

## **The municipal police's role in crime prevention: Contributions and perceptions of the Lisbon Municipal Police**

### **ABSTRACT**

In recent years, issues relating to crime, violence and insecurity have been the subject of widespread debate and concern for a diverse variety of social actors, including political parties, the press and even citizens. However, few studies have targeted the police officer's perspective whose job is precisely to prevent the occurrence of criminal deeds. These privileged actors take up center stage due to the reality of dealing with crime in a more direct and interventionist manner, thus earning their right to being heard in the complex process of managing the means and resources used in crime prevention and incivilities; whilst probing adopted public safety policies' accomplishability. This privileged source of information should span, also focusing on law enforcement personnel's motivation process while pursuing their professional duties and competences. This investigation will focus specifically on this subject, emphasizing the role of the municipal police in general and the Lisbon Municipal Police in particular, underlining the importance of the Lisbon Municipal Police in crime prevention, in close cooperation with others police forces. Based on a form survey we will try to understand the perception of Lisbon Municipal Police officers under the following scopes of analysis: i) current crime trends, ii) appropriate answers in crime preventing; iii) actions by the Lisbon Municipal Police that result in a more preventive action. The results achieved allowed to realize that: the evolution of crime is not perceived in parallel with the crime recorded data managed by the police; the most adequate responses perceived concerned effective rule-making instead of the mere forceful application of penalties or urban landscape improvements; and that the most effective preventive actions of Lisbon Municipal Police perceived were the ones regarding community policing, raising people's awareness and law enforcement actions taken under administrative social offenses inspections.

Keywords: Crime, municipal police, public safety policies, prevention, incivilities, risk and perceptions