



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII®
HILO

East Hawai'i Cultural Center

Community Perspectives
on Policing

Visit our website at:



easthawaiipolicingstudy.com



Our Goals



Goal # 1

Gain insight into the communities perspective of safety in East Hawai'i



Goal # 2

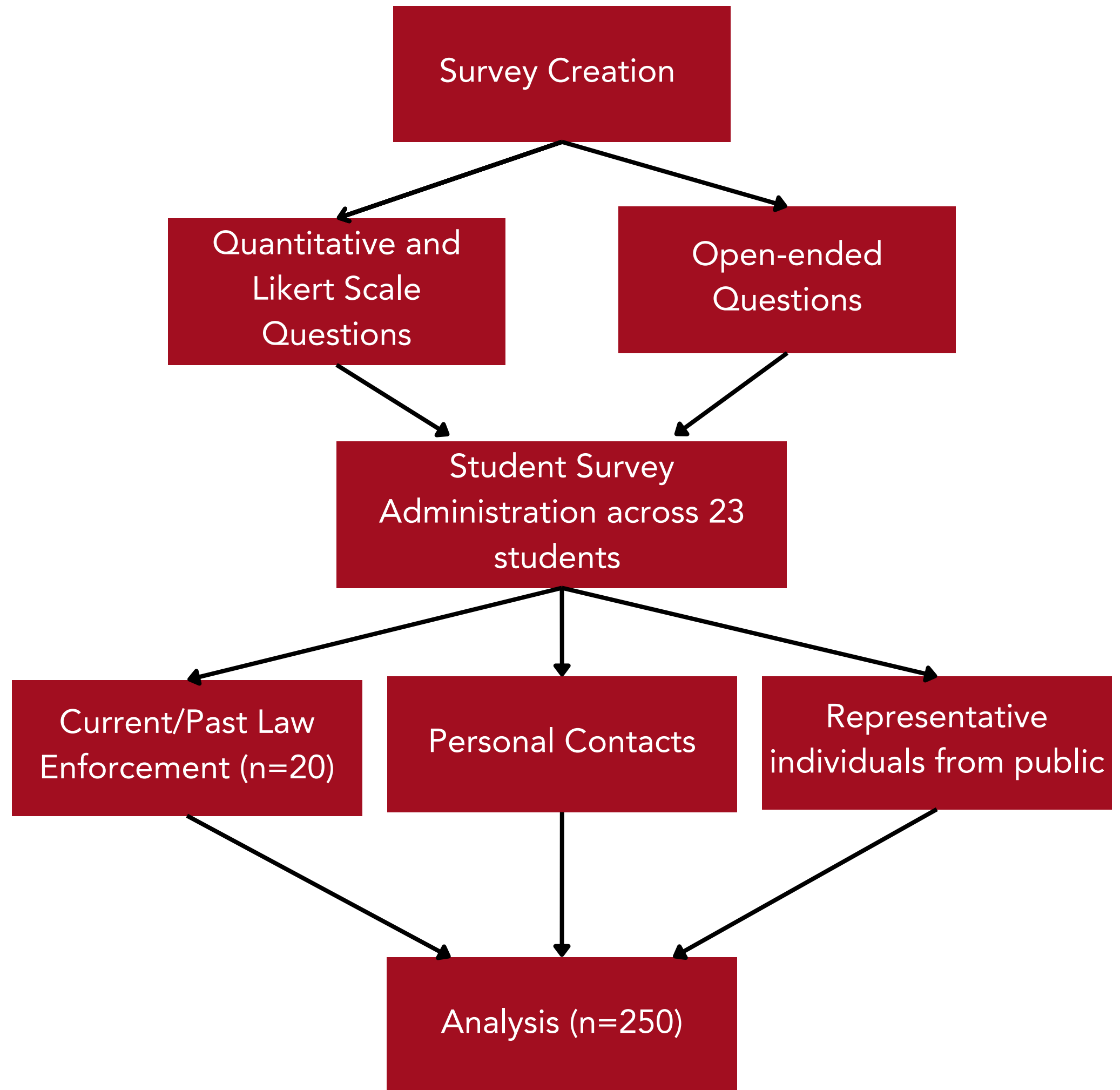
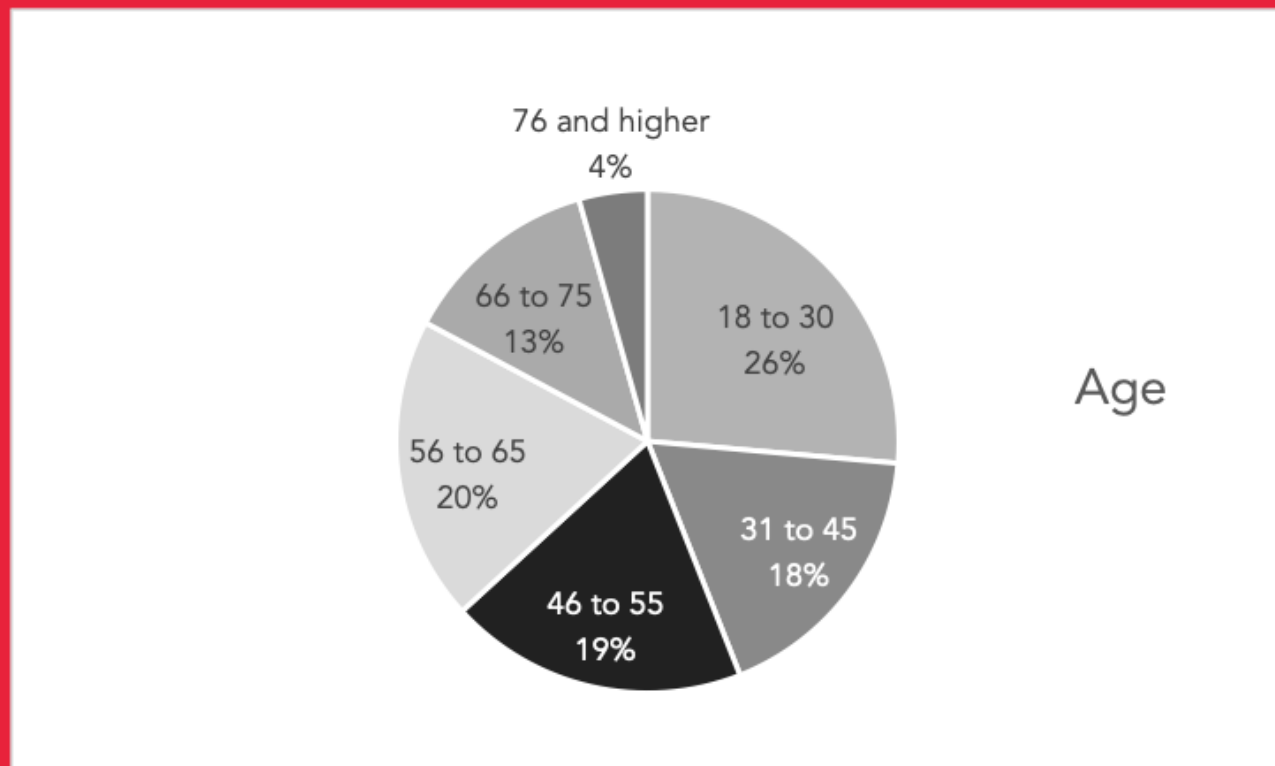
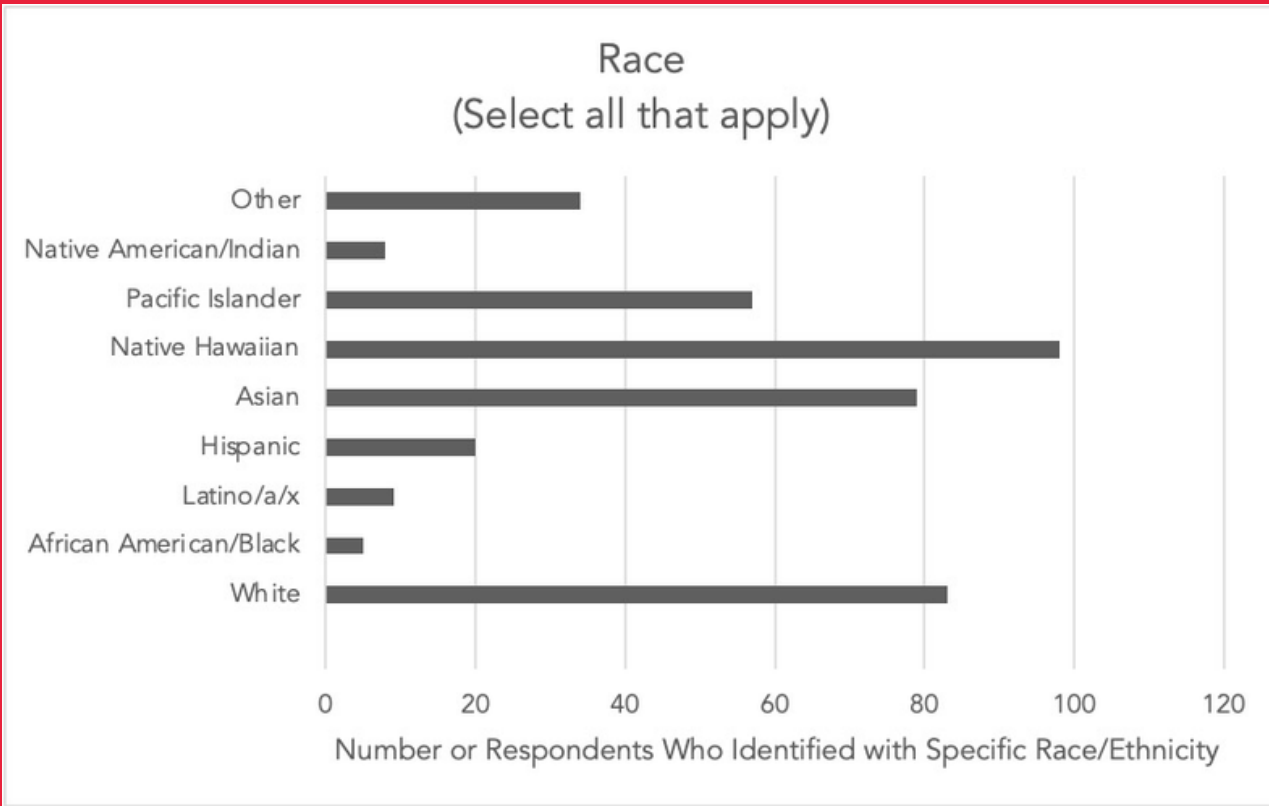
Discover how policing has impacted the community (in East Hawai'i specifically)



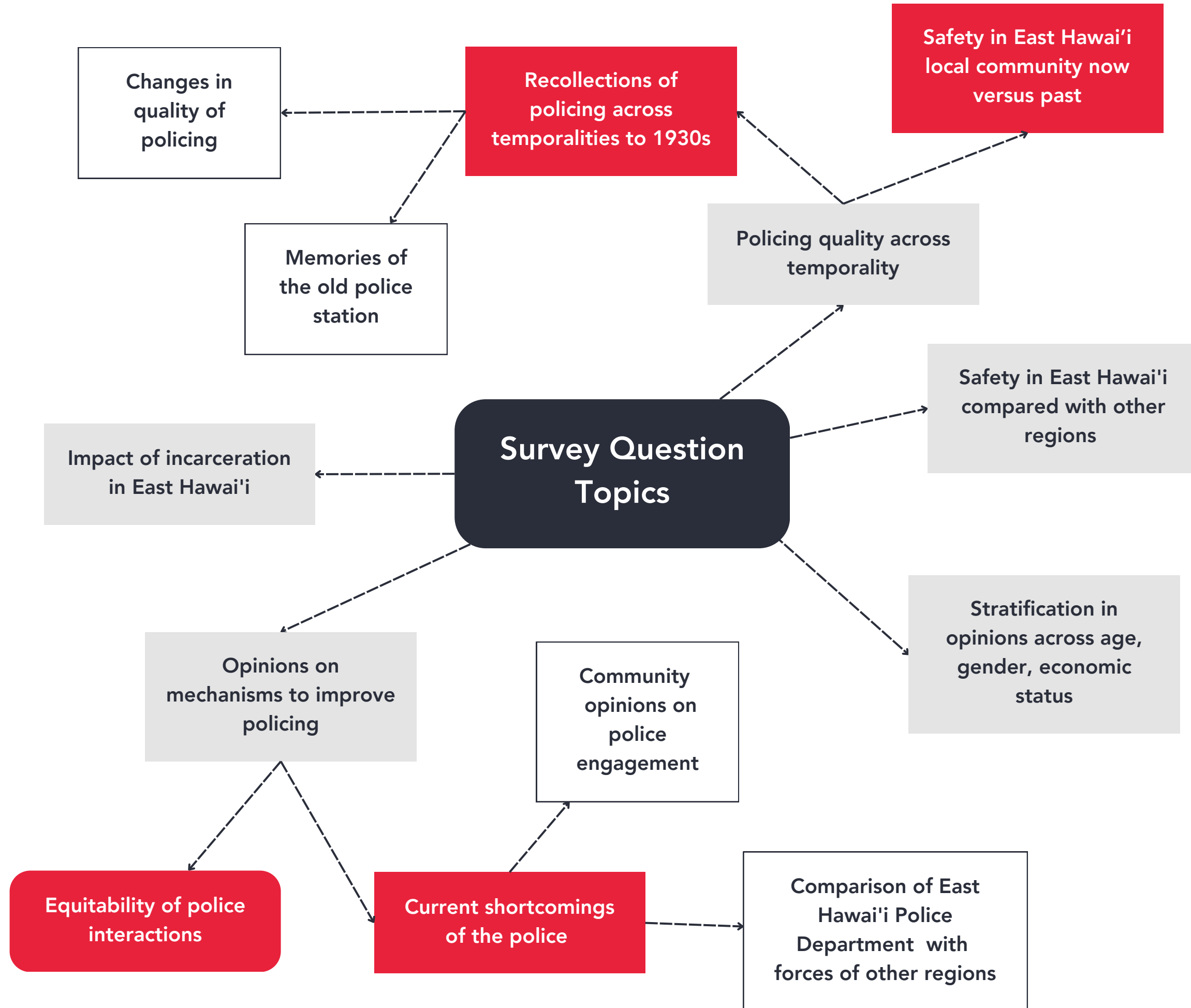
Goal # 3

Provide UH Hilo students with community-based research experience

Methods



Dimensions of Survey Topics





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Key Findings

Community Attitudes on
Policing



Safety

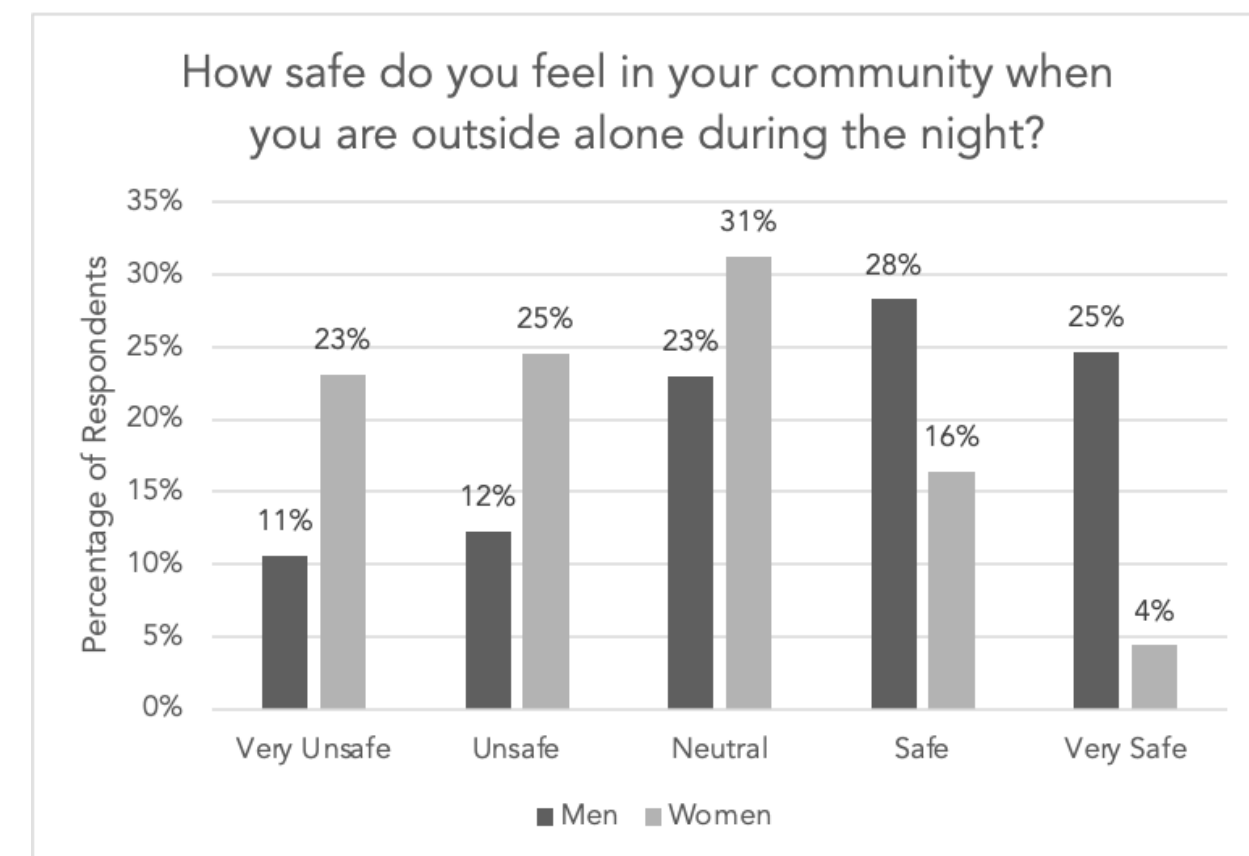
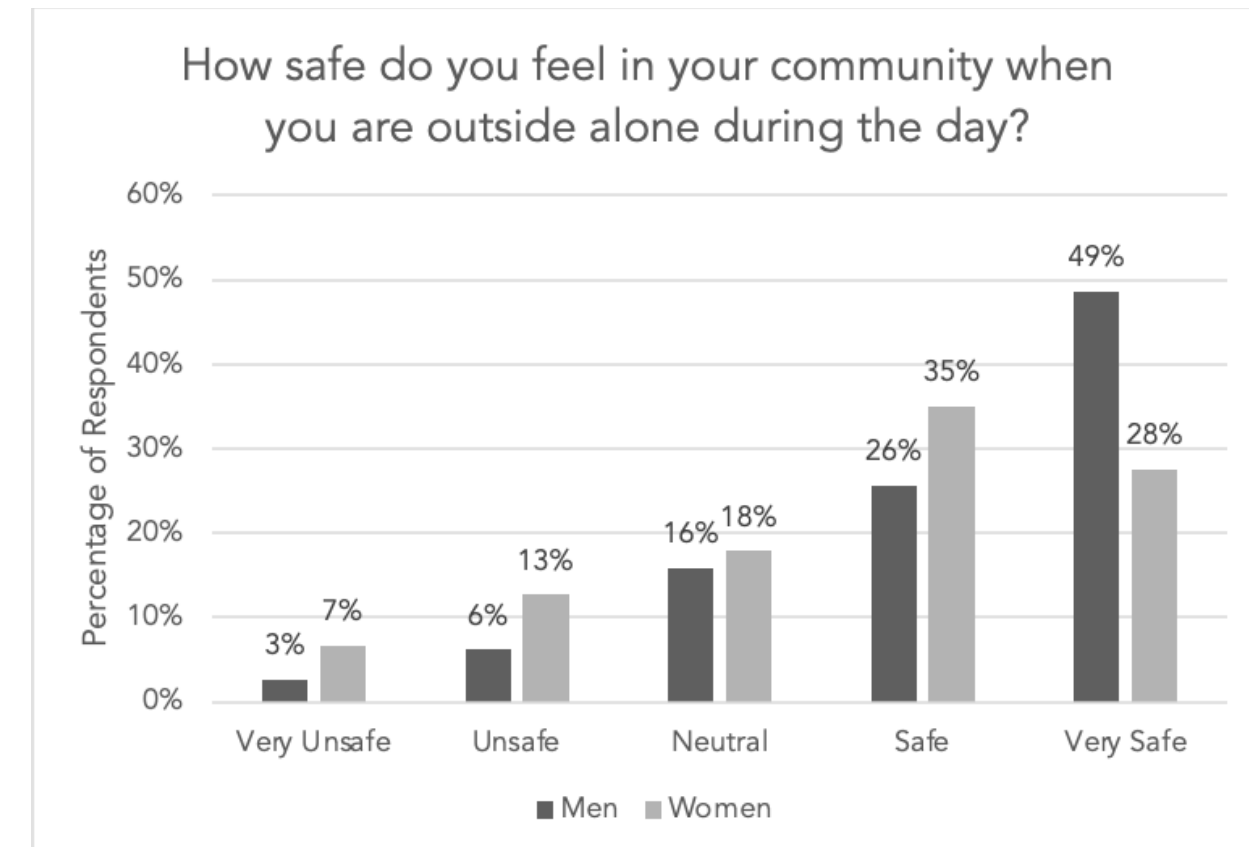
Out of 250 participants

Generally, respondents felt safe in East Hawai'i

Participants believed East Hawai'i's greatest safety issues include:

- (1) drugs,
- (2) property crime, and
- (3) a lack of police presence

"Lots of people on drugs, homeless, mental illness. Drugs are the worst. People on drugs downtown. Nobody cares anymore."



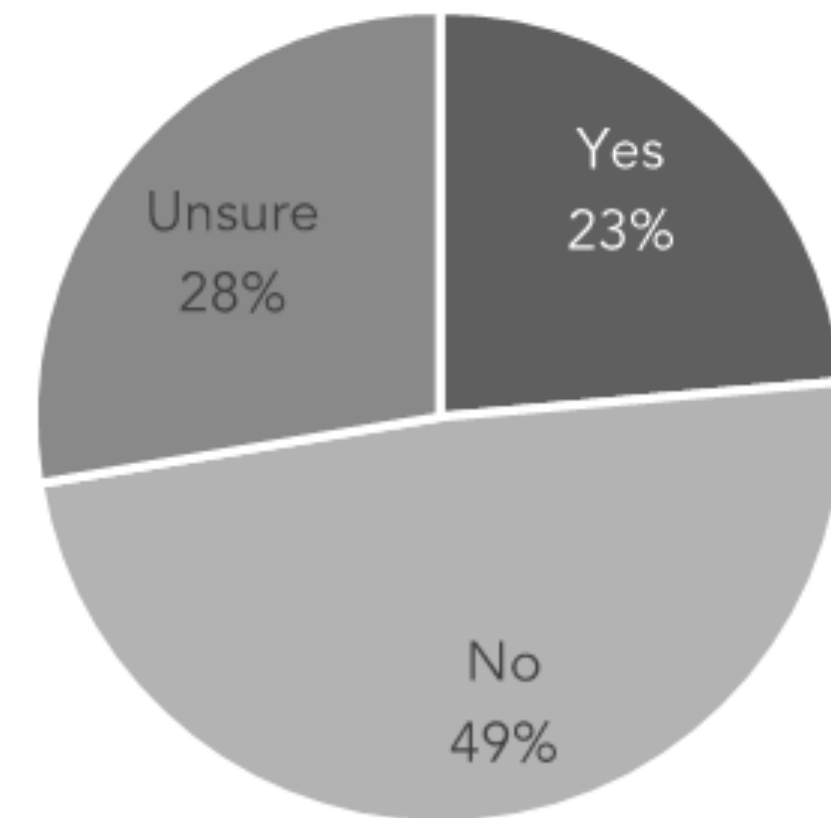
Perceptions of the Police

Roughly half of those surveyed (49%) do not believe that the Hawai'i Police Department treats all people fairly.

Women (55%) are more likely than men (43%) to believe that HPD treats people unfairly

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"Family members in the police force give preferential treatment to friends and family and ask their colleagues to do the same. Misogynistic comments toward women in the police force, victims of violence, and women who commit minor, nonviolent crimes is a norm."

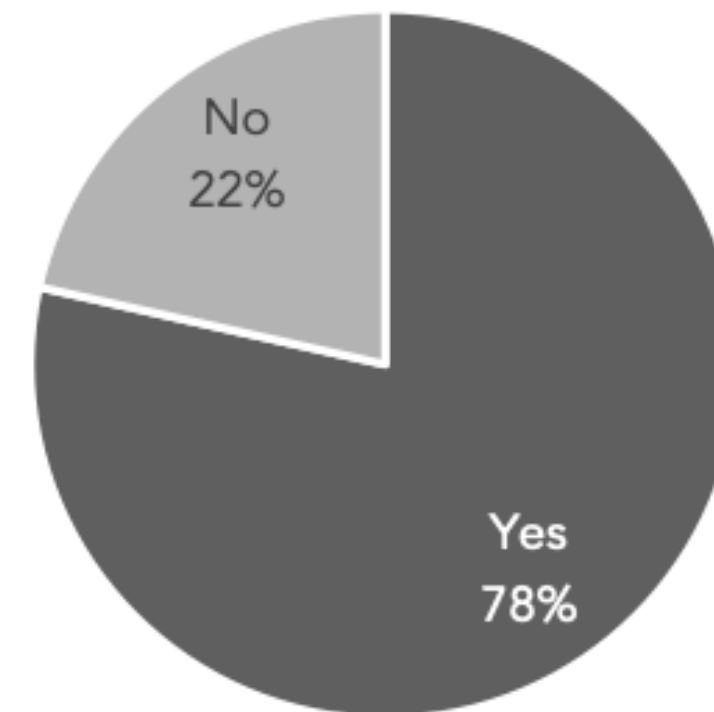
Do you believe all people are treated fairly by Hawai'i Police Department officers? (n=250)



Perceptions of the Police

Did the interaction(s) with the police officer feel fair and equitable? (n=144)

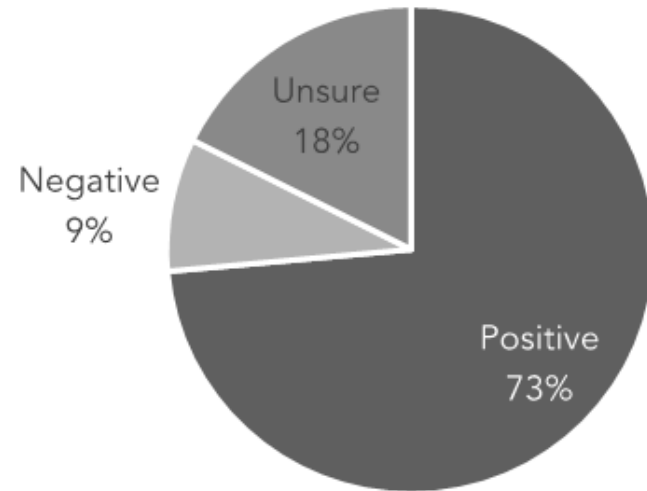
Of those who reported having interactions with HPD in the past 5 years (roughly 150 people), over three-quarters (78%) note that their interactions were fair and equitable.



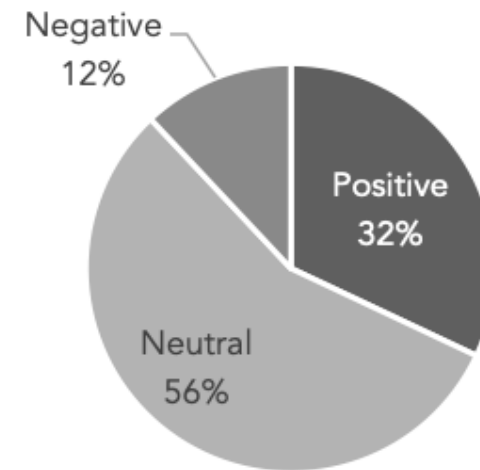
"They act fair in the involvement of every case. Giving fair chances and making their presence known."

Historical Perceptions of Policing

What type of relationship did the police have with the East Hawai'i community back then? (n=34)



What type of relationship does the Hawai'i Police department have with the local community? (n=250)



In line with past data which shows that 80% of individuals (in the 1980s) used to approve of the job of policing.

"It was a safe environment - Husband was a police officer, he retired in the 1960s. He was well-liked and respected. His priority was to keep the children out of jail."

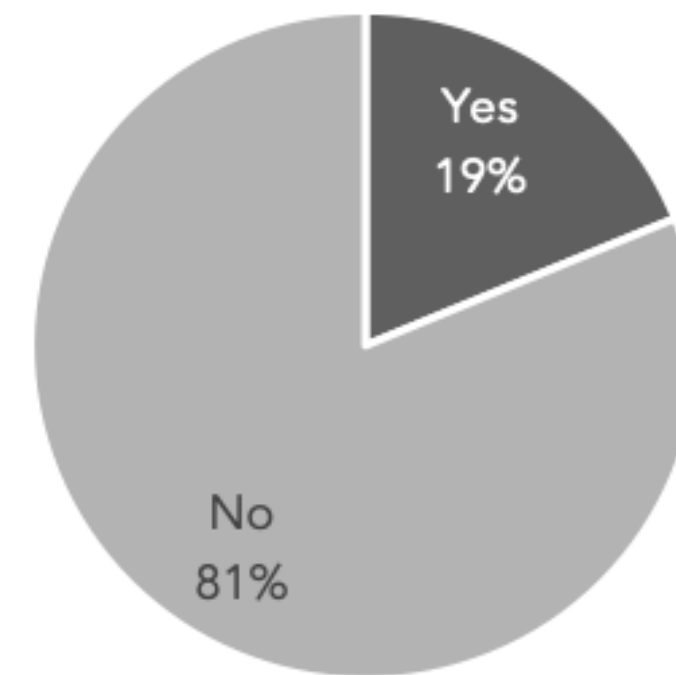


Impact of Incarceration

Many individuals noted that incarceration impacted their family in long term ways.

"He was assaulted while incarcerated and there was nothing we could do to help. He also complained of the living conditions like having to sleep on the floor and pee in a cup due to overcrowding."

Has incarceration in East Hawai'i impacted you and/or your family? (n=250)



"I was incarcerated and it created financial strain, made it harder to get a license, made me uncomfortable around officers, time strain."



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Community Recommendations

Desired Improvements for Policing

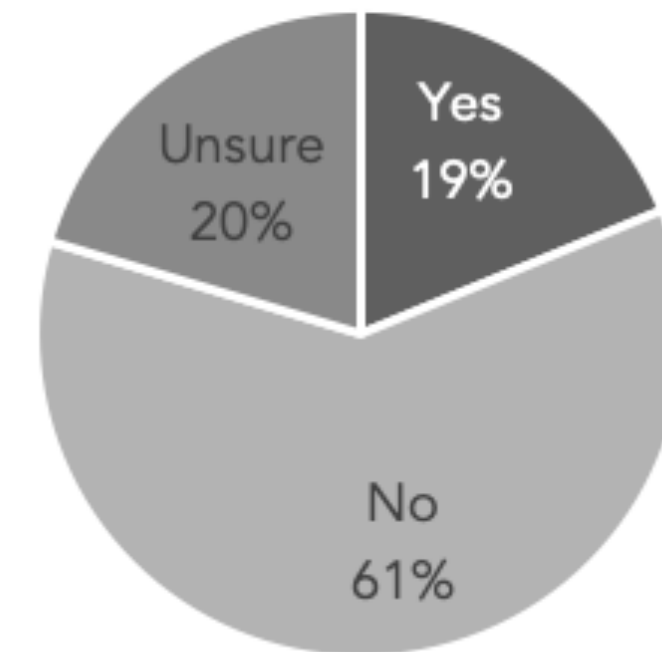


Community Improvements

When asked how the Hawai'i Police Department could improve, almost one-third of respondents (29%) recommend that HPD should increase staffing with qualified personnel. Several believe that doing so would decrease response time to community calls.

"Faster response times. In all of my experiences with them, they have always taken a long time to come."

Do you feel there is an adequate number of police officers to assist the East Hawai'i community? (n=250)



In comments to UH Hilo students, HPD recognizes the need for more officers.

Additional Community Improvements

"The keyword in this question is "Hawaii" and as an Island, I feel the police department should play a big role in bringing the community together. I know that it's only their job to 'Protect the community,' but there are other ways of doing so by helping the people come together."

About one in five (18%) suggest providing "better" training, as well as building more empathetic connections with the community.

Limitations

- Surveys were conducted in a wide-range of environments and surveyor-respondent relationships differed across individuals
- Lack of previous data on the topic (particular to East Hawai'i)
- Difficulty accessing:
 - Older folks
 - Law enforcement
 - Incarcerated peoples

Additional issues:

- Past perceptions may be impacted by a "Rose Colored Glasses" effect
- Time constraints
 - Limited time available to compare findings on race/ethnicity and income



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Questions?

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