
SQ2	Twitter	3,8
SQ3	Youtube	3,7
SQ4	Blogs	3,3
SQ5	Wikipedia	3,9
SQ6	Flickr	2,7
SQ7	LinkedIn	3,0
SQ8	Instagaram	2,9
SQ9	WhatsApp	3,5
SQ10	SnapChat	2,6
SQ11	Skype	3,2
SQ12	Google+	3,4
SQ13	Pinterest	2,7
SQ14	Gaming Services	2,3
SQ15	Online games	2,4

Chart 15: Rating of usable social media applications

It is striking that the platforms which are considered to be less useful for the police are typically used by the young target group. Children and juveniles usually start their online careers with online games and gaming platforms²⁸. SnapChat and Instagram are very popular amongst juveniles²⁹.

²⁸ See Bitkom, 2014-1

²⁹ Sellin, 2014 ; Bitkom, 2014-2

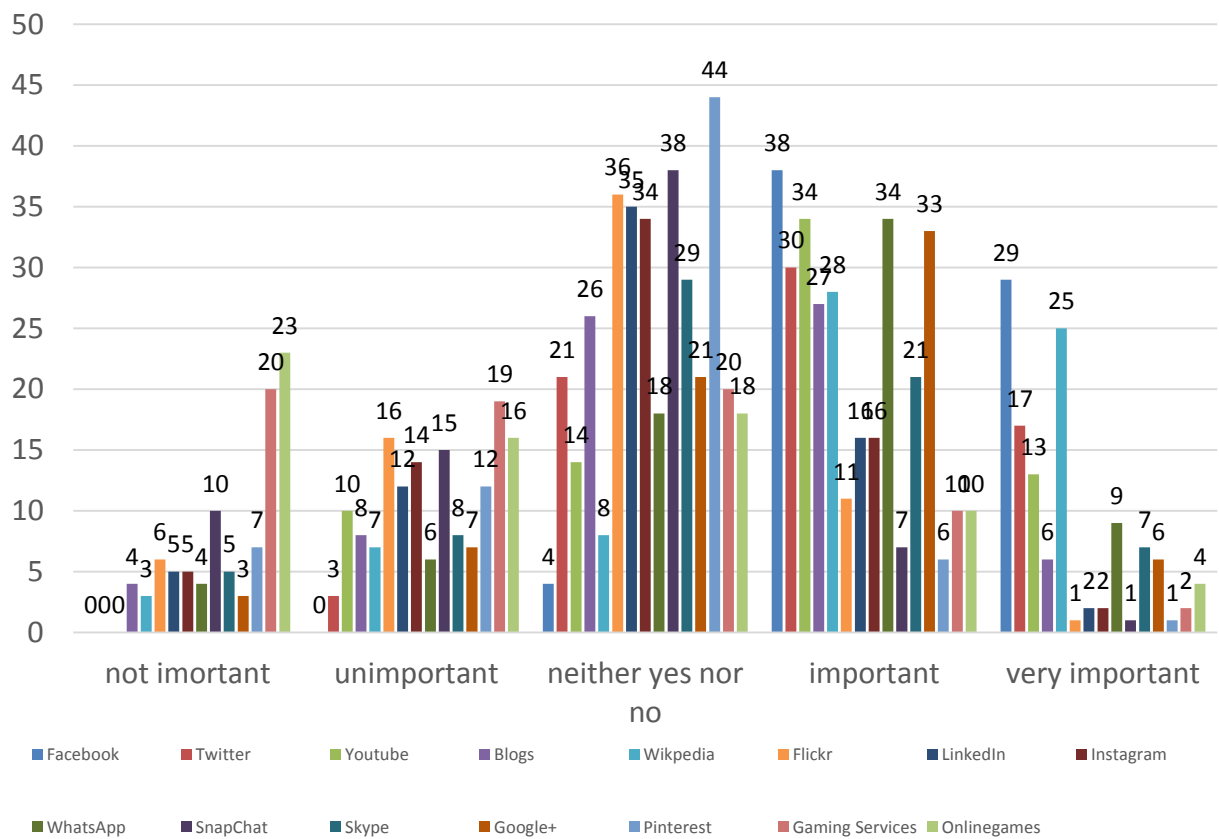


Chart 16: Usable social media applications

3.4. Comparison of official and private use of social media

3.4.1 Official utilization of social media by police organisations

It can be noted that police officers mainly have a positive attitude towards the use of social media as an individual tool as well as an instrument for police organisations. This in particular applies to the traditional platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. Question S8 collected information regarding the activities for which the participant's police organisation or unit already use social media. It has to be taken into account that the question did not offer a selection of possibilities between the strict official usage and where applicable an unofficial recourse to social media. This may explain why participants state their police organisations get information from the citizens despite the fact that they do not operate an official social media presence.

Subject to that reservation, the agreement level of 2.9 for the activity “Intelligence gathering” stands out in particular. This could be due to the fact that police organisations, where applicable, use official or private hardware (smart phones, tablet-PC, and notebooks) to run investigations in social media regarding operational environments, persons, and emergency situations for thorough risk assessments and preparation for police operations. The answers given may especially put emphasis on this fact. Such investigations do not require a social media presence or profile. The police do not even have to be engaged in direct communication or interaction with users and can remain undetected. Overall, 10 out of 11 proposed activities received agreement rates lower than 2.5. Police activities which require a direct communication with the society or individual citizens received the lowest rates. The activities “Informing public about criminal issues” (SQ6) received a rate of 1.7, “Information to the public about disasters, emergencies, crisis” (SQ5) 1.8, “Crime prevention activities” (SQ7) 1.9, and “Establishing good communication with public” (SQ8) 1.97. These results indicate that social media is only used to a limited extend for official purposes.

S 7	Activities	Ø
SQ1	Crime investigations	2,0
SQ2	Listening / Monitoring	2,0
SQ3	Intelligence gathering	2,9
SQ4	Getting information / Soliciting tips from public	2,2
SQ5	Providing information to public in case of disasters, emergencies, crisis etc.	1,8
SQ6	Informing public about criminal issues	1,7
SQ7	Crime prevention activities	1,9
SQ8	Establishing good communication with public	1,97
SQ9	In-service training	2,31
SQ10	Institutional dignity	1,92
SQ11	Recruiting	2,34

Chart 17: Rating about the usage of social media by police organisations

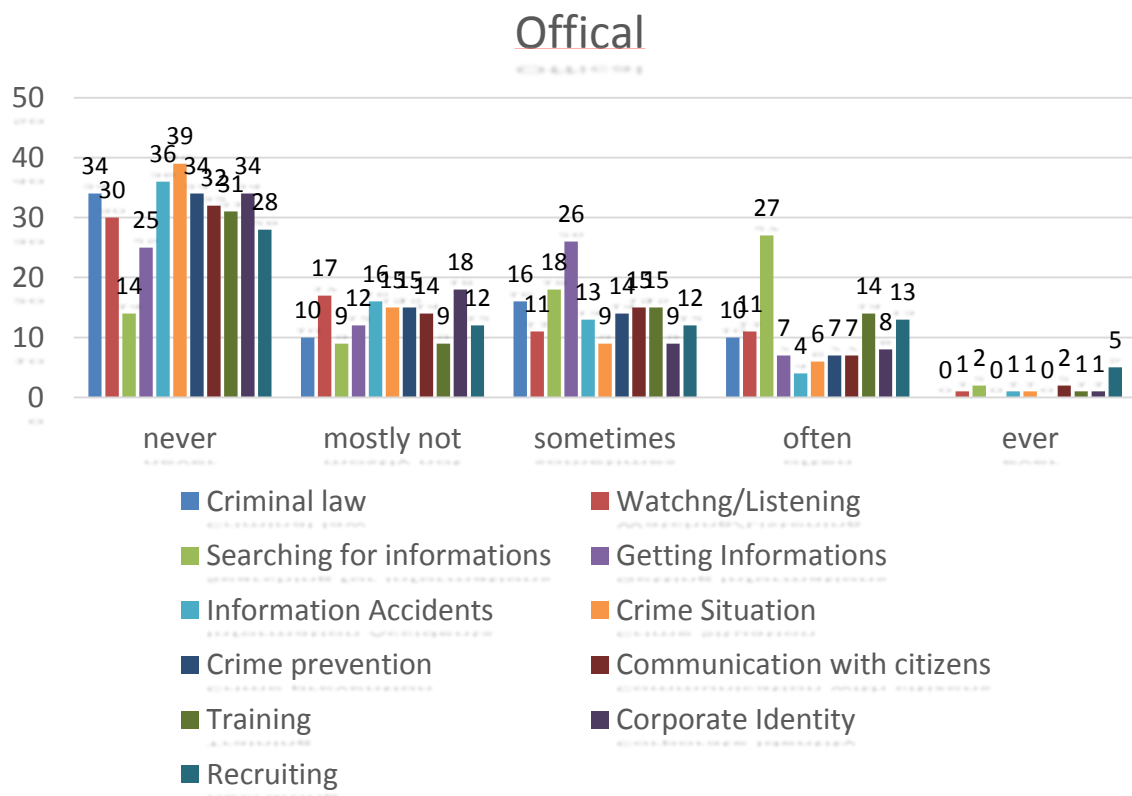


Chart 18: Usage of social media by the police

3.4.2 Official utilization of social media by individual police personnel

In contrast to question S8 in question S9 the participants were asked about their own official use of social media. On average, all agreement rates are lower than in question S8. Only the activity “Intelligence gathering” (SQ3) receives a rate of 3.0 which is 0.1 higher than in question S8. All other policing activities receive lower agreement levels which could be explained by a much lower individual utilisation rate. In this regard, it should be taken into account that some activities like recruiting (SQ11) are institutional tasks. The fact that this activity receives an agreement rate as low as 1.4 comes as no surprise. Interestingly, however, the subject “In-service training” (SQ9) is rated 2.1. Some of the participants presumably use web-based platforms to get information about criminal phenomena, current political developments and so on which leads to a higher rate regarding this aspect.

S9	Activity	Ø
SQ1	Crime investigations	1,7
SQ2	Listening / Monitoring	1,9
SQ3	Intelligence gathering	3,0
SQ4	Getting information / Soliciting tips from public	1,9
SQ5	Providing information to public in case of disasters, emergencies, crisis etc.	1,6
SQ6	Informing public about criminal issues	1,5
SQ7	Crime prevention activities	1,7
SQ8	Establishing good communication with public	1,6
SQ9	In-service training	2,1
SQ10	Institutional dignity	1,6
SQ11	Recruiting	1,4

Chart 19: Usage of social media by individual police

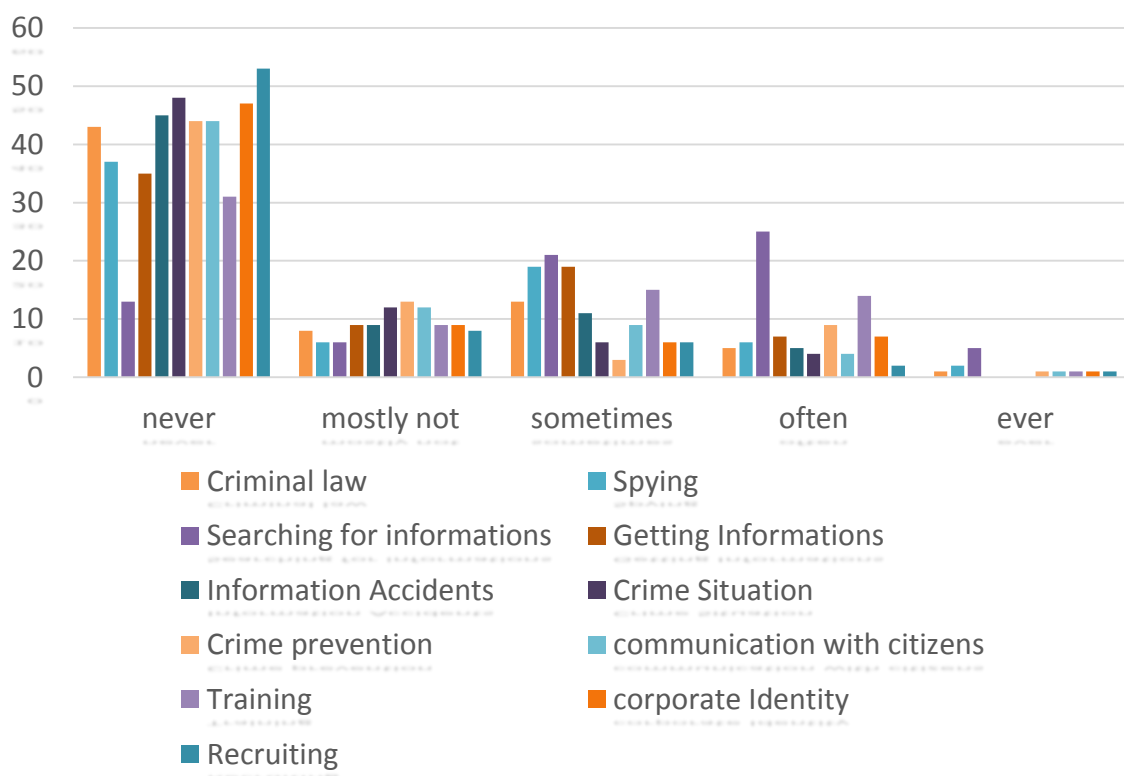


Chart 20: Usage of social media by individual police

3.5 Statements regarding the usage of social media in the future

Question block S12, especially the questions SQ1 and SQ2, investigated whether the participants intend to further use social media for official purposes or even plan to expand it in the future. It is conspicuous that 75.34 % (Ø 3.7) say they want to continue to use social media but only 57.54 % (Ø 3.5) want to expand their social media activities³⁰.

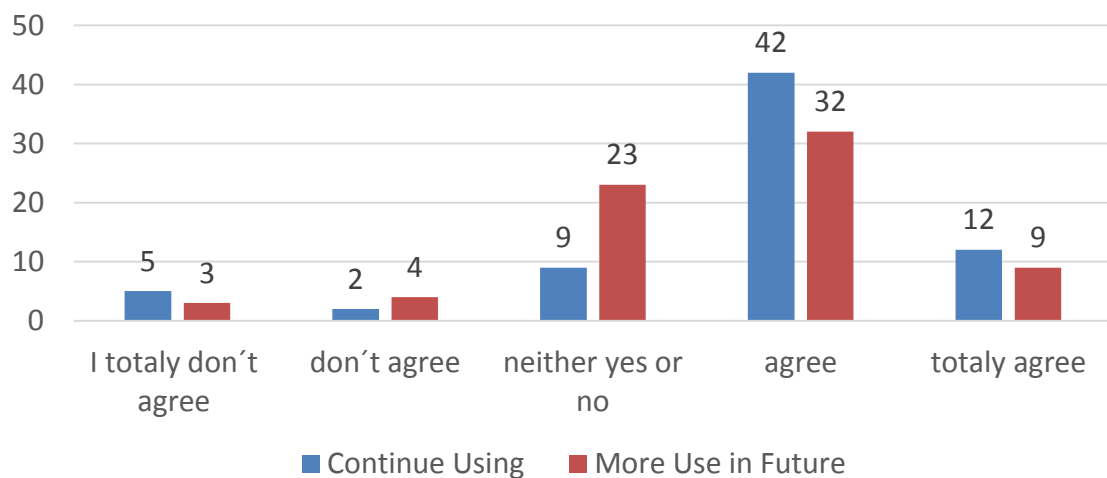


Chart 21: Statements regarding the usage of social media in the future

3.6 Essential Statements

The final question S12 focused on the participant's personal view on 12 given statements regarding police and social media (see charts 20 and 21). The highest agreement rate of 4.5 receives the statement "Interaction risks of social media – like cyber mobbing³¹, cyber grooming³², sexting³³ – are big quests for the police" (SQ8).

³⁰ A publication is planned by Dr Bayerl covering this topic

³¹ Cyber mobbing is the long term and repeated public embarrassment, harassment, maltreatment, and threats carried out with intensity using all sort of information technology (Rüdiger, 2014-2).

³² Cyber grooming is the initiation of sexual interactions with children und juveniles using web-based platforms, games and applications (Rüdiger, 2014-1).

³³ Sexting is the exchange of sexually explicit chat or text messages between two persons. But the definition has changed recently. Nowadays, mainly nude or child pornographic pictures are exchanged between adults and minors (Rüdiger, 2014-2).

This indicates that the participants are aware of the risks and forms of crime associated with social media due to the existing communication possibilities and the resulting importance for police actions. This is also reflected in some of the other statements. Specifically the statements “In the future every police officer shall be enabled to use social media at work” (SQ3; 4.1), “Nowadays every police trainee or student shall be taught in the use of social media” (SQ4; 4.4), “The police should be present and accessible in social media” (SQ5; 4.4), and “An effective prevention requires a strong police presence in social media” (SQ9; 4.1) correspondingly receive high agreement rates.

In essence, all of these statements discuss whether the police have to show responsibility for dealing with potential risks associated with social media (SQ8)³⁴, how this can be achieved (SQ5 & 9), and that all police officers must address this issue (SQ3 & 4). Interestingly, apart from the statement “My children have better knowledge about social media than I” (SQ10; 2.8) the lowest agreement rate (3.2) receives the statement “My police management has a positive attitude regarding the use of social media for policing” (SQ11). Particularly when considering the replies to statement SQ11 it is notable that 47.95 % of the participants cannot assess whether their supervisors are in favour or oppose the use of social media. This might indicate that the utilization of social media is not one of the top topics discussed by supervisors of the various police organisations.

³⁴Rogus, Rüdiger 2014

S12	Statement	Ø
SQ1	I intend to continue using social media in my job	3,7
SQ2	I intend to continue using social media for more of my job responsibilities	3,5
SQ3	In the future every police officer shall be enabled to use social media at work	4,1
SQ4	Nowadays every police trainee or student shall be taught in the use of social media.	4,4
SQ5	The police should be present and accessible in social media	4,4
SQ6	If the police is not present in social media, other informal groups will fill in the gap	3,9
SQ7	Social media will change the traditional way of police work	3,8
SQ8	Interaction risks of social media – like cyber mobbing, cyber grooming, sexting – are big quests for the police	4,5
SQ9	An effective prevention requires a strong police presence in social media	4,1
SQ10	My children have better knowledge about social media than me	2,8
SQ11	My police management has positive attitude in terms of the use of social media for policing	3,2

Chart 22: Essential statements

4. Summary

For the police there is no way around social media. If the police want to be recognised as a transparent, open-minded and community-oriented dialogue partner in digital space, the course must be set now and social media utilisation should already be addressed during basic education. Furthermore, the acceptance especially by the police leadership, needs to be improved. In fact, these statements reflect the results of the present survey. However, it has to be emphasised again, that this study does not claim representativeness. Nevertheless, from the authors' point of view the study results provide an interesting overview about the utilisation of social media by police employees and organisations as well as their attitude towards the effectiveness and possible practical applications. Apart from these aspects an in-depth and cross-border cooperation and scientific debate on the usage of social media by individual police employees and police organisations is urgently recommended. Empirical data about the expectations of the populations need to be collected and how the citizens imagine a police presence in social media, whether it is even wanted and would be accepted.

Ultimately, the adaption rate of social media is increasing in all societies worldwide. Police work in this field is also a global phenomenon which needs to be considered not only on a regional or national, but on a cross-border or even global basis.

The SOME-project and the results of this present survey want to contribute a significant part to this discussion.

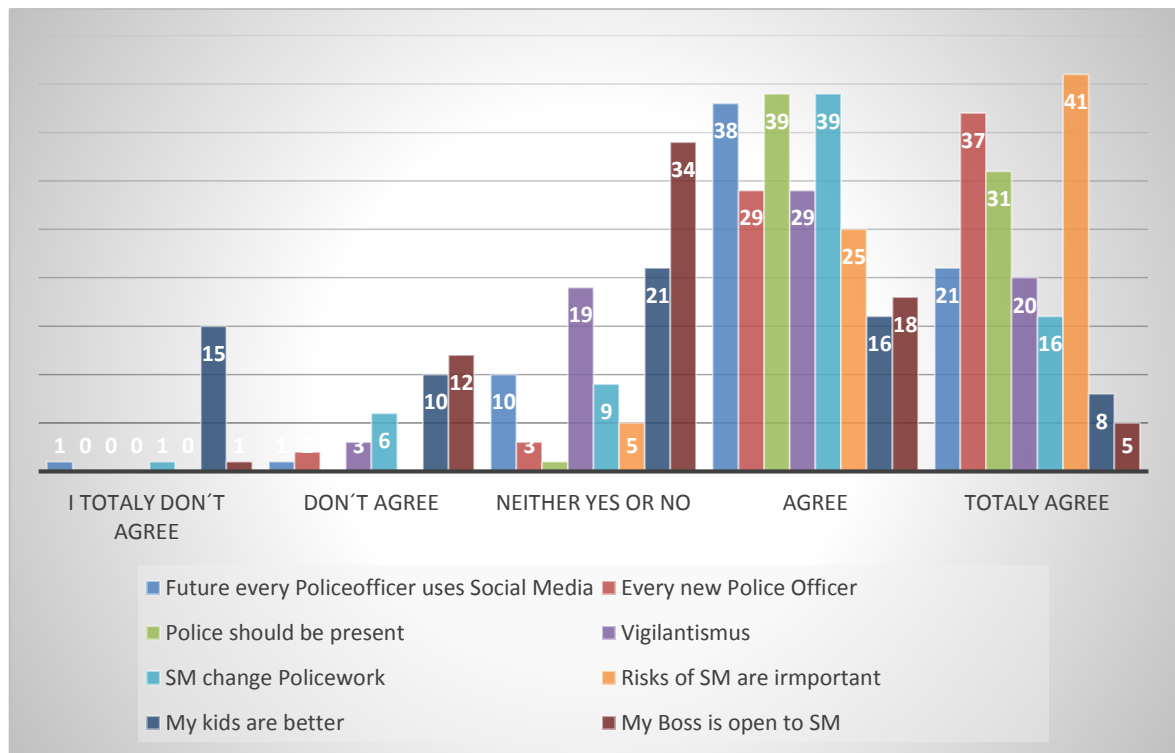


Chart 23: Rating essential statements

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Annex:

Personnel statistics of the police of Brandenburg provided by the Ministry of Interior of Brandenburg as at 01.01.2014

Police of Brandenburg	Number of positions (excl. third-party financed positions)	
Law enforcement officers	Senior command officers	193
	Junior command officers	3,825
	Police officers	3,429
	Total:	7,447
Civil servants	Senior management	52
	Middle management	147
	Clerks	575
	Total:	774
	Total number:	8,221

Branch	Number of positions	Remarks
Uniformed police	4,034	Patrol, traffic, waterway and riot police
Community police	521	
Criminal police	1,945	Criminal police at all levels
Education and training	351	Staff of the University of Applied Sciences
Enforcement support units	1,370	Administrative and central services, HQ's and PD' leadership and staff
Total number:	8,221	

Gender ratio	
Female employees	27.2 %
Male employees	72.8 %

Age average	
All employees	45.6 years