

THE IMAGE OF THE MILITARY JUDICIAL POLICE IN THE ARMED FORCES¹

A IMAGEM DA POLÍCIA JUDICIÁRIA MILITAR NAS FORÇAS ARMADAS

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Abstract

A criminal investigation, as the process of determining that a crime has been committed, who its perpetrator was, and the circumstances in which it was committed to hold the culprit accountable, presents a challenge for the police and judicial authorities. The Military Judicial Police (PJM), which has recently come under intense public scrutiny, has an important role in the Portuguese Criminal Investigation System. This study will analyse the image of the PJM among military career personnel by surveying 987 respondents from the three branches of the Armed Forces, using a deductive reasoning methodology supported by a quantitative research strategy reinforced by qualitative elements and a case study research design. The questionnaires and interviews assessed the respondents' perceptions about the PJM's professionalism, competence and utility, the quality of available information, as well as their knowledge about the organization and their opinion on the possible dissolution of the PJM through a merger with another Criminal Police Body. The findings showed that the AAFP personnel surveyed have a moderately positive opinion of this police agency, viewing it as a reasonably professional, competent and useful organization that tends to respect the law and uphold military values, and that is uniquely qualified to conduct military criminal investigations. Therefore, it should not be disbanded, nor deprived of its autonomy / independence.

How to cite this article: Bengalinha, J. H. F., & Fachada, C. P. A. (2020). The Image of the Military Judicial Police in the Armed Forces. *Revista de Ciências Militares*, May, VIII(1), 279-307. Retrieved from <https://cidium.ium.pt/site/index.php/pt/publicacoes/as-colecoes>

¹ Article adapted from the individual research work carried out in the 2019 / 2020 Field Grade Officers Course (1st edition). The defence took place in February 2020 at the Military University Institute.

Keywords: Criminal Investigation; Perceived Utility; Organizational Image; Perception; Image of the Military Judicial Police; Criminal Police Body.

Resumo

A investigação criminal apresenta-se como um desafio para as polícias e autoridades judiciárias, enquanto processo identificador da prática de um crime, do seu autor, das circunstâncias em que foi cometido e de uma efetiva responsabilização. A Polícia Judiciária Militar (PJM), assume um papel relevante no Sistema de Organização da Investigação Criminal Português, que, ultimamente tem resultado num forte escrutínio público. É, assim, objetivo deste estudo analisar a imagem da PJM junto dos militares dos Quadros Permanentes das Forças Armadas, com recurso a uma amostra de 987 efetivos dos três Ramos, e a uma metodologia de raciocínio dedutivo, assente numa estratégia de investigação quantitativa com reforço qualitativo e num desenho de estudo de caso. Dos resultados obtidos, mediante questionários e entrevistas – versando as perceções dos níveis de profissionalismo, competências, utilidade e qualidade da informação divulgada, a par do conhecimento organizacional e eventual extinção da PJM, por fusão noutra Órgão de Polícia Criminal –, concluiu-se que os militares inquiridos, apresentam uma imagem medianamente positiva desta entidade policial, percecionando-a como razoavelmente profissional, competente e útil, tendencialmente atuante em respeito pela Lei e pelos valores militares, e facilitadora da investigação criminal em contexto militar, não devendo ser extinguida, nem destituída da sua autonomia/independência.

Palavras-chave: *Investigação Criminal; Utilidade Percebida; Imagem Organizacional; Perceção, imagem da Polícia Judiciária Militar; Órgão de Polícia Criminal.*

1. Introduction

“Character is like a tree and reputation like a shadow.
The shadow is what we think of it; the tree is the real thing.”

Abraham Lincoln (1879, cited in Holland, p.586)

In the maze that is the epistemology of crime, criminal investigation is one of the threads that link homeland security and criminal justice, as the nature of criminal offences makes it difficult to establish an artificial distinction between the two dimensions of criminal activity: prevention and repression (Gouveia, 2018, p.654).

Thus, while prevention is not the same as punishment, the structures that prevent crime are naturally involved in the punitive process, in a preliminary phase, and may even help prevent crimes or stop illicit activities (Gouveia, 2018).

Criminal investigations are, then, part of a vast criminal justice framework, which, in the current legal and penal system, has four distinct phases: investigation, indictment, trial and appeal.

It is in the criminal investigation phase that “[...] a set of proceedings [are conducted] to investigate if a crime was committed, to determine the perpetrators, and to discover and collect evidence to decide on an indictment” (Decree-Law No. 78/1987, 17 February, p.644), that is, a criminal investigation is carried out under the direct supervision and functional authority of the Public Prosecutor’s Office.

It is in this phase that Criminal Police Bodies (CPB) are involved as the “[...] police agencies and officers who carry out criminal procedures or who operate under the direction of a judicial authority” (Cunha, 1993, p.99). This investigation addresses one such body, the PJM.

The Military Judicial Police (*Polícia Judiciária Militar* - PJM) is

[...] a criminal police body with specific powers assigned by the Code of Criminal Procedure to investigate strictly military crimes, operating under the direction and functional authority of the judicial authorities [...] and with the reserved powers assigned to it by the respective organic law. (Article 118(1) and (2) of Law 100/2003, of 15 November, p.7819, and Circular 14/2004 issued on 5 November by the Prosecutor General’s Office (PGR), p.1)

In other words, it is a “[...] higher criminal police body that assists in the administration of justice, operating under the authority of the Ministry of National Defence and monitored as prescribed by law [...]” (Article 2 of Law No. 97-A/2008 of 3 September, p.5890-(2)).

Thus, the essential role of the PJM in the Military Justice System is to protect, not the military organization but the military function (Prata, 2017) by upholding the laws that regulate the military status.

In a highly globalised society where advances in technology have enabled data to travel at high speeds, crime fiction and journalism are especially relevant media, inasmuch as they shape images and perceptions about the activity of CPB, influencing how people perceive their purpose, and consequently their usefulness.

Therefore, utilitarian and ontological perceptions about an organization are closely linked to the image that the organization projects, which is effectively perceived by the recipient and is “[...] also influenced by the everyday interactions between organizational members and external audiences” (Hatch & Schultz, 1997, p.359).

Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that “[...] image is the interactive result of a vast range of behaviours by the organization on the minds of its audiences” (Villafañe, 1998, p.30), or, in other words, “a person’s mental representation of an organization, which is a reflection of its culture, practices and communication” (Ruão, 2006, p.89).

By analysing *The image of the PJM in the Armed Forces*, this study will provide a better understanding of the PJM as a fundamental element of the Military Criminal Justice System (and consequently of the AAFF), as well as explain the role it plays and / or should play in the Portuguese Criminal Investigation System (PCIS).

This individual research work (IRW) examines the image of the PJM in the Armed Forces, and is delimited, as advised by Santos and Lima (2019, pp.41-43), in terms of:

- Time, to the present day (until the current year of 2019, the time at which the data were collected);
- Space, to the career personnel (CP) of the Armed Forces (AAFF);
- Content, to the image of the PJM in the AAFF.

Thus, the general objective (GO) of this IRW is *To analyse the image of the Military Judicial Police among AAFF personnel*, and its specific objectives are:

SO1: To analyse how AAFF personnel view the role of the PJM in the Portuguese Criminal Investigation System;

SO2: To assess how AAFF personnel perceive the utility of the PJM.

Achieving these objectives will help answer the research question (RQ) of this investigation, *What is the image of the Military Judicial Police among AAFP personnel?*

2. Theoretical and conceptual framework

“As the foundation of appropriateness is utility, where there is no utility there cannot be appropriateness.”

J. J. Rousseau (In Pensador, n.d.)

This chapter presents the literature review, the key concepts and the analysis model.

2.1. State-of-the-art and key concepts

This section summarises the literature that provided the theoretical framework for this investigation.

2.1.1. Perception

The word “perception” comes from the Latin *perceptiōne*, which refers to the act or effect of perceiving or sensing external objects or events (Infopedia, n.d.).

When applied to Psychology, it is the process or result of becoming aware of objects, relationships and events by means of the senses, which includes such activities as recognizing, observing and discriminating. These activities allow organisms to organize and interpret [...] stimuli (American Psychological Association, 2010, p.696).

According to Gestalt Theory,

[...] the primary brain process in visual perception is not a collection of small separate activities but a dynamic system. The visual area of the brain does not respond in terms of separate elements of visual input, with these elements connected by a principle of association. Rather, the brain is a dynamic system in which all elements active at a given time interact. Elements that are similar or close together tend to combine; elements that are dissimilar or far apart do not tend to combine. (Schultz & Duane, 2004, p.311)

Thus, the discussion on perception often associates it with sensation, which is “considered as the point of contact between the physical world and the world of the mind” (Lopes & Abib, 2002, p. 129). Whereas sensation refers to the capture of internal and external stimuli through the nerve fibres and their transmission to the different areas of the brain where they are decoded, perception is the process of decoding those stimuli (Souza & Erdman, 2003, p.76).

Therefore, perception is more than a rigid response to stimuli, determined solely by the physical characteristics of the environment, it is a bipolar process that stems from the interaction between stimulus conditions, on the one hand, and from factors inherent to the observer (and / or external social factors), on the other (Whittaker, 1971, p.345).

Moreover, Garcia (1964, p.62) states that the conditions that influence perception vary from one individual to another. Those conditions range from sensory differences to idiosyncrasies, such as subjective differences (aptitudes, habits, motivations, personal experiences, job, sex, age, emotional state, among others) and personality traits (Bartley, 1958, p.440).

As perception is the process that distinguishes stimuli and interprets their meaning, which is influenced by the factors listed above, one of the most conspicuous characteristics of perception is its selective nature, that is, although our sensory organs are constantly bombarded by multiple stimuli, few are clearly perceived and the rest remain hidden in the shadows (Morgan, 1974, pp.271-277).

Therefore, contrary to what is commonly accepted, reality is not unique, static and stable, but a construction made of flows and refluxes, movements and counter-movements, which affect one another (Branco, 2010, p.5).

In other words,

rather than passively receive factual and objective information from the environment, human beings actively process that information. [As such], more than simply absorbing reality, humans socially construct the reality they inhabit. Different people have different perceptions of the supposedly objective phenomena that occur around them, such as when two people disagree about the state of a certain thing or interpret it differently depending on their individual experiences and interests. (Cunha, Rego, Campos e Cunha, & Cardoso, 2003, p.63)

As Depexe and Petermann (n.d.) highlighted in the title of their article “Perception: the first step in building a brand image”, understanding the perception process is “[...] fundamental for advertising and managing a brand image, [where image is defined] as a set of associations and values established between the brand and the consumer” (p.2). These associations “[...] emerge from perceptions that stem both from personal experiences and from messages transmitted by the media” (Pine, 1996, cited in Depexe & Petermann, n.d., p.2).

Therefore, the “image” construct must be operationalized, even if briefly.

Image is associated with a result, an interpretation, or a decoding of signals that can come from different sources, including identity. This image reflects the soul and vision of the organization (Teixeira, 2016, p.57) and is formed by a set of meanings (perceptions) by which a person comes to know a certain object and through which they describe it (Riel, 1995, p.73-74).

Therefore, the image of an organization is not defined by that organization, that is,

the people who manage corporate communication do not have full control over the brand’s image because it consists of a set of perceptions that are incomplete without people’s individual references and values. Therefore, a brand image is built through constant interaction between brand and human beings. (Depexe & Petermann, n.d., p.2)

Thus, organizational image is not what an organization believes it to be, but the feelings and beliefs (perceptions) about the organization that reside in the minds of its multiple audiences / actors (Bernstein, 1986, cited in Abratt, 1989 p.68). It is the result of the projection of two dimensions, one internal and the other external, respectively: *internal image* and *communicated image*, as described by Alvessoon, 1990, p.376; self-image and public image, see the taxonomy proposed by Sousa (2003, p.36).

Ruão and Farhangmer (2000, p.9-10) describe it as the result of “the image that the organization wishes to project – which is consistent with its [own] identity”, and which the authors call *intended or projected image* – and the image “[...] that audiences will form of the organization from their contacts with it, which they will [later] confront with their [own] values, biases and other internal psychological factors, [which the authors call] *perceived image*”.

2.1.2. Portuguese Criminal Investigation System

Portugal has two Higher Police Bodies, the PJM and the PJ. Even though the Law does not define the concept of Higher Police Body (HPB), the special powers assigned to it by law distinguish them from other CPB. Those powers determine their exclusive mission of assisting the judicial authorities by carrying out what constitutes their sole mission: investigating complex crimes and ordering examinations, with the limitations provided by law (articles 1, 3 and 10 of Law No. 97-A/2008 of 3 September, p.5890-(2)- 5890-(3); articles 2, 3 and 12 of Law No. 37/2008 of 6 August, p.5281-5282).

Due to the complex environment that emerged with the issuance of Law no. 21/2000 of 10 August, which granted criminal investigation powers to administrative police agencies that uphold the public order, it was necessary to refine the criminal investigation system by approving a new legal framework (Gouveia, 2018, pp.656-657).

With the approval of the Law on the Organization of Criminal Investigation (LOIC) (Law no. 49/2008 of 27 August), a system of rules was created to guide and organize criminal investigation proceedings. Among other things, the law defines the investigative powers of the different CPB, how they are coordinated, and (to avoid jurisdiction disputes and improve efficiency) their duties of cooperation at national and international level.

As a punitive proceeding initiated by the State, the legal framework (more specifically the LOIC) defines a criminal investigation as “[...] the procedures defined by criminal procedural law to investigate if a crime has been committed, to determine the perpetrators and their liability, and to discover and collect evidence during the process” (Law 49/2008 of 27 August, p.6038).

Thus, pursuant to the same law (LOIC), these proceedings have a threefold goal: to investigate if a crime has been committed; to discover the perpetrators and ascertain their liability; to discover and collect evidence.

Therefore, the purpose of a criminal investigation is to

conduct a legal reconstruction of events as they took place through criminal proceedings, which consist of a series of legally determined acts carried out by duly authorised personnel to ascertain if a crime has been committed and, if so, to assess and enforce its legal consequences. (Silva, 2015, p.25)

On the other hand, beyond the legal framing of this concept, and from a material, methodological and epistemological perspective, criminal investigation is the area of knowledge that studies the phenomenon of crime and those who perpetrate it, in order to determine and reconstruct the material facts of the crime, as well as to prove who committed it (Braz, 2019, p.21).

From a methodological point of view, criminal investigation is, then, a standardised systematic system designed to obtain knowledge (Mannheim, 1984, p.118) or, in other words, “a systematic and sequential examination of its respective object through technical and scientific means” (Antunes, 1985, p.4).

Furthermore, Braz (2019) argues that the criminal investigation activity has a strictly instrumental character, as it does not attempt to establish any explanatory and etiological causes for crime, in general or categorically, but only to explain and prove objectively one or several

interconnected crimes, enabling the judicial power to enforce the Law and attain Justice.

While Article 1(1)(c) of the CCP provides a definition for CPB, it does not define the concept of criminal investigation. Duarte (2013, p.46) argues that

[...] the legislator did this because it is the laws that regulate the police bodies that will distinguish them and define their roles, [as this will allow] the Police to assist the administration of justice without impositions on their organization and structure, and without interfering in their organizational definitions and distinctions.

This criminal investigation system distinguishes two types of CPB: 1) bodies with general powers (Judicial Police – PJ, National Republican Guard – GNR, and Public Security Police – PSP) and 2) bodies with specific powers (Tax Authority – AT, Economic and Food Safety Authority – ASAE, Military Judicial Police – PJM, Maritime Police – PM, Immigration and Borders Service – SEF, among others).

The attribution of specific powers

[...] obeys the principles of specialisation and rationalisation in the allocation of resources for criminal investigations, [as CPB with general powers] refrain from initiating or continuing investigations into crimes under investigation by criminal police agencies with specific powers. (Law No. 49/2008 of 27 August, pp.6038-6039)

Thus, the Law on the Organization of Criminal Investigation, Law No. 97-A/2008 of 3 September (p.5890-(2)) and Circular No. 14/2004 (p.1), issued on 5 November by the Prosecutor General's Office (PGR), frame the PJM as an agency of the Criminal Investigation System with a dual purpose: specific powers for the investigation of strictly military crimes defined and punished by the Military Justice Code (CJM); and reserved (general) powers to investigate common crimes that occur within the AAFF units, establishments, and corps.

However, there have been questions regarding whether the PJM should be disbanded (or merged with a military police body) or continue as is. Both scenarios have been defended, the first by those who agree with:

Júdice (2004), who argues for the creation “of a section specialised in military crimes within the PJ – if it is even needed, which is doubtful”, or with J.M. Vidal (hearing at the CPI/AR on 19 March 2018), who states that “[...] there is nothing specific in the majority of these crimes that requires them to be investigated by a specific autonomous CPB”, or with Chaves (2019) and Ferreira (2018). That is, by those who argue that the PJM's powers should be absorbed by the GNR through the “creation of a Military Crimes Investigation Directorate in the Republican National Guard” (Chaves, 219), which could and should “be staffed by military personnel from the different branches of the Armed Forces, in order to streamline the linkages with the GNR's current criminal investigation structure” (Ferreira, 2018).

Rodrigues (2019) believes that “[...] this option should not be considered [...] [because] the PJM plays an important role in the Armed Forces”, and Prata (2012) states that there is nothing to justify changing the ministry that oversees the PJM or to integrate it into the PJ, as this agency “[...] does not deal with matters of national defence and does not possess the knowledge or institutional experience required to understand the legal interests at stake”.

2.1.3. Perceived utility

The “perceived utility” construct refers to the subjective belief that using a particular resource will improve the user’s performance (Davis, 1989, p.320), that is, the “utility that is attributed to something” (Fachada, 2015, p.2).

The Technology Acceptance Model advanced by Davis (1989) studies the effects of external variables on the internal beliefs, attitudes and intentions that influence people to reject or accept a new tool. Davis proposes that user motivation to adopt a new tool can be explained by a triad of factors, wherein one of the vertices is precisely the utility that the “user” perceives in the new tool, and the others are its perceived ease of use and user attitudes towards the system.

Perceived usefulness and ease of use are, then, two factors that can be influenced “[...] by external variables such as: the link between existing beliefs, attitude, intention, personal idiosyncrasies, emotional state, and controllable behaviours” (Davis, Bogozzi, & Warshaw, 1989, p.985, cited in Ramos & Fachada, 2019).

One of the purposes of this study is to assess the perceived utility of a police agency such as the PJM – not as a technological system, but as a public organization whose mission is to defend the public good. To that end, the TAM described above was used in a manner similar to the study by Ramos and Fachada (2019, p.125). However, unlike Ramos and Fachada (2019), the full model was not used, but only its narrative analysis tools and instruments to measure perceived usefulness.

2.2. Analysis Model

The study was guided by the concept map presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Concept Map

General Objective	To analyse the image of the Military Judicial Police in the Portuguese Armed Forces			
Specific Objectives	Research Question	What is the image of the Military Judicial Police in the Portuguese Armed Forces?		
	Subsidiary Questions	Concepts	Dimensions	Data collection techniques
SO1 To analyse the perceptions of military personnel about the role of the PJM in the Portuguese Criminal Investigation System	SQ1 What are the perceptions of military personnel about the role of the PJM in the Portuguese Criminal Investigation System?	Perceptions	Definition Image (organizational / perceived)	Document analysis, questionnaire and semi-structured interview
		Portuguese Criminal Investigation Organization System	Organizational structure Non-dissolution of the PJM vs. dissolution through a merger with another Criminal Police Agency	
SO2 To assess how AAFF personnel perceive the utility of the PJM	SQ2 How do AAFF personnel perceive the utility of the PJM?	Perceived utility	Acceptance Theory	

3. Methodology and Method

“No one is an artist unless he carries his picture in his head before painting it, and is sure of his method and composition.”

Claude Monet (*In Claude Monet Quotes*, n.d.)

This chapter describes the methodology and methods that guided the investigation.

3.1. Methodology

This study uses a deductive reasoning methodology (supported by a model / theoretical framework to assess the perceived utility construct, cf. Santos & Lima, 2019, p.19), a quantitative research strategy with qualitative aspects, and a case study research design.

3.2. Method

3.2.1. Participants and procedure

Participants. The pre-test phase included 81 service members from the three branches (54.3% Air Force; 28.4% Navy; 17.3% Army) and categories (63% Officers; 30.9% Sergeants; 6.2% Enlisted) of the AAFP, most of whom are male (82.7%). The pre-test phase included 987 service members from the three branches (39% Air Force; 35% Navy; 27% Army) and categories (55% Officers; 39% Sergeants; 6% Enlisted) of the AAFP. All respondents are AAFP career personnel and most are male (86%). The study also surveyed two experts, the Director General of the PJM, Commodore Paulo Isabel, and the Director of the Criminal Investigation Unit (CIU), Colonel Vasconcelos.

Procedure. The questionnaire was delivered online between 11 November and 21 December, 2019. All participants were informed about the purpose of the investigation, of the fact that there were no right / close-ended answers (followed by a request to use the survey data for statistical analysis / purposes), and of the average time it would take to complete the questionnaire. The semi-structured interviews to the two interviewees were carried out by email. Both groups were assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their answers, which the two interviewees waived.

3.2.2. Data collection instruments

A questionnaire was built and delivered to 6 service members (4 officers, 1 sergeant and 1 enlisted) for validation. In addition to collecting sociodemographic data, the questionnaire consisted of three sections: Perception (12 questions scored on a 7-point Likert scale); Perceived Utility (7 questions scored on a 5-point Likert scale); Organizational Structure (8 + 6 questions scored on two Likert scales with 5 and 7 points, respectively). A semi-structured interview scrip was also prepared.

3.2.3. Data processing techniques

The quantitative analysis was performed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0) and IBM SPSS AMOS.

4. Data presentation and discussion of results

“Without data, we are just another person with an opinion.”

W. Deming (*In Goodreads*. (n.d.)

This chapter analyses and answers the SQ and the RQ.

4.1. Perceptions of AAFF military personnel about the role of the PJM in the PCIS

This section analyses and answers SQ1.

4.1.1. Analysis of the factor structure of the measuring instrument

Perception. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation was performed, which resulted in a three-factor solution (Tables 2 and 3²). The three factors account for 59.86% of the total variance, with internal consistency indexes that range from unacceptable to good (cf. Hill & Hill, 2002, p.149)³, a KMO of .864, classified as good (Hill & Hill, 2002, p.275; Kaiser, 1974, p.35), and a significant Bartlett Sphericity Test ($\chi^2(66)=4579.767, p<.000$).

Table 2 – Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Perception Scale

Factors	Initial Eigenvalues			Squared factorial weight extraction system		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.424	36.870	36.870	3.878	32.313	32.313
2	1.702	14.181	51.051	2.085	17.374	49.687
3	1.057	8.807	59.859	1.221	10.172	59.859
4	.933	7.779	67.638			
5	.797	6.643	74.281			
6	.677	5.642	79.923			
7	.664	5.535	85.458			
8	.584	4.868	90.326			
9	.407	3.393	93.719			
10	.328	2.734	96.454			
11	.222	1.846	98.300			
12	.204	1.700	100.000			

² The designations listed in the 1st column of Table 3 were drawn from the “content” analysis of the items included in the three factors.

³ Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is considered: unacceptable if < .6; weak if [.6, .7]; reasonable if [.7, .8]; good if [.8, .9]; excellent if ≥ .9 (Hill & Hill, 2002, p.149).

Table 3 – Factorial structure of the Perception Scale and consistency indices

Factor	Item	Factor loading		
		1	2	3
F1: Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence ($\alpha=.854$)	2. The PJM is the only Criminal Police Agency with the powers to investigate strictly military crimes and all common crimes that occur inside military facilities.	.545		
	4. The PJM is impartial in its investigations.	.844		
	5. The PJM conducts its activity with respect for the law .	.843		
	6. The officers and investigators of the PJM are competent and professional .	.857		
	7. The PJM has an essential role in the proper functioning of the AAFE, namely in upholding military values.	.829		
F2: Perceived information quality ($\alpha=.672$)	9. PJM provides the necessary information for me to know how to act, if necessary.	.600		
	8. There is little information available about the PJM.	.689		
	10. The PJM should have a public relations office .	.648		
	11. The media give little importance to the activity of the PJM.	.759		
F3: Perceived resource availability ($\alpha=.308$)	12. People tend to pay more attention to news about other Criminal Police Agencies than about the PJM, which is unfair.	.615		
	1. The criminal investigation activity of the PJM is limited by the lack of a fixed staff of military investigators, as it depends on the availability of the Human Resources of the Armed Force Branches.			.743
	3. The PJM has the human, technical and logistical resources to carry out its mission.			.760

Note: Considering the poor reliability of F3, and assuming a conservative position, this factor will be excluded from the analysis from this point on.

Knowledge about the organizational structure. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation was performed, which resulted in a one-factor solution (Table 4) that explains 59.77% of the total variance, with an internal consistency index of .864, classified as good (cf. Hill & Hill, 2002, p.149), a KMO of .862, classified as good (Hill & Hill, 2002, p.275; Kaiser, 1974, p.35), and a significant Bartlett Sphericity Test ($\chi^2(15)=2531.751, p<.000$).

Table 4 – Factor Analysis of the Organizational Structure Knowledge Scale

Factors	Total	Initial Eigenvalues	
		% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.587	59.775	59.775
2	.662		
3	.574		
4	.496		
5	.399		
6	.282		

4.1.2. Descriptive and inductive analysis

As Table 5 shows, the highest mean values were obtained by the factor *Perceived information quality* (M=5.29; SD=1.005), on which most respondents agreed, followed by the factor *Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence* (M=4.76; SD=1.204), on which respondents moderately agreed (4 being the null point corresponding to “neither agree nor disagree”, with lower values indicating disagreement and higher values indicating agreement). The lowest mean values (even those in the “negative” range) were obtained by the factor *Knowledge about the organisational structure* (M=3.60; SD=.863).

Two usually strong and statistically significant correlations were found between *Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence* and:

- *Perceived information quality* ($r=.388, p< .001$);
- *Knowledge about the organizational structure* ($r=.337, p< .001$).

Table 5 – Descriptive statistics and correlations of the studied variables for the factors Perception and Knowledge about the organizational structure

Factors	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Branch						
2. Category						
3. Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence	4.76	1.204	.026	-.110		
4. Perceived information quality	5.29	1.005	.047	.065**	.388**	
5. Knowledge about the organizational structure	3.60	0.863	-.007	-.050	.337**	.107'

Cohorts codification: Branch (1=Navy; 2=Army; 3=Air Force); Category (1=Officer; 2=Sergeant; 3=Enlisted).

* $p< .05$; ** $p< .001$.

The fact that respondents tend to agree that the PJM is moderately professional and competent reflects, in a more segmented analysis, the perception that the PJM is a CPB: whose activity is essential to the proper functioning of the AAFF, that upholds military values and acts with impartiality and respect for the law; that its investigators are competent and professional, and that the lack of a specific staff does not limit its effectiveness. Furthermore, the higher percentage of “poor” answers obtained by *Perceived information quality* reflects: that there is little information available about the PJM; the lack of a public relations office; the fact that the media (M) give little importance to the activity of this CPB, and that the general public tends to pay more attention to news about other CPB, which is seen as unfair (Table 6).

Table 6 – Analysis of the frequency responses of the Perception Scale

		Disagreement			Neither disagree, nor agree	Agreement		
		Totally disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree		Slightly agree	Agree	Totally agree
In my perception...								
F1	1. The PJM is the only Criminal Police Agency with the powers to investigate strictly military crimes and all common crimes that occur inside the military facilities.		18.3%		9.6%			72.1%
	4. The PJM is impartial in its investigations.		17.6%		29.5%			52.9%
	5. The PJM conducts its activity with respect for the Law .		10.6%		21.3%			68.1%
	6. The officers and investigators of the PJM are competent and professional .		10.6%		28.1%			61.3%
	7. The PJM has an essential role in the proper functioning of the AAFE, namely on upholding military values.		13.1%		22.0%			64.9%
	9. The PJM provides the necessary information for me to know how to act, if necessary .		48.9%		18.2%			32.8%
F2	8. There is little information available about the PJM.		6.1%		9.1%			84.8%
	10. The PJM should have a public relations office .		9.3%		17.6%			73.0%
	11. The media give little importance to the activity of the PJM.		9.4%		19.4%			71.2%
	12. People tend to pay more attention to news about other Criminal Police Agencies than about the PJM, which is unfair.		12.8%		28.0%			59.3%

Furthermore, as Table 7 shows, although respondents reported knowing little about the PJM's organizational structure, they were reasonably aware of: the PJM's administrative dependence; its specific and reserved powers; its mission of preventing and investigating crimes; and the fact that, as a higher police body, it can order examinations, searches, body searches and seizures, within the limitations imposed by law.

Table 7 – Analysis of the frequency responses of the Knowledge about the organizational structure Scale

	Negative		Neither null nor low	Positive	
	Null	Low		Medium	High
1. The PJM is a Higher Police Force that can order examinations, searches and seizures within the limitations imposed by law.		21.1%	22.6%		56.3%
2. The PJM is a Criminal Police Agency whose mission isto carry out prevention and criminal investigation activities .		16.0%	21.0%		63.0%
3. The PJM is under the administrative authority of the Ministry of National Defense.		11.6%	19.9%		68.6%
4. The PJM carries out its investigations under the direction of the judicial authorities (Public Prosecutors and Judges), similar to the Judicial Police and other Criminal Police Bodies.		24.5%	26.8%		48.6%
5. Only PJM has specific powers to investigate strictly military crimes. <i>In this context, <u>specific powers</u> refer to the fact that the PJM is responsible for investigatins the crimes predicted and punished by the Military Justice Code.</i>		14.0%	20.9%		65.1%
6. The PJM has reserved powers to investigate crimes that occur inside military units, establishments and corps, but which are not strictly military. <i>In this context, <u>reserved powers</u> refer to the fact that the PJM can investigate crimes predicted and punished by the Penal Code.</i>		17.0%	25.1%		57.9%

Differences in means (ANOVA / Kruskal-Wallis). As shown in Table 8, no statistically significant differences were found between the *Perception* / Branch factors.

Table 8 – Difference in means for Perception sorted by Branch

Factors		n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	ANOVA		Homocedasticity	
							F	p	Levene	p
Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence	Navy	380	4.73	1.266	1.00	6.83	.344	.709	1.844	n.s.
	Army	263	4.77	1.223	1.00	7.00				
	Air Force	344	4.80	1.119	1.00	7.00				
Perceived information quality	Navy	380	5.27	1.043	1.00	7.00	2.311	.100	1.759	n.s.
	Army	263	5.21	1.038	1.75	7.00				
	Air Force	344	5.38	.928	1.50	7.00				

Note: In order to confirm the homoscedasticity requirement, the *p* value associated with the Levene test should be n.s. ($\geq .05$).

As shown in Table 9, some statistically significant mean differences were found in the factors:

Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence ($\chi^2(2)=10.415$, $p < .01$) between the Officers ($M=4.87$; $SD=1.151$) and Sergeants ($M=4.67$; $SD=1.227$) categories and between the Officers ($M=4.87$; $SD=1.151$) and Enlisted ($M=4.41$; $SD=1.412$) categories (Post Hoc, $p < .05$);

Perceived information quality ($\chi^2(2)=9.076$, $p < .05$) between the Officers ($M=5.22$; $SD=0.980$) and Sergeants ($M=5.40$; $SD=0.989$) categories (Post Hoc, $p < .05$).

Table 9 – Difference in means for Perception sorted by Category

Fatores		n	M	DP	Min.	Max.	Kruskal-Wallis		
							g.l.	χ^2	p
Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence	Officers	538	4.87	1.151	1.00	7.00	2	10.415	.005*
	Sargeants	389	4.67	1.227	1.00	7.00			
	Enlisted	60	4.41	1.412	1.00	6.83			
Perceived information quality	Officers	538	5.22	.980	1.50	7.00	2	9.076	.011*
	Sargeants	389	5.40	.989	1.25	7.00			
	Enlisted	60	5.28	1.251	1.00	7.00			

Note: A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was applied to the gaps between the “n” of the analysed groups (Kent State University; 2019).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

As shown in Tables 10 and 11, no statistically significant differences were found in the factor *Knowledge about the organizational structure* when sorted by branch ($\chi^2(2)=3.515$, $p > .05$) and by Category ($\chi^2(2)=3.515$, $p > .05$), respectively.

Table 10 – Difference in means for Knowledge about the Organizational Structure sorted by Branch

Factors	n	M	DP	Min.	Max.	ANOVA		Homocedasticity		
						F	p	Levene	p	
Knowledge about the organizational structure	Navy	380	3.58	.878	1.00	5.00				
	Army	263	3.68	.862	1.00	5.00	1.441	.237	.743	n.s.
	Air Force	344	3.57	.845	1.00	5.00				

Note: In order to confirm the homoscedasticity requirement, the *p* value associated with the Levene test should be n.s. ($\geq .05$).

Table 11 – Difference in means for Knowledge about the Organizational Structure sorted by Category

Factors	n	M	DP	Min.	Máx.	Kruskal-Wallis			
						g.l.	χ^2	p	
Knowledge about the organizational structure	Officers	538	3.63	.876	1.00	5.00			
	Sergeants	389	3.59	.838	1.00	5.00	2	3.515	n.s.
	Enlisted	60	3.44	.893	1.17	5.00			

As for whether the PJM should be disbanded and merged with another criminal police agency, most respondents answered negatively:

- An intra-branch analysis (Table 12) obtained a total of 77.5% (n=765) of responses, fairly evenly distributed by the Army (78.7%), Air Force (77.3%) and Navy (76.8%);
- An intra-category analysis (Table 13) obtained a total of 77.5% (n=765) of responses, fairly evenly distributed by the Officers (79%), Sergeants (76.6%) and Enlisted (70%) categories;

Table 12 – Dissolution of the PJM sorted by Branch

Branch		Should the PJM be merged with another Criminal Police Agency?		Total
		Yes	No	
Navy	Frequency	88	292	380
	% by branch	23.2%	76.8%	
	% by "Yes" or "No"	39.6%	38.2%	
Army	Frequency	56	207	263
	% by branch	21.3%	78.7%	
	% by "Yes" or "No"	25.2%	27.1%	
Air Force	Frequency	78	266	344
	% by branch	22.7%	77.3%	
	% by "Yes" or "No"	35.1%	34.8%	

Table 13 – Dissolution of the PJM sorted by Category

Category		Should the PJM be merged with another Criminal Police Agency?		Total
		Yes	No	
Officers	Frequency	113	425	538
	% by category	21.0%	79.0%	
	% by “Yes” or “No”	50.9%	55.6%	
Sargeants	Frequency	91	298	389
	% by category	23.4%	76.6%	
	% by “Yes” or “No”	41.0%	39.0%	
Enlisted	Frequency	18	42	60
	% by category	30.0%	70.0%	
	% by “Yes” or “No”	8.1%	5.5%	

Table 14 shows that, not only do most respondents believe that the PJM should remain autonomous / independent, they generally agree that this enables the PJM: to better perform its duties (92.1%) and to add more value to the Military Criminal System (90.6%).

Table 14 – Autonomy of the PJM

	Slightly Agree		Agree		Totally Agree		Accumulated total	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
I believe that the PJM is more useful to que Military Criminal System as an autonomous Criminal Police Agency.	13.3%	102	47.6%	364	29.7%	227	90.6%	693
I believe that the PJM will perform better if it remains autonomous.	13.6%	104	42.6%	326	35.9%	275	92.1%	705

As a matter of “curiosity”, as there was only a small percentage of positive responses to the merger, most respondents who answered “yes”:

- Are from the Navy (39.6%) (Table 12);
- Are officers (50.9%) (Table 13);
- Prefer a merger with the PJ rather than with the GNR (86.5%) (Table 15).

Table 15 – Merger of the PJM with another Criminal Police Agency

	Slightly Agree		Agree		Totally Agree		Accumulated total	
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
I believe that the PJM should be integrated into the Judiciary Police.	10.4%	23	34.7%	77	41.4%	92	86.5%	192
I believe that the PJM should be integrated into the Republican National Guard.	5.0%	11	3.2%	7	1.8%	4	10.0%	22

Finally, an analysis of the positive and negative responses to the dissolution of the PJM revealed significant mean differences in:

- Perception (Table 16), specifically, in *Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence* ($U=31047.0$; $p < .001$), Yes_(M=3.61;SD=1.342) vs. No_(M=5.10;SD=0.922) and *Perceived information quality* ($U=58245.5$; $p < .001$), Yes_(M=4.82;SD=1.132) vs. No_(M=5.43;SD=0.921);
- *Knowledge about the PMJ's organizational structure* ($U=66195.5$; $p < .001$), No_(M=3.68;SD=0.832) vs. Yes_(M=3.34;SD=0.914)

Table 16 – Difference in means for Perception by “Yes” or “No” responses to the dissolution of the PJM

Factors		n	M	DP	Mann-Whitney		
					Z	U	p
Perceived	Yes	222	3.61	1.342	-14.423	31047.0	.000**
	No	765	5.10	.922			
Perceived information quality	Yes	222	4.82	1.132	-7.155	58245.5	.000**
	No	765	5.43	.921			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

Table 17 – Difference in means for Knowledge about the Organizational Structure by “Yes” or “No” responses to the dissolution of the PJM

Factors		n	M	DP	Mann-Whitney		
					Z	U	p
Knowledge about the organizational structure	Yes	222	3.34	.914	-5.019	66195	.000**
	No	765	3.68	.832			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

4.1.3. Content analysis on the interviews

When asked *What do you consider to be the level of knowledge that most AAFP personnel have regarding, for example, the mission, hierarchical dependence, sphere of action, specific powers and reserved powers of the PJM?*, P.M. Isabel (email interview, 13 January 2020) answered that this knowledge is limited. More specifically, while service members are generally aware that the PJM investigates strictly military crimes, “[...] in terms of hierarchical dependence, many service members that I have been in contact with do not know for sure what our (administrative) hierarchy is – some say we are under the MDN, others the CEMGFA, and many are unaware that we are under the functional authority of the PPS”. For his part, F. M. Vasconcelos (email interview, 15 January 2020) believes that there is room for “[...] improvement, and it is up to the PJM and the branches to make that happen”.

Some important measures that the PJM can take to improve its image among AAFP personnel are: to maintain its level of professionalism and zeal, and to hold

[...] training and communication sessions about the PJM, focusing on crime prevention, to raise awareness about the PJM's mission and improve its institutional image; [to produce] information about the PJM and Criminal Investigation that

the AAFF can use to handle criminal events; [and to disseminate] information in the media about the work of the PJM, without jeopardising any ongoing criminal investigations or calling into question the values of the AAFF, which we must help to uphold. (P. M. Isabel, op. cit.)

Building “[...] a different and better image of the PJM, [will require] the creation of a website and holding conferences within the branches” (F.M. Vasconcelos, op. cit.).

While both interviewees agree that creating a public relations office in the PJM would be beneficial, they also do not see it as a priority, or even as feasible and sustainable considering the PJM’s current shortage of human resources.

Overall, the interviewees had different views regarding *The image of the PJM among military personnel*, which ranged from “[...] positive, although with a tendency to improve” (F.M. Vasconcelos, op. cit.) to “[...] dubious, as they are unaware of our work, and, having been influenced by the recent (and problematic) processes in which we have been involved, they do not have the information they need to form a ‘clear picture’ [...]” (P.M. Isabel, op. cit.).

Finally, with regard to the *Possible dissolution / continuity of the PJM*, both interviewees mention that this could happen through a merger with the PJ or the GNR. More specifically, that it could “[...] be absorbed by the PJ, with the creation of a department specialised in military crimes, staffed by some military personnel. Alternatively, the PJM’s powers could be transferred to the GNR” (P. M. Isabel, op. cit.)

4.1.4. Brief overview and answer to SQ1

The answer to SQ1 – *What are the perceptions of military personnel about the role of the PJM in the Portuguese Criminal Investigation System?* is that the military personnel surveyed (mainly officers, and regardless of branch), despite not being entirely familiar with the PJM’s organizational structure, perceive it as a reasonably competent and professional CPB, that acts with impartiality and respect for the law, whose activity is essential to the proper functioning of the AAFF and to uphold military values, whose investigators are competent and professional, and that even though it lacks a specific staff, this does not limit its activity.

This analysis also revealed that improving the current “moderate agreement” to “strong agreement” regarding the professionalism and competence of the PJM will entail developing strategies and measures to improve:

- The (poor) quality of the information that is (usually) disseminated about the role of this CPB, for example, by raising awareness in the media and by creating a public relations office. The interviewees agreed on these strategies and proposed ways to operationalize them: holding training sessions, disseminating and producing information on the PJM and on Criminal Investigation; creating a website; and holding conferences, both in the AAFF or through the media. Although both interviewees agree on the need to create a public relations office, they did not see it as a priority, nor feasible or sustainable vis-à-vis the PJM’s current shortage of human resources;

- The (poor) knowledge of the organizational structure revealed by most respondents (regardless of branch and category, just as the interviewees expected) by disseminating information on the fact that the PJM can order the conduct of examinations, searches, body

searches and seizures, carry out crime prevention and investigation activities, that it is under the administrative authority of the Ministry of Defence, that it has specific powers to investigate strictly military crimes and reserved powers to investigate common crimes. Both interviewees agree that this information is highly relevant, as is the fact that the PJM is under the functional authority of the PPS.

Finally, with regard to the dissolution of the PJM and its merger with another CPB, the majority of respondents from the three branches and three categories believe that the PJM should not be disbanded, but rather remain an autonomous / independent body, as this is how it can best conduct its activity and add value to the Military Criminal System.

Moreover, of the minority of respondents who believe that the PJM should be disbanded prefer that it be merged with the PJ rather than the GNR.

4.2. How AAFB personnel perceive the utility of the PJM.

This section analyses SQ2.

4.2.1. Analysis of the factor structure of the measuring instrument

Perceived utility. An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with varimax rotation was performed, which resulted in a one-factor solution (Table 18) that accounts for 74% of the total variance, with an internal consistency index of .949, classified as excellent (cf. Hill & Hill, 2002, p.149), a KMO of .925, classified as excellent (Hill & Hill, 2002, p.275; Kaiser, 1974, p.35), and a significant Bartlett Sphericity Test ($\chi^2(28)=7713.860, p < .000$).

Table 18 – Factor Analysis of the Perceived Utility scale

Factors	Initial Eigenvalues		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative%
1	5.934	74.180	74.180
2	.614		
3	.417		
4	.343		
5	.225		
6	.213		
7	.149		
8	.104		

4.2.2. Descriptive and inductive analysis

As shown in Table 19, removing the values marked in grey (which were analysed in the previous subchapter) and maintaining the reference point identified above (“4”), respondents tend to agree on that the PJM is moderately useful (M=4.76;SD=1.322).

Table 19 – Descriptive statistics and correlations of the variables examined in Perceived Utility

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Branch							
2. Category			.152**				
3. Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence	4.76	1.204	.026	.110**			
4. Perceived information quality	5.29	1.005	.047	.065**	.388**		
5. Knowledge about the organizational structure	3.60	.863	-.007	-.050	.337**	.107*	
6. Perceived utility	4.76	1.322	.059	.117**	.790**	.412**	.294**

Cohorts codification: Branch (1=Navy; 2=Army; 3=Air Force); Category (1=Officer; 2=Serjeant; 3=Enlisted). * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

A strong and statistically significant correlation was found between *Perceived utility* and *Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence* ($r = .790, p < .001$).

As in the analysis of SQ2, the fact that respondents tend to agree on the Perceived Utility of the PJM is explained by a more segmented analysis, which reveals that the majority of respondents view the PJM as highly useful, as it contributes to the effectiveness and efficiency of criminal justice, to the likelihood of success of military criminal investigations, and to the access to (military) intelligence relevant to those investigations (Table 20).

Table 20 – Analysis of the frequency responses of the Perceived Utility scale

	Disagreement			Neither disagree nor agree	Agreement		
	Totally disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree		Slightly agree	Agree	Totally agree
1. I believe that the military criminal investigations can be carried out with more quality by the PJM than by another Crminal Police Agency.		22.0%		31.0%		56.3%	
2. I believe that the military criminal investigations can be carried out more quickly by the PJM than by another Criminal Police Agency.		18.8%		37.5%		43.7%	
3. I believe that the PJM's activity meets the needs of military criminal investigations.		17.9%		24.7%		57.3%	
1. I believe that the PJM's activity improves the efficiency of criminal justice.		15.0%		23.7%		61.3%	
2. I believe that when the PJM carries out military criminal investigations, it has access to (military) intellegence relevant to the investigation that would be difficult or impossivle to access if it were conducted by another CPB.		15.2%		27.3%		57.5%	
3. I believe that when the PJM carries out a military criminal investigation, this improves the likelihood of success of the mission/investigation.		12.9%		21.8%		65.3%	
4. I believe that the PJM's activity improves the effectiveness of criminal justice.		14.4%		23.0%		62.6%	
8. I think that, in general, the activity of the PJM is very useful .		10.4%		18.3%		71.2%	

Table 19 also shows a strong and statistically significant correlation between *Perceived utility* and *Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence* ($r=.790, p<.001$). A statistically significant regression model ($F(1, 985) = 1630.588, p<.000$) confirms that the latter ($F1$: *Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence*) predicts 62.3% of the variance of *Perceived utility* (independent and dependent variables, respectively) (Table 21).

Table 21 – Overview of the regression model

Model	R	R ²	R ² adjusted	Standard error	Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	gl1	gl2	Sig. F Change
1	.790 ^a	.623	.623	6.49811	.623	1630.588	1	985	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perceived professionalism and sphere of competence

An analysis of the non-standardised coefficients (Table 22) shows that the mean value of perceived utility increases by 1.156 for each 1-unit increase in the value of perceived competence and professionalism.

Table 22 – Analysis of the coefficients of the regression model

MODEL		Non-standardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.051	.845		5.980	.000
	Perceived professionalism and competence	1.156	.029	.790	40.381	.000

Dependent variable: Perceived utility

Mean differences (ANOVA / Kruskal-Wallis / Mann-Whitney). As shown in Table 23, no statistically significant differences were found between the factor *Perceived utility* and Branch ($F=1.714, p>.05$).

Table 23 – Difference in means for Perceived Utility sorted by Branch

Branch	n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	ANOVA		Homocedasticity	
						F	p	Levene	p
Navy	380	4.67	1.379	1.00	7.00	1.714	.181	1.666	n.s.
Army	263	4.77	1.354	1.00	7.00				
Air Force	344	4.85	1.228	1.00	7.00				

Note: In order to confirm the homoscedasticity requirement, the p value associated with the Levene test should be n.s. ($\geq .05$).

Analysing Table 24 and the corresponding Post Hoc tests ($p<.05$) revealed statistically significant differences ($\chi^2(2)=11.751, p<.01$) between the Officers_(M=4.88; SD=1.225) and Enlisted_(M=4.24;SD=1.528) categories.

Table 24 – Difference in means for Perceived Utility sorted by Category

Category	n	M	SD	Min.	Max.	Kruskal-Wallis		
						g.l.	χ^2	p
Officers	538	4.88	1.225	1.00	7.00			
Sargeants	389	4.68	1.395	1.00	7.00	2	11.751	.003*
Enlisted	60	4.24	1.528	1.00	6.75			

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

Table 25 shows significant mean differences ($U=27398.5$; $p < .001$) between respondents who do not agree with the dissolution of the PJM ($M=5.15$; $SD=.989$) and those who do ($M=3.41$; $SD=1.439$).

Table 25 – Difference in means for Perceived Utility by “Yes” or “No” responses regarding the dissolution of the PJM

Answer	n	M	SD	Mann-Whitney		
				Z	U	p
Yes	222	3.41	1.439			
No	765	5.15	.989	-15.394	27398.5	.000**

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$.

4.2.3. Content analysis on the interviews

When asked *In your opinion, how do AAFP personnel perceive the utility of the PJM?*, both interviewees agreed that they perceive it as useful, considering the quality of the end product and its credibility with several sectors of society – even if it does not receive the attention it deserves (P. M Isabel, op. cit.) – and the fact that it has “[...] analysis, conduct and action capabilities that make it uniquely qualified to conduct military investigations” (F. M. Vasconcelos, op. cit.).

4.2.4. Brief overview and answer to SQ2

Therefore, the answer to SQ2 – *How do AAFP personnel perceive the utility of the PJM?* – is that the surveyed service members (especially the officers category) tend to moderately agree that the PJM is useful (in line with what the experts / representatives of the PJM expected), that there is a correlation between this utility and the professionalism and competence of the PJM staff, in which an increase in the latter corresponds to an increase the former.

Despite perceiving the PJM as being moderately useful, respondents tend to acknowledge that it improves the effectiveness and efficiency of criminal justice, the likelihood of success of military criminal investigations, and the access to (military) intelligence relevant to those investigations.

4.3. The image of the Military Judicial Police among Armed Forces personnel and answer to the RQ

The above analysis provided the answer to the RQ – *What is the image of the Military Judiciary Police among AAFP personnel?* This image is moderately positive, inasmuch as the

surveyed service members (career personnel from the three branches, and especially the officers category), despite not being entirely familiar with the organizational structure of this CPB, perceive it as usually competent, professional and useful, capable of acting impartially and with respect for the law, with an activity that is essential to the proper functioning of the AAFF and to uphold military values, despite not having a specific staff of investigators (which is not seen as a constraint).

Furthermore, increasing the current “moderate agreement” with the purpose of the PJM to “strong agreement” will entail measures such as improving the knowledge of both military personnel and civilians regarding the organizational structure of this CPB, as well as the quality of available information both by improving internal communication (holding information sessions / conferences and creating a website) and by increasing the clarity and assertiveness of external communication.

Finally, the findings showed that respondents generally agree that the PMJ improves the effectiveness and efficiency of criminal justice, the likelihood of success of military criminal investigations, and the access to (military) intelligence relevant to those investigations. Most respondents would rather the PJM remain autonomous than be merged into another CPB (PJ or GNR).

5. Conclusions

“Perceptions which are at present insensible may grow some day: nothing is useless, and eternity provides great scope for change.”

G. W. Leibniz (1997, p.243)

In the labyrinthine complexity that is the study of crime, criminal investigation is one of the threads that link homeland security and criminal justice.

Therefore, criminal investigations are part of a vast criminal justice framework, which the current legal and penal system, has four distinct phases: investigation, indictment, trial and appeal.

It is, then, in the criminal investigation phase (in terms of purpose and scope) that criminal investigations are carried out under the direct supervision and functional authority of the Public Prosecutor’s Office.

This same framework also includes the Criminal Police Bodies (CPB), that is, the police agencies and officers who carry out criminal procedures or who operate under the direction of a judicial authority, in this case, the PJM, which has specific powers to investigate strictly military crimes and reserved powers to investigate common crimes that occur within the AAFF units, establishments or services.

Thus, the PJM plays an essential role in the Military Justice system, that of protecting the military function by protecting the legal dispositions that regulate the military status, rather than the status itself.

As such, in a highly globalised society where technology advances have enabled data to travel at high speeds, crime fiction and journalism are especially relevant media, inasmuch as they shape images and perceptions about the activity of CPB, influencing how people perceive their usefulness, and consequently their purpose.

The PJM has been under intense public scrutiny over recent years, both from civil society and from the military due to the tremendous media exposure that the criminal proceedings related to the case of the deaths in the Commandos and especially the Tancos process have received.

A number of issues have been raised and discussed in several sectors of Portuguese society regarding the image of competence and professionalism of the PJM, its usefulness for the Military Criminal System and particularly its continuity or dissolution as an autonomous CPB.

Therefore, it is important to understand how AAFF personnel view the PJM's image, its perceived utility, and how it will continue in the future.

This study analysed the image of the PJM in the AAFF, and was delimited in terms of: time, to the present year of 2019; space, to the career personnel of the AAFF; and of content, to the image of the PJM in the AAFF.

The study was guided by the research question RQ, *What is the image of the Military Judicial Police among AAFF personnel?*

The methodological procedure consisted of deductive reasoning, a quantitative research strategy with qualitative elements, and a case study research design, and the data collection instruments were a literature review, a questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews.

The study's SO1, *To analyse the perceptions of the AAFF military personnel about the role of the PJM in the Portuguese Criminal Investigation System*, was achieved by answering the corresponding SQ and operationalized by delivering a questionnaire to 987 career personnel of the Portuguese Armed Forces, complemented by semi-structured interviews to two experts, one general officer and one field grade officer. The military personnel surveyed (mainly officers, and regardless of branch), despite not being entirely familiar with the PJM's organizational structure, perceive it as a reasonably competent and professional CPB, that tends to act impartially and with respect for the law, whose activity contributes to the proper functioning of the AAFF and to uphold military values, whose investigators are competent and professional, and that, even though the PJM does not have a specific staff, this is not considered a constraint. Furthermore, to improve the current "moderate agreement" to "strong agreement" regarding the professionalism and competence of the PJM will entail developing strategies and measures to improve the quality of information that is generally available about the role of this CPB and to improve the knowledge about its structure. This can be done by disseminating information on the fact that the PJM can order the conduct of examinations, searches, body searches and seizures, as well as carry out crime prevention and investigation activities, that it is under the administrative authority of the Ministry of Defence, that it has specific powers to investigate strictly military crimes and reserved powers to investigate common crimes. Finally, with regards to the dissolution of the PJM through a merger with another CPN, the majority of respondents from the three branches and three categories believe that the PJM should not be disbanded, but rather remain an autonomous / independent agency, as this is how it can best conduct its activity and add value to the Military Criminal System. Furthermore, the minority who believe that this CPB should be disbanded prefer that it be merged with the PJ rather than the GNR.

SO2 – *To assess the perceived utility of the PJM among AAFF personnel* – was achieved and

the corresponding SQ was answered by delivering the measuring instruments to the study participants, as described above. The data revealed that the respondents tend to perceive the PJM as moderately useful, especially those in the officers category. A correlation was found between this perceived utility and: the perceived professionalism and competence of the PJM, and that an increase in these “perceived professionalism and competence” corresponds to an increase in the perceived utility of the PJM; the knowledge about the PJM’s organizational structure. Despite the fact that respondents tend to perceive the PJM as moderately useful, they also tend to acknowledge that it contributes to the effectiveness and efficiency of criminal justice, to the likelihood of success of military criminal investigations, and to the access to (military) intelligence relevant to those investigations.

With regards to the study’s GO – *To analyse the image of the Military Judicial Police among AAFP personnel* – and the answer to the RQ, the findings showed that service members tend to agree that the PJM has a positive image, which is reflected in the belief that it is a moderately competent, professional, and useful CPB, qualified to act in accordance with the principles of impartiality and respect for the law, that enables the proper functioning of the AAFP and upholds military values, even if the quality of available information is somewhat insufficient. It was also found that investing in producing objective and assertive information (internal / external communication, training, conferences, website, etc.) may improve the current “moderate agreement” with the purpose of the PJM to “strong agreement”. Finally, the possibility of disbanding the PJM through a merger with another CPA was clearly ruled out by most respondents (AAFF career personnel).

This study’s *contribution to knowledge* consists of the empirical knowledge it provides on the type of organizational image (perception, perceived utility and knowledge) that the PJM projects and on how AAFP career personnel (respondents) perceive its competence and professionalism as a relevant actor in the Military Criminal System.

There were three *limitations*, which do not condition or diminish the robustness of the findings. The first concerns the convenience sample used in the study, which makes it impossible to generalise the findings to all service members of the Portuguese Armed Forces. This limitation was mitigated by the fact that the sample analysed was found to be robust enough to make statements that can be used as empirical anchors. The second concerns the use of self-reporting measures, which can introduce biases. This limitation was addressed by safeguarding the confidentiality and anonymity of the responses and by using a complementary data collection tool (semi-structured interviews). The third limitation concerned the fact that the sample did not include GNR personnel, who are also subject to Military Criminal Law.

Future studies should attempt to replicate this study with a broader sample of respondents, both in terms of “n” and by including respondents from the GNR, as well as by conducting another study surveying civilians. It would likewise be of interest to conduct a comparative study between the PJM and similar supranational agencies.

Finally, this study’s *practical recommendation* is that the Military Judicial Police develop both internal communication strategies specifically targeted at AAFP personnel, as the PJM has a strong military component, and external communication strategies targeted at civil society.

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