



UNIVERSIDADE
ESTADUAL de LONDRINA

CARLA CAMPOS AVANZI

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL IMAGE OF
THE FEDERAL POLICE AND ITS POSITIONING WITHIN THE
FIELD OF SYMBOLIC DISPUTES**



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Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Lucas de Melo Melgaço

Londrina

2026

Ficha de identificação da obra elaborada pelo autor, através do Programa de Geração Automática do Sistema de Bibliotecas da UEL

Avanzi, Carla Campos.

Elite Police : the construction of the institutional image of the Federal Police and its positioning within the field of symbolic disputes / Carla Campos Avanzi. - Londrina, 2026.
315 f. : il.

Orientador: Cleber da Silva Lopes.

Coorientador: Lucas de Melo Melgaço.

Tese (Doutorado em Sociologia) - Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Centro de Letras e Ciências Humanas, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Sociologia, 2026.

Inclui bibliografia.

1. Polícia Federal - Tese. 2. Instituições policiais - Tese. 3. Poder simbólico - Tese. 4. Imagem institucional - Tese. I. Lopes, Cleber da Silva. II. Melgaço, Lucas de Melo. III. Universidade Estadual de Londrina. Centro de Letras e Ciências Humanas. Programa de Pós-Graduação em Sociologia. IV. Título.

CDU 316

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To CAPES (Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel), for the funding provided on two occasions for this research, both for part of my doctoral studies in Brazil and for the doctoral research stay (PDSE) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium), without which it would not have been possible for me to dedicate myself full-time and carry out the research with the same commitment and dedication. The support also enabled new directions for this research, as well as the realisation of the cotutelle agreement that originated from it.

To my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Cleber Lopes, for his dedication to his profession, the professionalism with which he has always conducted meetings and guidance sessions, and for his persistence in accompanying and encouraging me from undergraduate studies through the doctoral program.

To my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Lucas Melgaço, who, with great professionalism, opened doors in academia I could never have imagined, also shaping the trajectory of this doctorate. I will always be grateful for the opportunities he offered and for the empathy with which he welcomed me in Belgium. I also thank Prof. Dr. Priscila Villela, who accepted to be part of the Steering Committee, in addition to the jury, contributing several times to this work and addressing questions that arose during the writing process.

To the members of the examination committee: Prof. Dr. Sofie De Kimpe, Prof. Dr. Rosamunde Van Brakel, Prof. Dr. Arthur Trindade Maranhão Costa, and Prof. Dr. Marcia Neme Buzalaf. Thank you for accepting the invitation to serve, for your careful reading, and for your invaluable contributions to this research.

To the State University of Londrina, which I am honoured to call home, for the unique opportunities it provided me and for the many good moments throughout these years of study. Especially to the PPGSOC program, for the attention and competence with which its members

conduct a cutting-edge and resilient research agenda in Brazil. I have received so many contributions in classes, events, and meetings that I could not list them all here without risking omitting someone important.

To my colleagues at the Laboratory of Studies on Security Governance (LEGS) for their countless contributions to this research and to previous ones, especially my friends Gabriel, Fabrício, Caio, Herbert, Amanda, Luan, Gustavo, Anderson, and João Victor.

To the Vrije Universiteit Brussel for welcoming students of different nationalities and promoting pluralism in its policies. To the Crime & Society Research Group (CRiS) for the opportunity to participate in discussions and for contributions providing new perspectives.

To the members of the Brazilian Federal Police who kindly collaborated with this research, demonstrating that the goal of a transparent police force does not remain merely on paper.

To my friends Lília, Thamires, Fábio, Evelyn, Jeff, Lina, and Mari, for understanding my many absences during important moments, and for their constant support and encouragement.

To my father Jorge and my mother Iracema, who supported all my decisions with kindness and love, even from afar. To my grandmother Maria, who, even without fully understanding my professional choices, always encouraged me with great love.

To my partner Aristeu, for the shared journey, for the dreams, struggles, and constant encouragement. All my love.

Estudar as consequências econômicas, culturais e políticas das mudanças induzidas pelos meios de comunicação é, então, evitar evocar virtudes mágicas, poderes desconhecidos, mas voltar sempre àqueles que os inventam e os utilizam, os seres humanos, e às relações que os unem no duplo plano da ação e da ideologia. Maigret, 2010, p. 48. (pt)

Studying the economic, cultural, and political consequences of changes induced by the media is, therefore, to avoid invoking magical virtues, unknown powers, but to return always to those who invent and use them, human beings, and to the relations that unite them on the dual plane of action and ideology. Maigret, 2010, p. 48. (en)

ABSTRACT

AVANZI, Carla Campos. **Elite Police**: The Construction of The Institutional Image of the Federal Police and Its Positioning Within the Field of Symbolic Disputes. 2026. 339 f. Thesis (Doctor of Sociology and PhD in Criminology) – Sociology, State University of Londrina; Law and Criminology, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Londrina, 2026.

The Federal Police (FP) in Brazil has undergone a process of institutional strengthening over the past 20 years, in addition to achieving significant media prominence following major anti-corruption operations. This study aims to investigate the construction of the Federal Police's institutional image, understood as a strategy mobilised within the power structures within the scope of the State. It seeks to answer the following questions: how does the FP construct its institutional image? If a coordinated communication strategy exists, in what sense does this image construction occur? The database used comprises all content published on the official FP profiles on Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter), as well as featured news articles published on the agency's official website, referring to the years 2022 and 2023. To grasp the strategic aspects of image construction, in-depth interviews were conducted with professionals from the FP's communication sector. The data were analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis, considering its three dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. The study investigated the symbolic reinforcement related to the three fields of power in which the FP can operate: the defence field, the criminal justice field, and the transnational policing field. Although elements of reinforcement were identified in all three fields, the strategies employed differ according to the characteristics of each.

Keywords: Federal Police, Police institutions, Organisational fields, Institutional image, Symbolic power.

RESUMO

AVANZI, Carla Campos. **Polícia de Elite**: a construção da imagem institucional da Polícia Federal e o seu posicionamento no campo de disputas simbólicas. 2026. 339 f. Tese (Doutorado em Sociologia e PhD em Criminologia) – Sociologia, Universidade Estadual de Londrina; Law and Criminology, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Londrina, 2026.

A Polícia Federal (PF) no Brasil tem passado por um processo de fortalecimento institucional nos últimos 20 anos, além de protagonizar um relevante destaque midiático após as grandes operações de combate à corrupção. Este estudo pretende investigar a construção da imagem institucional pela Polícia Federal, como uma estratégia como uma mobilizada dentro das estruturas de poder no âmbito do Estado. Assim, pretende-se responder aos seguintes questionamentos: como é feita a construção da imagem institucional da Polícia Federal pela própria instituição? Se existente e coordenada uma estratégia de comunicação, em que sentido ocorre essa construção da imagem? O banco de dados é composto por todos conteúdos publicados nos perfis oficiais da PF no Facebook, Instagram e X (Twitter), bem como notícias em destaque publicadas no site oficial do órgão, nos anos de 2022 e 2023. Para apreender os aspectos estratégicos da construção da imagem, foram realizadas entrevistas em profundidade com profissionais do setor de comunicação da PF. Os dados foram analisados por meio da análise crítica do discurso em suas três dimensões de análise: texto; prática discursiva e prática social. Foram investigados o reforço simbólico relacionado aos três campos de poder em que a PF pode atuar: campo da defesa; campo de justiça criminal e campo transnacional de policiamento. Embora tenham sido encontrados elementos de reforço nos três campos analisados, as estratégias empregadas são diferentes para cada um deles.

Palavras-chave: Polícia Federal, Instituições policiais, Campos organizacionais, Imagem institucional, Poder Simbólico.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research notes

Before delving into the development of the topic, it is important to consider the trajectory of this research and of the researcher. After completing my undergraduate degree in Law, and while pursuing a second undergraduate degree in Social Sciences, I joined the Security Governance Studies Laboratory (LEGS/UEL) in 2016 with the aim of conducting research on the relationship between the police and the media. At that time, I was particularly interested in the influence of police institutions on journalistic coverage, and I undertook a research internship on this topic. In 2018, I entered the Master's Program in Sociology, initially intending to study the strategies employed by the agencies involved in the Lava Jato Operation¹ in Brazil. In that year, the operation, launched in 2014 and lasting eight years, was at the height of media prominence and showed no signs of concluding, although political mechanisms aimed at weakening it were already underway. A few years later, during the government of former President Jair Bolsonaro (2019–2023), the most prominent anti-corruption task force in Brazil would ultimately be dismantled. In the initial research project, the two institutions involved in the operation, the Federal Prosecution Service (MPF) and the Federal Police (FP), were the primary focus. However, as the research progressed and in light of contributions received in academic conference forums and research group meetings, the social media platforms of the Federal Police emerged as an autonomous object of study, leading to the redirection of the project.

What does the Federal Police communicate about itself and how is this accomplished?

¹ The Lava Jato Operation was a joint investigation conducted by the Federal Prosecution Service (MPF) and the Federal Police (PF), focused on combating corruption and money laundering in Brazil. It began in March 2014 and was formally concluded in February 2021. <https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2021-02-04/lava-jato-sai-de-cena-sob-um-brasil-em-silencio.html>

Part of this question was addressed through a content analysis of the institution's social media, in which the disseminated content was compared with data from public documents on the actions undertaken in the repression of different types of crimes. Social media constitute direct channels of communication between the institution and its public, without traditional intermediaries, such as journalists, for example, except through the mechanisms of the platforms themselves (which are neither disregarded nor presumed to be neutral). The results of the master's thesis indicated a departure from the traditional moral panic strategies historically employed by police forces, a reinforcement of positivity in the terms proposed by Han (2015) (in which there is an excessive encouragement of performance and productivity aimed at inhibiting negative reactions), as well as the dissemination of the logistical capacity of the Federal Police.

After understanding part of the strategy in one of the Federal Police's communication channels, other questions emerged. Does institutional communication follow any strategic guideline? If so, in what sense does the construction of institutional image occur and for what purpose? Who defines this strategy? Among the many theoretical possibilities for investigating the topic at the doctoral level, organizational field theory, particularly as advanced by Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio (1991) on the basis of Pierre Bourdieu's (1986, 2004, 2007) theory, was chosen as the analytical framework, as will be further developed, for being considered the approach most likely to yield the best results in addressing the questions raised.

After completing the PhD coursework requirements, the research period abroad at the Faculty of Law and Criminology of Vrije Universiteit Brussel, with the subsequent conversion of this research into a Joint-PhD, also entailed changes to the project that were fundamental to its improvement, including the incorporation of new perspectives, new theoretical scope, and even new hypotheses. The period abroad also enabled participation in

international conferences, seminars, research group meetings, and as observer in specific courses, such as Policing and Surveillance and Criminological Encounters. It further contributed to identifying social problems similar to those faced by Brazil, as well as to becoming aware of different social problems or of issues analysed from alternative perspectives due to cultural differences. Moreover, it provided a detached perspective on Brazilian policing, enabling comparisons and distinctions between Belgian and Brazilian police institutions. Despite not having conducted in-depth research on the Belgian police institution, since this was not the object of the study, these perceptions were fundamental to developing the scope of this research and to examining Brazilian policing, particularly the Federal Police, in its complexity. The academic environment of Vrije Universiteit Brussel, which prioritises the inclusion of international students, also facilitated the exchange of information, as communication in English predominated, even though it is not the country's official language. In addition, I engaged with students of Criminology, Law, and Sociology from different parts of the world, who contributed to a deeper understanding of both shared and distinct dimensions of security-related problems.

The discussions on the use of policing technologies in the discussions and events at VUB fostered a new perspective on the data under analysis, drawing attention to a global agenda from which the Federal Police would not be detached. The potential positioning within the international field of public security, through the adoption of “solution packages” marketed internationally, became particularly salient during the period abroad, through engagement with debates on policing worldwide, and especially in Belgium.

The Covid-19 pandemic also served as the backdrop for a considerable period of the research. When I entered the program, the pandemic was still at its critical stage, with thousands of deaths per day. At the time of the beginning of doctoral studies, there remained uncertainty as to whether the research could proceed according to “traditional models,” or

whether adaptation would be required in order to achieve its intended objectives. Only on 5 May 2023, when I was already in Belgium, did the World Health Organisation declare the end of the Public Health Emergency of International Concern related to Covid-19, thereby bringing, at least at that moment, an end to its pandemic status. However, a significant part of the doctoral program was conducted under a regime of sanitary exception. The exceptional measures adopted affected various aspects of social life, including the permanent use of masks, restrictions on movement to basic places such as markets, the impossibility of accessing outdoor leisure spaces, limited access to libraries, and the absence of in-person conversations with laboratory colleagues. And there was fear, the constant fear that hovered over us, even the most unwary among us, the fear of dying or of losing someone close surreptitiously, without the chance to say goodbye.

The doctoral admissions committee was conducted remotely; the Master's defence took place in a remote format, and all coursework requirements were likewise completed remotely. There was no in-person contact with the other members of my doctoral class, as well as minimal face-to-face interaction with faculty members, except in exceptional circumstances. The remote format of academic activities was only one of the many aspects affected by the pandemic, alongside numerous others in both the social and private spheres, such as the holding of events remotely and the establishment of remote work and research groups.

Brazil's political and democratic landscape also underwent significant changes during the research, evidently affecting the object of study as well, since the Federal Police occupied a central place in several debates during the administrations of Presidents Michel Temer (2016–2018), Jair Bolsonaro (2019–2023), and the third term of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2023–2026). In the first version of the research project, the hypothesis was raised that the Federal Police enjoyed greater independence than the Minister of Justice itself, moving

toward a solid path of institutional autonomy, along a trajectory similar to that of the Federal Prosecution Service. However, the actions of former president Bolsonaro (2019–2023), who governed at the time, cast doubt on this assumption through repeated attempts to interfere with the institution's leadership and operations. The peak of the scandal involving the Federal Police was the resignation of the former Minister of Justice, Sergio Moro, who stated that Bolsonaro sought to interfere with the institution by imposing the replacement of the Director-General. Although the investigation into the alleged interference was eventually closed, the episode placed a spotlight on the limits of the autonomy attributed to the Federal Police.

Subsequently, in September 2023, I joined the Civil Police of the State of Paraná² as an investigative officer and completed the institution's three-month police training course. Although the intensive workload of the program limited my ability to devote myself fully to writing the dissertation, entering a judicial police institution, although at the state level, allowed for greater familiarity with elements of the field. Confidential information, intelligence data, or operational techniques presented during the course cannot be disclosed for reasons of institutional security, even for academic purposes, and will therefore not be addressed here. Nevertheless, contact with the discursive grammars employed, police culture, and the common difficulties and dilemmas faced within the institution provides a more accurate framework for this research, as well as an initial closer rapport with potential interviewees, contributing to the overcoming of the invisible barrier that separates academics from police officers, so frequently reported in studies on the institution (Poncioni, 2021).

A recurrent issue identified in the traditional literature on policing concerns a dichotomy between researchers and policing professionals. On the one hand, policing professionals point to a gap between research conducted in academia, particularly that of a

² In Brazil, both the Civil Police and the Federal Police are investigative police forces, although with different territorial jurisdictions. While the Federal Police has jurisdiction to act against crimes throughout Brazil, the Civil Police may operate only within the State.

theoretical nature, and police practice. The dissatisfaction with the works published thus far is, indeed, one of the causes of the movement toward academic production originating within Brazilian police institutions, with the creation of their own academic journals aimed at academically validating police knowledge, such as the *Revista do Instituto Brasileiro de Segurança Pública (RIBSP)* (Lima et al., 2022). On the other hand, academic knowledge, with its specific methodology, does not require immersion or practical experience in order to present valid results and reflections. Practice in itself, without theory and method, is unproductive. The intention here is not to endorse either perspective, since critical positioning and dialogue are inherent to the academic and intellectual environment. However, unlike the movement identified by Lima et al. (2022), from the police to academia, the movement reported here proceeds in the opposite direction, from academia, with an academic and sociological perspective, toward a police institution. Regarding these dilemmas, I borrow the words of Luiz Eduardo Soares (2001, p.261) in an interview:

For me, the intellectual function must also maintain a permanent pragmatic commitment to the possibilities of transformation inscribed in historical reality. And nothing is better for understanding and intervening in these potentialities than public life (...), where one also learns to respect the limits dictated by circumstances. What matters, I believe, is to preserve the vitality of this dual perspective: the critique that stems from an autonomous gaze and the pragmatic commitment arising from immersion in the conditions of historical reality. Even if this ambivalent and tense vitality requires a division of labour, in which each of us will occupy provisional and interchangeable positions. And even if it generates tension among us and within us, because we ourselves, with our indefatigable self-critical consciousness (is this not the good, incurable disease that makes someone an intellectual, in the fullest sense of the

term?), are arenas of this duplicity of perspectives and postures.³

Research conducted within police institutions often indicates resistance from interviewees toward researchers, as exemplified by the study conducted by Poncioni (2021) in Brazilian police academies. Over the course of this study, the Communications Office of the Federal Police at headquarters proved accessible and receptive in providing information for the research, even facilitating the scheduling arrangements in order to optimise this researcher's time in Brasília⁴. After the ethics committee's approval in Brazil and the research project was submitted to the communications department of the Federal Police, beyond the scheduling process, no resistance was encountered in accessing members at headquarters, demonstrating exceptional transparency. The same did not occur with equal ease at the regional police stations, which exhibited greater resistance to participating in the study, whether due to concerns about breaching hierarchies, given that information is centralised at headquarters, or due to distinct logics of collaboration with academia. Those who agreed to participate, including at the regional stations, proved receptive in responding to the questions.

Studying police institutions as a female researcher is no less difficult than being a female police officer. The differences that men do not notice, or pretend not to notice, are felt intensely by us, even when they are demonstrated subtly and often appear in very subjective ways. The police are an institution traditionally marked by masculine codes, masculine

³ Original text in Portuguese: "Para mim, a função intelectual deve manter também um compromisso pragmático permanente com as possibilidades de transformação inscritas na realidade histórica. E nada melhor para conhecer e intervir sobre essas potencialidades do que a vida pública (...), onde também se aprende a respeitar os limites ditados pelas circunstâncias. O importante, creio, é manter a vitalidade dessa dupla perspectiva, a crítica que provém do olhar autônomo e o compromisso pragmático oriundo da imersão nas condições do real histórico. Mesmo que essa vitalidade ambivalente e tensa exija uma divisão do trabalho, em que cada um de nós ocupará posições provisórias e intercambiáveis. E mesmo que ela gere tensão entre nós e dentro de nós, porque também nós, com nossa infatigável consciência autocrítica (não é essa a boa doença irremediável que faz de alguém um intelectual, no sentido pleno do termo?), somos arenas dessa duplicidade de perspectivas e posturas."

⁴ Brasília is located at a distance of 1,100 kilometers from the State University of Londrina, which, for comparison, represents the same distance between Brussels and Trieste, in Italy.

uniforms, and a masculine grammar, especially in Brazil where men occupy about 85 % of police positions, according to the Brazilian Public Security Yearbook 2025.⁵ In these institutions (and in so many others), the logic for men is one of camaraderie, whereas for women it is bureaucracy. Even in favourable contexts, there is always a warning signal switched on, whether during interviews or in the work itself.

Within Brazilian police forces, the distinction between administrative and managerial sectors and operational sectors often suggests the existence of two distinct police institutions, grounded in different paradigms. One is that of the regional police stations and operations; the other is that of headquarters, which communicates with journalists, scientists, and politicians. As a researcher, I was primarily present in the latter, and even with possible gender-based obstacles that may have remained invisible, the experience in Brasília was positive in this respect. The composition of the communications team at the headquarters of the Federal Police includes a majority of female professionals, unlike what occurs in the regional police stations. At headquarters, the chief position within the communications advisory office is held by a woman, which contrasts with the profile found in the regional stations and with the broader pattern of female leadership in Brazil, which remains highly unequal.

1.2 Research object

In January 2022, an exhibition by the Federal Police (FP)⁶ was held in the entrance hall of one of the city of Londrina's main shopping malls⁷. I remained at the place for approximately half an hour, documenting the exhibition and observing the dozens of visitors.

⁵ In Belgium, women accounted for approximately 27% of police personnel in 2024.

<https://www.brusselstimes.com/1702135/police-aim-to-recruit-more-women>

⁶ The event was part of a series of exhibitions throughout the state entitled “PF in Action in Paraná”.

⁷ Londrina is the second-largest city in the state of Paraná and the fourth-largest in southern Brazil, with approximately 600,000 inhabitants.

A Lamborghini, valued at more than 130,000 euros (Figure 1), which had been seized in an operation against the so-called “Bitcoin King”⁸ and temporarily assigned by the courts for the exhibition, was wrapped in black and gold colours with the FP logo and positioned at the centre of the space. Although there was a structure for children simulating a police vehicle, parents preferred to take photographs with the real vehicle, emphasising its features, such as the high speed it can reach within a few seconds. There were also photographs, banners, and a television broadcasting images of the operations, accompanied by energetic music, which shaped the acoustic atmosphere of the venue. Some young people commented admiringly on the action images, mentioning the special operations units depicted in the photographs: “O NEPOM⁹ é fera!”¹⁰ All indications suggest that the institutional promotional initiative was successful.

8 The operation known as Daemon, launched in June 2021, investigated cryptocurrency fraud and the misappropriation of funds.

9 NEPOM is the Special Maritime Police Unit of the Federal Police, one of its specialized operational groups.

10 It can be translated as ““NEPOM is awesome!”. “É fera” is a Brazilian slang expression used to describe someone who is competent, talented, courageous, or excellent in a given activity. The closest equivalent in English would be an expression such as “a beast.”

Figure 1

Federal Police Exhibition in 2022– Lamborghini Gallardo



The scenario does not differ significantly from the practices of various police forces around the world, such as those observed at security fairs, for example, in which security forces increasingly seek to reinforce themselves through symbols of power, action, and military capacity (Grassiani, 2022). Police studies indicate that, beyond being merely state bureaucratic institutions, police forces represent structures of feeling that project symbols whose meanings are produced and received by different groups within society (Loader, 1997, 2003).

Policing does not constitute merely another bureaucratic function of the state. When we think about policing, structures of feeling are evoked, exposing our own reading of the world. These sentiments refer to the existence of criminality as a threat to which we are

reminded we are subject, and, in contrast, policing is viewed as the benevolent force that protects us from these dangers of the world. The police and policing occupy this central position in the production and reproduction of order and security, associated with the figure of a guardian (Loader, 1997, 2003).

In countries such as England, for example, the police are part of popular culture, in a strategic process of communicating with the public that dates back to the 19th century. The London police can be regarded as a reference for the cultural mobilisation of the police as a symbol, including replicas of their characteristic elements found in souvenir shops in the city, for example (Loader, 1997, 2003; Loader & Mulcahy, 2012). Beyond the London police, which constitutes a unique reference in this regard, other police forces have adopted strategies to stand out, reinforcing themselves as symbols or using these symbols to enhance their prestige. However, much has changed in recent years regarding the consolidation of these police symbols. There are still a few studies analysing how state police forces use communication to project these meanings, especially in light of new social dynamics involving emerging technologies and communication formats.

The scene depicted above at the exhibition was staged by the Brazilian Federal Police (FP), which has implemented a communication strategy that can be considered successful in Brazil in recent years. Research on institutional trust conducted in Brazil generally identifies the FP as one of the most trusted institutions¹¹, a distinction not often shared by other police forces, which typically do not achieve such high levels of credibility. The vehicle positioned at the centre of the exhibition illustrates the effort to construct these symbols of power by this police force. The exhibited vehicle, seized in a major operation, was not intended for routine policing activities but for exhibitions and fairs. It functions as a symbol that goes beyond its instrumental role of promoting policing and begins to convey codes and meanings associated

¹¹ https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/reporterbbc/story/2007/09/070927_brasilconfiancadenize_ba

with the FP. Although such practices are common among security forces worldwide, in Brazil, it is unusual for state police forces to hold exhibitions for self-promotion, although they frequently employ other strategies, including the intensive use of digital media.

This study aims to understand how the Brazilian Federal Police (FP) implements its communication strategy on digital media. Furthermore, it seeks to examine how the FP uses these communication strategies to better position itself within the various organisational fields that permeate its activities, with the goal of increasing its power within the state. The study addresses the following research questions: What strategy does the Federal Police employ on digital media to construct its institutional image? If such a strategy exists and is coordinated, in what ways is it implemented?

The FP is Brazil's federal police force responsible for investigating crimes under federal jurisdiction, such as public corruption, money laundering, and international drug trafficking. In terms of symbolic importance and operational competencies in Brazil, it could be compared to police forces such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States and New Scotland Yard in the United Kingdom.

Two elements in the current Brazilian Federal Constitution¹² have been important for the consolidation of the FP in recent years: its status as a permanent agency, preventing its dissolution by the executive branch, and the structuring of career paths, with regulations

12 The 1988 Federal Constitution establishes the competencies of the Federal Police as follows:

Article 144, §1: The Federal Police, established by law as a permanent agency and structured as a career service, is intended to:

I – investigate criminal offenses against the political and social order or against the assets, services, and interests of the Union or its autonomous agencies and public companies, as well as other offenses whose practice has interstate or international repercussions and requires uniform enforcement, as provided by law;

II – prevent and repress the illicit trafficking of narcotics and related drugs, smuggling, and tax evasion, without prejudice to the actions of the tax authorities and other public agencies within their respective areas of competence;

III – perform maritime, air, and border policing functions;

IV – exclusively exercise the functions of the Union's judicial police.

governing promotion and salary scales (Arantes, 2011a, 2011b, 2019). Although studies indicate that the FP had already been in a process of strengthening since around 2004, it gained greater prominence in operations combating corruption in Brazil, alongside a significant increase in its institutional capacity, through higher public investment and staff expansion¹³. Lava Jato Operation was a joint investigation conducted by the Federal Prosecution Service (MPF) and the Federal Police (FP), focused on combating corruption and money laundering in Brazil. It began in March 2014 and was formally concluded in February 2021, receiving significant media attention in Brazil and frequently being compared to Operation Clean Hands in Italy.

The organisation of police forces in Brazil has a complex structure, which can be confusing even for many Brazilians. The current Federal Constitution¹⁴ established six different police forces, in addition to municipal guards, which are not currently considered police but are part of the state security system. Police forces in Brazil are essentially divided into two categories: by function and by territorial jurisdiction. Since, as a rule, Brazilian police do not carry out the full policing cycle (with the exception of certain special operations), the police are divided into three main functions: those responsible for ostensive policing; those that conduct investigations up to judicial sentencing; and those responsible for executing the penalties imposed.

Police forces are also divided by territorial jurisdiction. Federal police are directly linked to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and operate at the federal level,

13 In an interview given to the newspaper **The Intercept**, the former advisor to Sérgio Moro, the principal figure in Operation Lava Jato, described her relationship with the press and reporters.

<https://theintercept.com/2018/10/29/lava-jato-imprensa-entrevista-assessoria/>

14 Brazil's current Constitution dates from 1988 and was promulgated following the country's long period of military dictatorship. As such, it served as an important instrument for the reestablishment of Brazilian democracy, incorporating broad participation from various sectors of society to address diverse demands. It is also characterized by an extensive catalogue of fundamental rights and by the establishment of rules and divisions for state organization, including the structuring of the police forces.

particularly in crimes with broader territorial reach, such as international drug trafficking and other offences that may cross state or international borders¹⁵. State police are linked to the State Secretariats of Public Security (directly under the state executive) in each of Brazil's 27 states and possess residual jurisdiction. This means that all crimes not falling under federal jurisdiction must be investigated and repressed by the state police, resulting in a high workload and a larger personnel contingent compared to the federal police, although this does not necessarily correspond to higher public investment¹⁶. Another characteristic is that, while maintaining similar functions and responsibilities, each state police force can have its own organisation, resources, and command structure, which may make them very different from one another. Federal police, despite having a smaller workforce, have a centralised leadership at the national level, facilitating the definition of strategies and greater centralisation of resources. Although it is nationally centralised, the Federal Police also maintains focal points in the capitals of each of the states, known as Superintendencies, as well as regional police stations in other cities and specialised units dedicated to the repression of specific crimes, such as cybercrime. These units, while responsible for enforcing federal criminal law, facilitate the collection of information and the organisation of operational activities across the country's many regions.

Each police force has numerous legally established responsibilities, and these divisions are not rigid, allowing for many legal exceptions. Occasionally, an investigative police force may carry out patrol duties, just as an ostensive police force may investigate certain crimes. The FP's primary competence is to serve as the Union's judicial police, with the exclusive mandate to investigate crimes under federal jurisdiction. However, it also holds

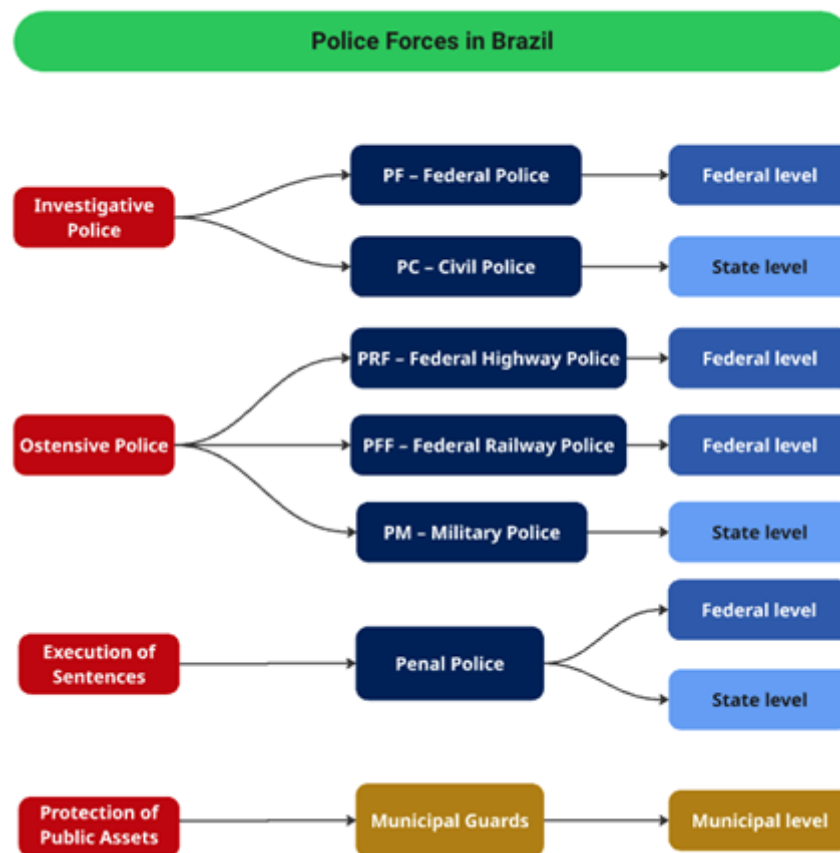
¹⁵ The list of crimes under federal jurisdiction is established in Brazil's constitutional and penal legislation. This list is, as a rule, subsidiary; that is, any offenses not included fall under the jurisdiction of the states.

¹⁶ Data from 2023 from the Brazilian Forum on Public Security indicated that the number of military police officers in Brazil was nearly 405,000, while the Federal Police had approximately 13,000 officers.

competence in ostensive policing, such as border policing and the suppression of international drug trafficking. The diagram below (Figure 2) illustrates this organisational structure in general terms.

Figure 2

Organisational chart of the Brazilian police (2026)



To understand the object of this research, the theory of organisational fields will be used as an analytical tool, derived from Pierre Bourdieu's theoretical framework on field theory (1986, 2004, 2007), but further developed by Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio (1991) to address the organisational context. Field theory posits that state actors are in constant competition for symbolic power, a diffuse and abstract form of power that permeates all social relations. These struggles take place within fields of power, where actors share

specific rules and knowledge and employ various forms of capital to increase their power. Examples of the main forms of capital identified by Bourdieu include economic, cultural, and social capital, which will be discussed in greater detail in a dedicated section of this work.

The theory of organisational fields, primarily presented by Powell and DiMaggio (1991), is employed to understand how state organisations, including police forces, operate within the different fields in which they are embedded to enhance their symbolic power, thereby acquiring, for example, greater resources and influence over political decisions. An example of the theoretical application of this approach in criminology is Bowden's (2024) study, which sought to understand how the security field is structured in Ireland to repress crime. However, unlike Bowden's (2024) study, which aims to identify the structure of a field based on a network of actors, this research seeks to understand the positioning of a specific security actor, the Federal Police, within the different fields it navigates, representing two distinct types of studies derived from the same theoretical foundation.

Despite Brazil's complex policing system, Medeiros (2004) indicated that the country has not yet consolidated a distinctly police field, as occurs in other countries. Although the study focused on military police and was conducted around 20 years ago, during which much has changed, the absence of a strictly police field in Brazil results in police forces operating across the different fields that intersect with their activities. In the case of the Federal Police (FP), studies indicate that it operates between the defence field and the criminal justice field, given the breadth of its constitutionally mandated responsibilities (Medeiros, 2004, Costa et al., 2016). This is because part of its responsibilities is directed toward the judiciary, through the conduct of investigations and police inquiries, while another part involves ostensive policing activities, such as the repression of international trafficking, for example.

The FP can use its digital channels to convey the image traditionally associated with the defence field, mobilising ostensive elements such as vehicles, badges, and weapons, with

the aim of reinforcing itself as an important police institution for the maintenance of order. A second strategy may involve highlighting elements that strengthen the evidentiary value of its work, presenting itself as a key institution within the justice system, in order to reinforce its position within the criminal justice field and seek greater autonomy, taking as a reference the institutional autonomy achieved by the Federal Prosecution Service under the 1988 Constitution, another prominent actor in this field.

Additionally, the FP may seek to position itself within a transnational policing field as an alternative path to acquiring greater autonomy. Unlike the two national fields, which operate according to a centripetal logic, the transnational policing field follows a centrifugal logic, whereby the institution, if strengthened, can increase its legitimacy even in the face of government changes. In this context, the FP can emphasise elements valued in this field, such as the use of police technology, participation in international events and fairs, and partnerships with other police institutions worldwide, such as the FBI and the DEA. This study will investigate these three sets of elements, corresponding to the three distinct organisational fields.

Previous studies have indicated that members of the Federal Police identify themselves as an “elite police,” both because of the types of crimes they investigate and due to the relatively high salaries of their personnel compared to other police institutions (Costa et al., 2016; Fagundes & Pilau, 2019). In this sense, strengthening its activities across different fields to build its institutional image may serve the purpose of promoting greater organisational autonomy, in a process similar to that experienced by the Federal Prosecution Service under the 1988 Constitution, or through establishing closer ties with other international institutions, such as the FBI.

Digital media were chosen because they constitute direct communication channels between the institution and the population, without the presence of traditional intermediaries,

such as journalists. Moreover, Brazil is one of the world's largest consumers of social media. Despite significant social inequality, which represents a structural problem in the country, nearly 90% of Brazilians own a personal mobile phone¹⁷, and almost 95% have access to the internet¹⁸. Brazilians also spend nearly four hours per day on digital media¹⁹, while in Europe, the average daily usage is 1 hour and 48 minutes²⁰. The high consumption of digital media in Brazil underscores the necessity for institutions to communicate through these channels as well, establishing strategies aligned with the new patterns of platform usage.

Some studies have analysed how police forces deploy these strategies on social media. Recently, studies have emerged on the police presence in these new communication channels, especially on X (Twitter), such as the work of Mayes (2020) with the police in the United States; Schneider (2014) on the strategies of the police in Canada on Twitter; and Meijer and Torenvlied (2014) on the use of Twitter (by the Dutch police).

In an effort to systematise research on social media and policing, Walsh and O'Connor (2018) identified three main forms of police use of social media: the role of police forces as monitors, as subjects of online content, and as producers of content²¹. The potential for increased police control through new technologies, as well as for greater citizen scrutiny, has characterised digital media as arenas of contestation, implying the need for the police to

17 According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), 88.9% of people aged 10 or older owned a cell phone in 2024, including those in rural areas.

<https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-noticias/2012-agencia-de-noticias/noticias/44032-no-brasil-88-9-da-populacao-de-10-anos-ou-mais-tinha-celular-em-2024>

18 According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), 93.6% of Brazilian households had internet access in 2024, including those in rural areas.

<https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-noticias/2012-agencia-de-noticias/noticias/44031-internet-chega-a-74-9-milhoes-de-domicilios-do-pais-em-2024>

19 According to data from Data Reportal Brazil. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-brazil>

20 <https://www.demandsage.com/average-time-spent-on-social-media/>

²¹ The aspects were presented in a different order in the original text, but have been arranged here in this way to facilitate their presentation in line with the aims of this study.

manage their visibility (Walsh & O'Connor, 2018).

Most studies on digital media, however, have focused on the first aspect identified by the authors, namely the use of media as technical tools for policing, enabling increased access to data and information. With regard to this first aspect, the authors (Walsh & O'Connor, 2018) raise ethical concerns about the possibility of surveilling citizens who have not committed any crimes, based solely on their attributes, as a form of risk management by the police, which may in turn reinforce prejudice and discretionary practices. With respect to the second aspect, in which police forces become objects of content, the use of media by the police may also give rise to a form of counter-surveillance, allowing citizens to scrutinise police work by documenting and disseminating instances of abuse.

The third aspect identified by Walsh and O'Connor (2018) aligns with the findings presented in this study, namely the use of social media by police forces for organisational communication, with a focus on increasing engagement and visibility for their activities. The use of media has also been observed as a means for police organisations to present their agendas and improve their public image, thereby enhancing public support (Walsh & O'Connor, 2018). According to the authors, one indication of the growing importance of social media for police forces is the increased recruitment of professionals dedicated to influencing public opinion and managing media coverage, reducing reliance on third parties, such as traditional media outlets, and increasing institutional control.

The authors mapped the use of media to disseminate different types of content, such as alerts about imminent or real-time risks, as well as educational material aimed at mitigating those risks. Among the content identified, they also found patterns similar to those observed in this study. The material disseminated tended to prioritise law enforcement efforts, achievements and institutional culture, as well as relationships with the community. These patterns of dissemination reflect clearly defined strategies and objectives. The promotion of

accomplishments, community ties and demonstrations of effectiveness seeks to convey an idealised image of the police, positioning them as specialists in crime control. According to the authors, while content emphasising police effectiveness enhances credibility, content that humanises the police reduces the distance between citizens and officers, thereby increasing trust and public support.

In a study conducted with twelve municipal police departments in the United States, Mayes (2020) identified the use of digital media and the mobilisation of specific concepts aimed at controlling the message and assisting in crisis management, without relying on traditional media intermediaries. In addition to publicising arrests, concepts such as transparency and the humanisation of the police were mobilised to convey a positive and proactive image of the work being carried out. However, these studies remain limited and preliminary, not addressing how these communications construct meanings within these new channels. This study aims to contribute to this research agenda by identifying strategies in the digital media of one of the highest-rated Brazilian police forces.

In Brazil, a previous study of the Federal Police's social media content, comparing the published material with the institution's actual activities, found a strong emphasis on posts related to diffuse and collective interests far exceeding the actions actually carried out, such as environmental protection and human rights, particularly on Instagram, areas that are traditionally under the responsibility of the Federal Prosecution Service (MPF) (Avanzi, 2021). The data observed on social media, especially regarding areas typically associated with other institutions like the MPF, may indicate an effort by the Federal Police to strengthen its position across different fields of action.

As will be detailed in the following section, the data collected encompass all publications made by the Federal Police (FP) in 2022 and 2023 across three digital media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and X), all news featured on the highlights section of the

institutional website during the same period, as well as interviews with professionals directly involved in the organization's communications. The material was analysed using critical discourse analysis, as advocated particularly by Fairclough (2001). Critical discourse analysis allows for an understanding of the power relations and struggles in which the institution is engaged within the analysed context, as well as the meaning of its actions, since change is a central concept in the theory.

The study will be presented in three parts, in addition to the introduction and concluding remarks. The first part aims to present the symbolic elements involved in police activity, the overview of policing in Brazil, the organisation and distinctions among police forces, the differentiating aspects of judicial-function police, and the Federal Police (PF) in Brazil. The second part will introduce the concepts related to the theory of organisational fields, as well as the three potential fields of action for the FP. The defence field is traditionally occupied by military institutions in Brazil, including, for example, state military police and the Federal Highway Police. The criminal justice field includes, for example, the Federal Prosecution Service (MPF) and the courts of justice. The transnational policing field can encompass various actors, with the work of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) standing out as examples. In the third part of the study, the results of the critical discourse analysis will be presented across its three dimensions: text; text as discursive practice; and text as social practice.

1.3 Methodology

In this section, the research data, delimitations, and theoretical framework for data treatment through critical discourse analysis will be presented. In order to identify the image-construction strategy of the FP and to promote source triangulation, the content of all

publications made by the FP on its official profiles on Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter) was collected, as well as featured news published on the FP's own website, all data referring to the years 2022 and 2023²². Data mining of the website and social media platforms was initially conducted using specific programming²³. Additionally, 10 semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the FP communication team. The database is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Database

Database		Reference/collection year	Amount
Social Media	Facebook	2022-2023	427 posts
	Instagram	2022-2023	679 posts
	X (Twitter)	2022-2023	2688 posts
Featured News		2022-2023	1109 news
Interviews		2024	10 interviews

Although the choice of time frame reflects a specific political period in Brazil, marked by a particular government and the use of digital technologies and media, which must be considered in discourse analysis, it is consistent with the research proposal to identify current image-construction strategies. The period occurred in the context of the transition to the third term of the Lula administration (2023–2026), which historically valued and significantly increased investments in the FP during its two previous terms (2003-2006 e 2007-2010) as indicated in the literature on the institution (Arantes, 2015), as well as the end of the

22 Featured news items are contained in a specific virtual tab. <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/noticias-destaque>

23 Considering the limitations of each platform, an API (Application Programming Interface) was developed for scraping the information.

Bolsonaro administration (2019–2022), which was marked, among other scandals, by attempts to interfere with the institution’s investigative autonomy²⁴ (Engelmann & Pilau, 2025). The FP is an agency directly linked to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, such that changes in government administration directly affect the institution, even though it seeks to maintain its institutional and investigative independence.

With the aim of obtaining strategic information on the construction of the FP’s image, 10 interviews were conducted with members of the institution’s communications sector after collecting publicly available data. The interviews took place at two distinct moments, first in October 2024 and subsequently in October 2025, each lasting approximately 45 minutes. The interviews were granted on an anonymous basis, so that the interviewees will be identified solely as “Interviewee X.” The order in which the interviewees are presented in this study does not reflect the order in which the interviews were conducted to ensure anonymity. Also, with the purpose of safeguarding the anonymity and professional security of the interviewees, no information will be provided regarding attributes, positions, or any details that might identify the sources. Certain information that could potentially identify the interviewees will likewise not be disclosed, even if relevant to the research, such as, for example, the functions they perform or specific communication characteristics of the region of the country they may coordinate. As a general characteristic, all interviewees work directly with the institution’s communications activities, whether at the headquarters in Brasília or in the coordination of the sector in one of the superintendencies across the country, among those that most actively publicize their actions.

Prior to the conduct of the interviews, the project, including information regarding data collection and human sources, underwent review by the National Commission on Ethics

²⁴ In 2020, there were indications that President Bolsonaro had attempted to interfere in the management of the Federal Police, which culminated in the opening of investigations. <https://noticias.stf.jus.br/postsnoticias/a-pedido-da-pgr-stf-reabre-investigacoes-sobre-suposta-interferencia-de-jair-bolsonaro-na-pf/>

in Research (Comissão Nacional de Ética em Pesquisa - CONEP²⁵), in Brazil, obtaining a favourable opinion. All interviews were voluntary, ensuring confidentiality and the possibility for the interviewee to withdraw at any time. The interviews followed the guide scripts provided in Annexes A and B, with the central themes to be investigated, while also allowing for further exploration of issues of interest to the research (Gaskell, 2003). The first script included questions about the interviewee, their responsibilities and functions; about the communication coordination and the specific sector in which they work; about the flow of publications; communication channels; target audiences; content definition; and, finally, specific questions concerning the three fields of investigation in the research. The second script has a simplified structure, primarily directed at sectoral police stations, since some questions from the previous script did not align with the regional structure. Occasionally, depending on variations in the interviewees' responses, the conduct of the interview was adjusted to better identify the research findings. The in-depth interviews contributed to understanding what the institution intends to communicate about itself and how it may address different external audiences.

After the initial contact with a sector representative at headquarters, including information about the research objectives and the submission of the project with the ethics committee's approval, contact with the first interviewees encountered no significant resistance. With the exception of accommodating the interviews within the professionals' busy schedules, particularly in an election year, all were willing to collaborate with the study. The first stage of interviews was conducted in person at the headquarters of the Federal Police, in Brasília-DF. The Communications Sector occupies half of a floor within the imposing black-and-white building that has served as the institution's headquarters since 2022 (Figure 3).

25 The National Commission on Ethics in Research is the national committee that evaluates the ethical terms of all research conducted in the country.

Figure 3

Federal Police Headquarters in Brasília - FP



All interviewed professionals work directly in the communications sector and hold academic training in the field or had extensive experience in communications prior to joining the Federal Police, indicating the technical nature of both the position and the sector. The FP's Social Communication Coordination is divided into three internal units: Press Office; Ceremonial; and Internal Communication and Institutional Advertising. According to the interviewees, each FP superintendency in the 27 Brazilian states and in some regional police stations also has communication focal points, which produce materials, liaise with the local press, and forward content to headquarters. Professionals in the communications office also have a particular characteristic in relation to other police officers, as they form a team trained to deal with the media and journalists. Thus, many of the responses, as expected, were

protocol-driven or socially acceptable answers, as it seems to be the case in the example below. Nevertheless, the interviewees were cooperative, and it was possible to ascertain important findings for the research.

Researcher: Is there a defined general and specific communication strategy?

Interviewee 2: We follow our normative instruction. We have a normative instruction, and we adhere to the rules set forth therein. That is essentially it.ⁱ

Given that the initial interviews indicated partial control over agenda formation on the part of sectoral communication focal points, a second stage of interviews was conducted with members who head the sector in some of the FP superintendencies across the country. Initial contacts were established based on the names provided by headquarters, and emails were also sent to other superintendencies to inquire about the possibility of conducting interviews. Unlike the first stage, the second stage of interviews encountered greater resistance, revealing a paradox between the sector's profile in Brasília, oriented toward general strategies, and the sectoral police stations, which are more focused on operational activities. Contacts were made with 12 regional police stations through the institutional email addresses of the communications offices of the state superintendencies, selected from among the states that most actively publicised their actions in the national media. Two of them, who had been directly indicated by the central sector in Brasília, participated. The others either did not respond to the emails or replied stating that they could not participate in the research, since information regarding communication could only be provided by the Social Communication Coordination in Brasília, whose members had already been interviewed.

The responses reveal a strong hierarchical character, typical of police institutions, as well as that the database represents the decision-making group, since other contacts directed inquiries to the Brasília sector. Several interviewees mentioned internal regulations for institutional communication, as well as the existence of a workflow that centralises

information and guidelines in Brasília. The obstacles to participation by sectoral police stations may stem primarily from this workflow, which channels interviews to Brasília, rather than from any intention to withhold information, which is not believed to have occurred. Even though the FP has characteristics that distinguish it from other oversight institutions, it remains a police institution with a strong hierarchical structure over its members. Despite some initial resistance, all interviewees were cooperative in providing responses and clarifying the points of interest in the research.

It is also important to highlight that, despite the considerations about hierarchy discussed here and in the literature, women and staff from all levels, agents, delegates, and administrative personnel, are highly represented in leadership positions within FP communications. Emphasis is given to the principal communication post of the FP in Brazil, the General Coordination of Social Communication, which is held by a woman, as well as the Head of the Press Office, also in Brasília, who was likewise a woman at the time of this research.

It is also important to highlight the ethical procedures for scraping digital media in accordance with applicable Brazilian legislation. Although the data are on social media, in Brazil they are understood as public. This is firstly because they were published on an official, institutional, and public profile. It is not an individual police officer or a group speaking, but the official and central profile of the Federal Police. The Brazilian General Data Protection Law (Law No. 13,709/2018)²⁶ governs personal data, including in digital environments. In this case, considering that the data in question are institutional, the LGPD does not apply to the data collection carried out on the Federal Police's digital media, as these constitute official and publicly accessible channels, characterised as institutional communication. The Brazilian

²⁶ Translated from Portuguese: Article 1. This Law governs the processing of personal data, including in digital environments, by natural persons or by legal entities under public or private law, with the aim of protecting the fundamental rights of freedom and privacy and the free development of the natural person's personality

LGPD, therefore, does not address the use of institutional data.

With regard to the provision for interviews under the Brazilian General Data Protection Law, it should also be emphasised that all legal requirements were duly fulfilled. The interviews were anonymised, making any identification impossible; informed consent was obtained from all interviewees; and the information was processed and disclosed in accordance with the principles of purpose limitation, good faith, and public interest.

With regard to access to institutional information, the Brazilian Federal Constitution²⁷ provides, within its catalogue of fundamental rights, for the disclosure of information of collective or general interest, including for purposes such as scientific research. Furthermore, Law No. 12.527/2011, known as the Access to Information Law (LAI), establishes the procedures for the disclosure of data by public institutions, as is the case of the Federal Police. This legislation, in Article 4, defines what constitutes “information” and “document” and clarifies that information contained in any medium, format, or support falls within its scope, including digital media.

Evidently, all applicable Brazilian laws on access to information expressly provide for exceptions concerning sensitive data or information deemed essential to the security of society and the State. As the Federal Police is a law enforcement institution, access to data entails certain restrictions due to the very nature of its investigative and regulatory functions. Nevertheless, considering the applicable Brazilian legal framework, and given that the scraped data had already been made publicly available through official channels, such information is not only regarded as public but could also, in principle, be requested from the institution through a specific formal access mechanism.

²⁷ Translated from Portuguese: Federal Constitution, Article 5, XXXIII: everyone has the right to receive information of personal interest, or of collective or general interest, from public authorities, which shall be provided within the time limit established by law, subject to liability, except where confidentiality is essential to the security of society and the State.

In Brazil, there is an official channel through which any person may request information under the law, known as the Transparency Portal²⁸. For example, it is possible to request data on public expenditure, figures relating to police operations, and the number of public servants, among other types of information. Each year, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, on the basis of the Access to Information Law, publishes extensive and detailed reports containing public data on the institutions under its authority, including information on the Federal Police, which forms part of the Ministry.

Thus, the data collected could also have been requested through a specific formal channel. However, even though the law provides for the disclosure of institutional data, considering the complexity of the scraping process, the possible lack of systematic organisation of data from digital media, and limited staffing (as indicated in the interviews), the likelihood of obtaining the data in the required format would be low, not due to the absence of a legal basis, but rather as a result of operational constraints.

Although the data were collected via a specific API (Application Programming Interface), the researcher manually verified that no personal information was present. Despite the necessary caution, no information in the institutional publications allowed for the identification of individual officers. The only proper names disclosed refer to Federal Police authorities participating in significant events, such as the institution's Director-General, Andrei Augusto Passos Rodrigues, and the current Secretary General of Interpol and Federal Police officer, Valdecy Urquiza. An exception is made for posts concerning wanted individuals or those listed under Interpol's "Red Notice" system²⁹, which is specifically intended to broaden the dissemination of information about fugitives.

²⁸ <https://portaldatransparencia.gov.br/>

²⁹ An Interpol Red Notice is an international alert issued to locate and detain fugitives with a view to extradition. It is not an international arrest warrant, but rather a request to 196 countries to provisionally detain a wanted person, based on convictions or ongoing proceedings for serious crimes.

Although images were not systematically scraped in this research (only textual content was collected), a small number of images were included solely for illustrative purposes in relation to the analytical categories. As a rule, officers are not identifiable in these images. Where images of police officers do appear, they are shown from behind and without any identifying features. This mode of representation in digital media contrasts with that used in posts featuring Federal Police dogs, in which the animals are typically presented and identified by their names.

The absence of personal information in digital media is consistent with what the communications team reported, which repeatedly emphasised the need for caution in disclosing images and information. The non-disclosure of personal information applies both to police officers, for their protection, and to individuals under investigation. In this regard, interviewees referred on several occasions to the Abuse of Authority Law (Law No. 13.869/2019)³⁰, which prohibits exposing the body or parts of the body of a detainee or prisoner to “public curiosity.”

*Interviewee 1: Our officers do not like to appear publicly very much, it can be dangerous for them to be exposed and show their faces. Therefore, **communication by the Federal Police directed at external audiences has always depicted officers from behind. Faces must not be shown; it is almost a taboo within the institution. Under no circumstances should an officer's face be revealed, as this could pose risks both to the individual and to the institution.** (...) For all these reasons, **we do not show faces and we exercise great caution regarding what is disclosed.** For example, we are very careful about information related to targets, suspects' residences, or weaponry.*

³⁰ Translated from Portuguese: Article 13. To coerce a prisoner or detainee, by means of violence, serious threat, or by reducing their capacity for resistance, to:

I - display themselves, or have their body or part of it exposed to public curiosity;

II - submit to a humiliating situation or to constraint not authorised by law.

We take considerable care with this type of material.ⁱⁱ

*Interviewee 2: **We never disclose, under any circumstances, images of detainees or operational targets, not even parts of their bodies.** The press often favours those images, such as “a person arrested at the airport with drugs attached to their body.” Those kinds of body images, no, we do not publish them on our website; they are never released.ⁱⁱⁱ*

*Interviewee 3: What happens is that we exercise an additional level of caution (...) Due to the **Abuse of Authority Law**, we are particularly careful when it comes to **disclosing names, publishing photographs, and related matters.** In short, we approach this with a high degree of sensitivity, as those involved are often public figures, and we always seek to avoid contravening any legal provisions, including the **Abuse of Authority Law**, precisely in order to preserve the individual’s image, regardless of what they may have done. We strive to uphold our guidelines and maintain our practices, irrespective of who is involved. (...) If a journalist publishes information of that nature, it is a journalistic achievement, they have independently obtained it. However, **such information will never be released by the Federal Police’s communications office.**^{iv}*

This pattern differs significantly from that observed in police communications in Brazil just a few years ago, when the focus was on offenders, within a strategy that could be characterised as one of moral panic, particularly in crime reporting media (Angrimani, 1993). In the interviews, the Federal Police emphasised the strategy it has been developing in recent years, which prioritises compliance with legal standards and respect for human rights, and which departs from approaches previously adopted by policing institutions. The non-disclosure of information, including in relation to high-profile targets with significant

economic and political prominence, forms part of its forward-looking policing strategy, intended as an example for other law enforcement agencies. The focus is on police work itself, rather than on the generation of moral panic.

It is also important to offer some reflections on the methodological choices and limitations of this research, which addresses the construction of the FP's image through its *external social communication*. When analysing communication aimed at image construction, especially that carried out by police organisations, the communication can take different approaches and possibilities. Initially, institutional image construction may refer to both external and internal communication. Internal communication, although contributing to the organisation's image, is primarily directed at members of the institution, with the objective of informing, motivating, and educating its personnel (Jesus, 2021)³¹. Although it is not within the scope of this study, the FP's internal communication is also conducted by the communications team based in Brasília, through the Intranet, an internal channel for information dissemination, available to approximately 12,000 federal police officers and not accessible to the external public.

Regarding external communication (or public communication), which will be analysed in this study, the concept may carry different meanings depending on the author, the country, and the context (Brandão, 2009). In one interpretation, public communication refers to communication within an organisation and between the organisation and its audiences, using strategies aimed at constructing an image and identity. Identity is expressed in all the institution's symbolic productions and "allows an organism to possess the sense of existing as a coherent and specific entity, assuming its history and constructing its place in relation to

³¹ It may refer to internal bulletins, internal lectures, signage, portals etc. In the case of police institutions, it is understood that officers represent the "first image, whether positive or not, that is conveyed and created, as they carry an opinion in the link between perception and external communication. Only by building a solid image internally is it possible to convey a strong and positive image to the outside." (Jesus, 2021, p. 19).

others” (Zémon, 2009, p. 227). Public communication can also encompass governmental communication by the State, which aims to establish a flow of information with its citizens, build an agenda, provide accountability, and encourage public engagement in debate (Brandão, 2009). In governmental communication, the State generally relies on traditional mass media, such as television and radio channels, due to the characteristics of the large audience it seeks to reach. However, the emergence of new communication technologies also opens space for new channels that can foster more active participation by citizens (Brandão, 2009). A third understanding considers public communication as political communication, operating within a power dynamic. According to Brandão, “the media is part of the political, economic, and social game, and shares and contests power with or against the State” (Brandão, 2009, p. 6). In this study, public communication is understood through these three dimensions: organisational, because it seeks to create an identity and communicate with the institution’s different audiences; governmental, because it communicates a state service; and political, because it is embedded in relations of power.

External communication strategy can also be broad, involving relationships with other political or media actors, such as major newspapers or agreements with directors of other institutions. The FP, for example, maintains an internal WhatsApp group with journalists in Brazil as part of an articulation for external communication aimed at intermediaries, but this does not constitute direct communication with its external audience. The term “police communication” can also refer to two aspects: the communication formats used within policing activities themselves, such as radio communication between officers³²; or communication directed at society, referred to as social communication, which aims to inform about the institution and construct its institutional image. Among the external communication

32 During the extensive activities that the police carry out, including in hard-to-reach locations, communication between officers can be crucial for the efficiency of their operational activities. One example is the Q-code system, which aims to provide speed and standardization in communications between police officers.

strategies, this study will analyse those in which the institution communicates directly with society, without press intermediaries, thereby indicating what the institution intends to convey about itself.

The communication strategy can also determine or alter internal demands not directly related to the Federal Police's (FP) core mission. The FP's main responsibility is to investigate crimes, in addition to repressing international drug trafficking and border policing³³. Among its functions, investigation aims to support and provide a just cause for criminal proceedings³⁴. However, investigations can take years in Brazil, and their outcomes may not be easily identifiable by the public, who often lack knowledge of the details of the justice system. A large part of investigative activity occurs away from public view, such as the analysis of fiscal documents and telephone interceptions, for example. Even if the FP supposedly carried out excellent investigative work in a situation like this, it would hardly have a media impact, recognising its efforts when the investigated party was finally penalised if convicted.

During the investigation, the main actions with potential for media dissemination are legally classified as exceptional measures (even though they are widely used in Brazil), such as precautionary arrests and search-and-seizure warrants. The operations carried out, which constitute the majority of the content disseminated in the media, often consist of executing these precautionary measures, even though they result from lengthy investigative processes that are not publicised. The communication strategy adopted by the police institution can therefore focus not on the investigation itself but on these exceptional measures, which represent a reversal of priorities, since they are often perceived by the public as the very core

33 As stipulated in the Federal Constitution, the Federal Police is responsible for investigating criminal offenses nationwide, border activities, judicial police work, and combating drug trafficking and financial crimes, in short.

34 In the regular flow of criminal justice, the Federal Police conducts an investigation, forwarding the police report to the Federal Prosecution Service, which will initiate the criminal proceedings. Only at the end of these criminal proceedings would the defendant be imprisoned or other penalties applied if convicted.

activity of the police, as exemplified by arrests.

After data collection, the material was processed through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to identify meaning and context, with the aim of examining how the construction of the institutional image by the Federal Police (FP) occurs. Discourse analysis goes beyond the grammatical content of the text and seeks to infer its trajectory and apprehend its meaning (Orlandi, 2009). There are dozens of different varieties of what is called discourse analysis, with diverse approaches and theoretical strands, such as the Foucauldian, the French, and the critical traditions (Gill, 2002; Caregnato & Mutti, 2006). As a rule, all of them reject the premise that language is a neutral means of describing phenomena and emphasise the importance of discourse in the construction of social life (Fairclough, 2001; Gill, 2002; Caregnato & Mutti, 2006). Language is neither transparent nor homogeneous, and therefore accommodates different meanings. Meaning is also a symbolic element that is always incomplete. It follows that discourse cannot be analysed solely on the basis of the text or language itself, but rather by connecting it to its external conditions of production (Caregnato & Mutti, 2006).

This implies looking at the object in a different way, also posing questions that differ from traditional ones. Not only what is expressed in the publications and their content, but also why and which power relations they express (Gill, 2002). The discourse analyst must say “something more” beyond language and also assume a position within the text (Gill, 2002). The discourse analyst does not remain neutral in their analysis; instead, they produce a constructed, situated, and oriented version of the object, similar to the discourse they are analysing (Gill, 2002). The analyst consistently acts as an interpreter, conducting analysis influenced by personal positional, emotional, and belief-driven factors. The research's scope and other features are also context-dependent, so interpretation is never definitive but always shaped by these conditions (Caregnato & Mutti, 2006). Thus, the method does not seek to

identify universal processes, since discourse is always circumstantial, even that produced after the analysis (Gill, 2002). These characteristics confer upon discourse analysis a nature that cannot be reduced to closed manuals for the application of a method, as in quantitative methodologies, but rather to a way of analysing data grounded in social theories, always conditioned and always contextual (Caregnato & Mutti, 2006).

Among the different strands of discourse analysis, the perspective adopted in this study is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which emerged in the mid-1980s, having as its main precursors Norman Fairclough (2001) and Teun A. Van Dijk (2010). CDA seeks to analyse the structural relations of dominance, power, discrimination, and control, as well as the social interactions manifested in language. Discourse has various orientations, but it is discourse as a political and ideological practice that draws Fairclough's attention (2001). For Fairclough (2001), other theories of discourse analysis were previously advocated by authors such as Pêcheux. Halliday (1994) and Foucault are based on a static view of power, with limited attention to struggles and transformations in power relations and to the role of language within these dynamics, which is why the author proposes a method of discourse analysis to investigate such social changes. Critical approaches to discourse analysis distinguish themselves from non-critical methods by revealing the power dynamics and ideological influences that shape discourses, as well as their role in constructing identities and social relationships (Fairclough, 2001; Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). In the case of the Federal Police (FP), understanding how discourse is used for improved positioning within different organisational fields is essential to comprehend these transformations in the power relations in which the institution is embedded.

According to Fairclough (2001), the process of textual production and interpretation has also received insufficient attention in other approaches to discourse analysis, as earlier theories tended to understand the text as a finished product. For Critical Discourse Analysis

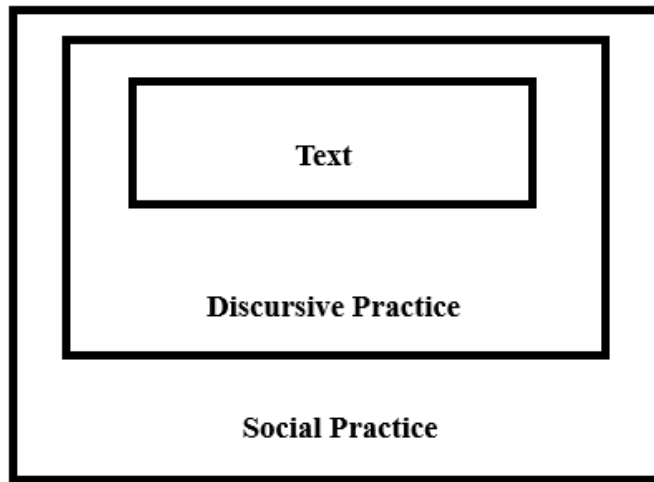
(CDA), discourse is socially constructed and socially conditioned, an object of power. Social processes that occur outside discourse are manifested within it and are shaped by it, establishing a nexus between discourse and social structure. CDA is generally associated with theories of power and ideology developed by different authors, such as Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, John B. Thompson, Anthony Giddens, Pierre Bourdieu, and Jürgen Habermas (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). However, although CDA uses social theory as its starting point (and many of these theorists are, in fact, referenced by Fairclough (2001) and Van Dijk (2010) in examples of how the model is applied), it is not specifically tied to any one of them (Fairclough, 2001; Van Dijk, 2010). In the present study, CDA will be guided primarily by Pierre Bourdieu's theory of fields of struggle and power, concepts that will be further developed in a subsequent section.

Fairclough (2001) argues that in recent years, significant changes have occurred in the social importance of language, with its centralisation in the major social transformations that have taken place. As examples, the author points to certain changes observed in relation to discourse: one is the apparent democratization of discourse, which reduces the markers of institutional power differences between people; and the other is a simulation of private discourse within public discourses addressed to mass audiences, referring to the extension of a market-oriented logic into other areas of social life, such as education, health, and the arts. The marketing discourse adopted by these sectors has affected the activities, relationships, and identities of those who work within them. Students have become consumers or clients who acquire packages or products. This is not merely a change in discourse, but the expression of new cultural values within this grammar and within these discursive practices. There is a concern with controlling discourse as part of the engineering of these social and cultural changes.

These changes are not transparent to the people involved. Nor are they linear; rather,

they involve struggles in the construction and organisation of discourse, as well as in its reception, or lack thereof, by those concerned. The term “critical”, as proposed by Fairclough (2001) in his method of discourse analysis means exposing the hidden connections and causes, as well as intervening, when necessary, to promote change for those who may be at a disadvantage (Fairclough, 2001; Van Dijk, 2010). Change is a central aspect of Critical Discourse Analysis, particularly discursive change and its relationship with social and cultural change. There are numerous examples of how changes in discourse promote, or reflect, structure, and are structured by ongoing social transformations. These changes involve processes of struggle, with accommodations or resistances, as groups may appropriate or reject new processes. Discourses may or may not contribute to changes in social practice and in struggles for power, thereby either promoting change or maintaining existing arrangements. This can be observed, for example, through contradictions in textual formats and language, such as technical and non-technical registers, markers of authority or familiarity, formal and informal styles, etc. (Fairclough, 2001).

In indicating the operationalisation of the model, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is presented by Fairclough (2001) within a three-dimensional framework (as represented in Figure 4): discourse as *text*; discourse as *discursive practice*; and discourse as *social practice*. However, Van Dijk (2010) emphasises that different types of analyses and approaches may be combined within CDA, as there is no single format for understanding the power relations involved in discourse. Recent studies using Fairclough's (2001) three-dimensional framework include Durmaz and Yoğun (2022), who examined an image of the Moms Demand Action movement; Mohr and Frederiksen (2020), who analysed anti-HPV vaccine discourse; and McMillian (2022), who investigated discursive violence in educational reform policies. This research seeks to identify these three dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis in the materials disseminated and collected in the communication of the Federal Police (FP).

Figure 4*Three-dimensional conception of Critical Discourse Analysis*

Source: Prepared by the author, using as a reference the image presented by Fairclough (2001, p. 101).

In discourse as *text*, its linguistic and organisational features are analysed, including vocabulary choices and patterns, textual structure, and concrete textual characteristics. The unit of analysis is typically the clause (Fairclough, 2001). In the present research, this stage, discourse as text, will be operationalised in the form of content analysis, although it constitutes one of the dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Content analysis may be characterised as a “set of communication analysis techniques, which uses systematic and objective procedures to describe the content of messages” (Bardin, 2016, p. 38). It may encompass quantitative procedures, such as word counts and frequency within the text, as well as qualitative procedures aimed at understanding meanings and interpretations (Caregnato & Mutti, 2006). The defining feature of content analysis is primarily inference, whether derived from quantitative indicators or not. For Bardin, “what characterises qualitative analysis is the fact that inference, whenever it is carried out, is grounded in the presence of the index (theme, word, character, etc.), and not in the frequency of its appearance, in each individual communication” (2016, p. 11).

Content analysis comprises three main stages: pre-analysis; material exploration; and treatment of results and interpretation (Bardin, 2016). Pre-analysis is the phase of organisation, of systematising ideas to initiate the analysis. It consists of open, unstructured activities, such as floating reading to familiarise oneself with the documents and selection of documents that are representative, homogeneous, and pertinent. It also involves preparation of the material, such as, for example, transcription of the interviews conducted. Pre-analysis has three interdependent objectives: selecting documents, defining hypotheses, and setting objectives that will guide the final analysis (Bardin, 2016). In the pre-analysis, the documents that make up the data scope were selected, which will be publications on digital media and on the institutional website.

After the collection of textual data, different textual segments should be compared to identify common attributes, differences, or relationships, so as to categorise the data, hierarchize the codes that will aid in organising the information, and understand the whole. Categorisation is characterised by the classification of the elements that constitute a set, differentiation, and regrouping, according to previously defined criteria, which may be compared to identify similarities or contrasts (Bardin, 2016; Gibbs, 2009). There are two different categories of coding: theoretical codes, which are defined in advance according to theory based on constructed variables; and codes derived from common sense, which arise spontaneously from the data based on empirical variables. Both types of codes form the initial framework upon which the data will be analysed, establishing a level of correspondence between the theoretical and the empirical, as the objective of the method (Kelle, 2007; Bardin, 2016; Caregnato & Mutti, 2006). Bardin (2016) also draws attention to the importance of absences in the categories, just as with presences, which will be indicated later together with the results.

Regarding the use of software to assist in qualitative data analysis, Kelle (2007)

identifies three advantages: the mechanisation of tedious and complex tasks in data organisation; the process can become more systematic and transparent; and the possibility for the researcher to devote more time to analytical tasks. Software is useful for exploring the basic material, but it is necessary to combine electronic and manual methods to obtain valid answers, as it should not be confused with statistical analysis or quantitative methods (Welsh, 2002; Kelle, 2007). Software designed for this purpose serves as a tool to assist in the organisation, processing, and archiving of texts, but not in the analysis of the data itself. This remains the task of the researcher, who connects theory to the collected data (Kelle, 2007). For the categorisation and treatment of the data, the software NVivo was used, which assists in qualitative data analysis through the creation of codes, generation of graphs, clusters, lists, and visualisations based on the coding performed, as well as the transcription of interviews. The software aids in the analysis process, especially for large amounts of data, providing transparency and rigour to the procedure, although it has limitations. In this study, NVIVO was used for interview transcription, material coding, and the generation of visualisations of word recurrence and clusters.

Discourse as *discursive practice*, the second dimension of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), is understood as something that is produced, distributed, and consumed by society, with attention to its intertextuality (Fairclough, 2001). The aspect of discursive practice involves understanding the processes of production, distribution, and consumption of texts, depending on different social factors. The conditions of production can vary considerably: whether texts are produced daily or periodically within a market-oriented logic, the sources of the content, whether production is individual or collective, decisions regarding production, and so forth. The consumption of texts also varies according to different contexts, such as the level of attention, whether individual or collective (reading private letters or normative documents addressed to a collective), and so on (Fairclough, 2001).

Discourse as Social Practice indicates changes, ascensions, inequalities, struggles, attempts at control, and resistances within power dynamics. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) advocates interventionism in social practices; the analysis should have an impact on society by proposing changes and correcting inequalities (Fairclough, 2001; Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). Discourse as social practice is understood not as an individual aspect of the speaker, but as a mode of action, a way of acting upon the world and other people, as a form of representation. Discourse also contributes to constituting the social order and all dimensions of the social structure that, directly or indirectly, shape and constrain it: its own norms and conventions, as well as the relations, identities, and institutions that underlie it. Discourse is a practice, not only of representations of the world, but of signification of the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning (Fairclough, 2001, p. 91). The constitutive effects of discourse have three dimensions: the construction of social identities and the “positions” of subjects; the construction of social relations among people; and the construction of systems of knowledge and belief. These effects relate to what Fairclough (2001) understands as the functions of language: the identity function, concerning how identities are established in discourse; the relational function, concerning how relations are represented and negotiated; and the ideational function, concerning the way texts signify the world. For the author, the relationship between discourse and social structure is dialectical, with neither the social determination of discourse nor the social construction of discourse being absolute.

Regarding intertextuality, present mainly in the second dimension but not exclusively, Fairclough (2001, p. 114) summarises that it is “the property of texts to be full of fragments of other texts, which may be explicitly delimited or blended, and which the text can thus assimilate, contradict, echo ironically, and so forth.” Intertextuality is related to the history of the text, how history is embedded in the text, and how the text is inserted into history

(Fairclough, 2001). Concerning production, intertextuality indicates that texts are always in dialogue with previous texts in the communication chain, responding to prior texts. Regarding consumption, the understanding of a text is also linked to the interpretation of other texts within this process of intertextuality (Fairclough, 2001). For the Federal Police (FP), the production of content by the communication sector may be associated with responses both to texts previously produced by the institution itself and to texts produced by other institutions, such as the state Military Police, for example. This does not occur explicitly, but as symbolic elements that suggest a response or dialogue. The historicity in texts is naturalised.

There are also the so-called “intertextual chains,” which are the different types of texts that subsequently derive from the main text and that deserve attention due to the differences contained in the discourse (Fairclough, 2001). Thus, an operation carried out by the Federal Police (FP) in the interior of Brazil, for example, may generate a report that is sent to the Communication Coordination in Brasília, which will modify part of the text and forward it via WhatsApp to the main media outlets, which will publish it according to the editorial profile of each. This text will also be adapted for publication on social media and the FP website, in different formats, which will in turn be replicated, with variations, by other newspapers and media channels interested in disseminating the news. Each stage of this intertextual chain has its own language and format, in which the information will be modified, omitted, or added depending on the interests of the disseminating entity. When releasing a text, the FP Communication Coordination also considers this chain, reflecting on how it will be reproduced across different newspapers or social media platforms, although it is not possible to anticipate in detail how this will be executed by the other actors in the chain (Fairclough, 2001).

This transformation of discourse during intertextual chains can be radical or subtle. One way to control the intertextual chain within the institution is through communication

guideline manuals, which provide guidance on the desired elements, although they do not completely control them (Fairclough, 2001). The interviews conducted indicated that the Federal Police (FP) has communication manuals that are strongly followed by the team, both at headquarters and in regional offices. Control over materials outside the institution, however, is more difficult and may manifest in the source text through the omission of certain sensitive information, narrative control, or emphasis on elements intended to be highlighted. In this study, only texts disseminated by the institution itself will be analysed, but intertextual chains must be taken into account to understand how these materials are designed to be properly propagated.

In the text as a construction of social reality, the ideational function of language is analysed, which is its capacity to represent reality, to name things and events, to restructure systems of knowledge and belief, and to represent human experience (Halliday, 2004). The construction of discourse can carry cultural, political, or ideological significance. There are differences in presenting discourse in the passive or active voice, for example, which reflect more complex decisions. An example the author provides is that authorship, causality, and responsibility are important aspects that may or may not be made explicit in media reports, and that these choices reflect political and ideological struggles within the social context. When a newspaper publishes, for example, a headline stating “one hundred protesters died,” this is different from stating “the police shot one hundred protesters,” a choice made by the newspaper that reflects social struggles (Fairclough, 2001).

Words or groups of words that convey greater significance also deserve attention. There are keywords that are culturally highlighted, either due to their transience or the meanings they have acquired. The very meaning of words may not be stable, but rather embedded in processes of social and cultural contestation and change, so that their meaning can shift rapidly. The metaphors used can reveal some of these shifts in meaning and their

implications. Fairclough (2001) provides the example of the metaphor employed by newspapers, “war on crime.” For him, the militarisation of discourse also represents the militarisation of thought and social practice. This militarisation appears not only in the use of the metaphor itself, but also in a set of words associated with the idea of “war,” such as attack, offensive, defence, among others, that evoke a military logic. These groups of words indicate significant movements and will be analysed in the data collected from the Federal Police (FP).

Fairclough’s (2001) analytical perspective is closely linked to struggles for power, to changes and resistances, which are often not explicit but hidden, and which redefine boundaries through dynamics, establishing new codes and symbols. Discourse analysis, in this sense, allows for the interpretation and apprehension of the meaning of content disseminated by the Federal Police (FP), considering the context in which it is embedded and the orientation toward the purpose intended by the institution, such as the potential aim of constructing its institutional image to reinforce its position within organisational fields. Beyond the possibility of an explicit guidance occasionally indicated in the interviews, characteristic elements of the investigated organisational fields will be identified, such as the quality of judicial evidence (criminal justice field); ostensive symbolic elements, such as weapons and vehicles (defence field); or elements of technology or internationalisation, such as courses abroad and partnerships with foreign institutions (transnational policing field).

2 POLICING STUDIES

2.1 The Police as Cultural Symbol

In recent decades, landmark studies on policing have emerged, addressing definitions of what the police are and their various social relations (Bowling et al., 2019); the nature of policing activity (Bayley, 2017; Bittner, 2017); comparative studies across different police forces worldwide (Devroe et al., 2017; Bayley & Skolnick, 2006), among other agendas. In his classic study on policing patterns, conducted comparatively across police forces in multiple countries, Bayley (2017) highlights the rise of research on police institutions from the second half of the 20th century, particularly from the 1960s onward. According to the author, the scarcity of studies on the institution until that period is due to the fact that police activity was largely perceived only in dramatic events of political repression, such as wars and political revolutions, even though a substantial portion of police work is more closely related to the resolution of mundane bureaucratic problems.

Bayley (2017) identifies four main reasons for the scarcity of studies on police institutions up to the time of his research in the 1980s: the police do not usually play a significant role in major historical events; policing is not a glamorous or highly prestigious activity; police work is considered morally repugnant, as it serves to control society against itself; and researchers on policing face practical difficulties in conducting research due to limited access to the institution and to important documents. According to the author, police activities are too routine and their clientele too ordinary to warrant significant attention, which, in that context, would not attract the interest of researchers and academics (Bayley, 2017).

However, in Brazil, this is not the case for the Federal Police (FP) and “elite police forces” worldwide, which routinely deal with crimes involving major business figures or

high-ranking government officials. With the exception of the fourth justification presented by Bayley (2017) for the lack of comprehensive studies on the police until then, it can be said that the activities of the Federal Police have moved in the opposite direction of what the author observed in other police institutions. Not only has the FP played a historically significant role in the Brazilian political scenario, worthy of film and TV series productions³⁵, but its activity is also considered prestigious and morally acceptable, since combating state corruption (one of its most prominent activities in recent years) is regarded as beneficial by a large part of the population. Although part of its work is also “too routine,” as Bayley (2017, p. 18) identifies in the performance of police institutions, the FP has sought to demonstrate both its role in historical events in Brazil and the glamorous aspects of its work, through the use of luxury vehicles and symbols of prestige.

Police forces are intrinsically related to the legitimacy of governments and their capacity to maintain order, as well as to setting the limits of individual freedom in an organised society (Bayley, 2017). Although police legitimacy is addressed in policing studies as an important factor for the exercise of the profession (Monet, 2002), within the scope of this research, it will not be possible to measure or investigate the legitimacy of the Federal Police (FP), since such measurement involves multiple dimensions. Legitimacy can be understood as a broad concept that has been operationalised in different ways by criminologists over the years, particularly after 1990. In one of these studies, Tankebe (2013) identifies four dimensions that comprise legitimacy: procedural justice; distributive justice; legality and effectiveness; and obligation. Understanding legitimacy would require considering these dimensions, as well as establishing appropriate data collection instruments, such as public perception surveys on police forces. The purpose of this research differs

35 As examples we can mention the film "Federal Police: The Law Is for All" from 2017 and the series "DNA of crime" from 2013, which was inspired by the activities of the PF. The famous series franchise "Airport - Area restricted" in Brazil also has the PF as the protagonist.

according to the established objectives and acknowledges the limitations of the data collection. Although legitimacy underlies the discussion, it will not be the object of analysis.

Regarding the characteristics of modern policing, according to Bayley (2017), the broad concept of police is related to three main elements: physical force, internal (or national) use, and collective authorisation. Thus, his definition excludes armies (which have external use), paramilitary forces, and those lacking social legitimacy to operate. Furthermore, the definition of modern policing involves three additional characteristics: police forces are public, specialised, and professional (Bayley, 2017). However, the combination of these attributes as a definition of modern policing is more important than the individual attributes themselves. Throughout history, there have been police forces that were public, or specialised, or professional, but the systematic combination of these three elements across different countries has occurred only in the last one hundred years (Bayley, 2017, p. 65).

The first attribute, public nature, refers to a police agency originating from a public source (and not merely a collective one), with activities oriented toward the community. The second attribute, specialisation, indicates that the focus of police activity is the application of physical force to maintain order, even though police forces may carry out other activities, or other institutions may use physical force as a secondary function. Finally, modern police work requires professionalisation as the third attribute, involving specific preparation for its exercise, which encompasses “recruitment based on merit, formal training, progression within a structured career, systematic discipline, and full-time work” (Bayley, 2017, p. 25). In the case of the Federal Police (FP), these three attributes are evident, as it is a state institution directly linked to a government ministry; it has specific policing responsibilities established by law; and entry into the institution requires passing a public examination and specialised training in a formation course, in addition to career structuring and exclusive dedication.

The specialisation of the police function does not require a monopoly over this

function, nor does it require that specialisation be confined to a single police unit, as multiple police forces can coexist with the primary role of maintaining public order. This is the case in Brazil, for example, where six police forces share responsibility for public order. The plurality of police forces, however, also reflects competition for authorisation and the exercise of state power among these institutions within the State, resulting in a key condition for the political changes that have occurred over the years (Bayley, 2017). These characteristics outlined by the author will be important for understanding the consolidation, or lack thereof, of a policing field in Brazil, as will be further explicated in the fourth chapter of this work.

In his study on police forces, Bayley sought to comparatively examine three questions: “How have modern police systems developed? What tasks fall to the police? And how independent are police forces as social actors?” (2017, p. 15). The third aspect is of particular interest in this study, as it seeks to investigate the agency of a police institution and its optimal positioning within the state framework. The Federal Police’s (FP) engagement in different fields is only possible with a certain degree of independence and may aim precisely at enhancing its institutional autonomy.

Although police forces occupy a predominant place in security policies, research has indicated that merely increasing the number of officers on the streets does not have an immediate effect on reducing crime. Information provided by the public for crime resolution, on the other hand, has a high degree of effectiveness (Bailey, 1996; Loader, 1997). This is not to say that the police are ineffective, but rather that they have played a secondary role in the effectiveness of public security policies (Loader, 1997). Nevertheless, the police maintain a prominent position in most societies, where the population still demands more officers on the streets, reflecting a desire for visible protection (Loader, 1997). The various studies on policing conducted to date have focused on policing as an instrumental action (Loader, 1997, 2003). In his study on England, Loader (1997) indicates that the police occupy the *structures*

of feeling of the population, as the police continue to hold a prominent voice and constant presence.

Loader (1997, 2003) proposes understanding policing as a cultural, cognitive, and affective category, mobilising Bourdieu's (2007) concept of symbolic power to investigate its social meanings and how these meanings are produced and received. Beyond the operational aspects of police work, Loader (2003) emphasises that police forces are also a cultural and performative institution, producing and reproducing meanings related to order, authority, morality, and so forth. Understanding policing as a cultural category involves invoking fears and anxieties ingrained in the population, as well as hopes and fantasies (Loader, 1997, 2003). According to the author, policing also evokes the dangers of the world, the threat posed by other criminals, and a sense of vulnerability in the face of a threatening environment. In opposition, there is the belief in a "force for good" that protects citizens from these dangers, with the police associated with the traditional figure of a guardian (Loader, 1997, 2003).

According to the author, there is a high level of fantasy in the public's perception, which is linked to how the idea of order is imagined. The symbolic dimension of policing exceeds the security that the police can effectively provide (Loader, 1997). Especially in the context of London, where Loader (1997) conducted his research, the police are also seen as a tourist icon, appearing on postcards and in gift shops. Although this is not the case in Brazil, or even in other countries as in the London context, it provides an interesting example to illustrate this cultural and symbolic aspect of the police, beyond their patrolling activities. The author emphasises that this also applies to the use of police symbols. Symbols serve not only to communicate about policing but also to convey meanings of power and authority in society (Loader, 2003). They are not merely decorative but are mobilised for instrumental purposes.

(...) the iconography of policing - the handcuffs, fingerprints, cop shows, uniforms, photofits, picture postcards, memoirs, cars, sirens, helicopters, riot shields and so forth

- connect with and re-articulate dispositions towards, and fantasies of, policing that already pertain within the wider culture (Loader, 1997, p. 4).

There are four main means through which meanings are created and transmitted, as indicated by Loader (1997): everyday police practice, the police voice as a narrative authority, fictional dramas about the police and the social imagination, and iconography, including symbols and cultural expressions. Although they represent the police in different ways, they provide the public with elements through which people classify, judge, condemn, or support policing.

This symbolic power goes beyond the mobilisation of police efforts to increase their legitimacy, which occurs primarily during moments of crisis. According to Loader (1997), when the police speak, they already occupy a privileged position that pre-legitimises their authority to make statements (Loader, 1997). The police possess symbolic power in addition to coercive power: the power to diagnose, to classify, to authorise, and to make legitimate pronouncements (Loader, 1997, 2003). Within these structures of feeling, the police occupy a central place in the production and reproduction of order and security, serving as a lens through which people interpret and give meaning to the world (Loader, 1997). However, this symbolic power is not static and may vary depending on social groups, such as differences in race, gender, and social class. Among some groups, especially socially marginalised populations, the police evoke more fear than security (Loader, 1997, 2003). Moreover, the police can evidently lose this privileged position, necessitating strategies to maintain their symbolic power (Loader, 1997, 2003).

The staging of a travelling exhibition in a shopping centre in Londrina about the Federal Police, loaded with symbolic elements of ostentation, power, and structure, indicates a process of constant symbolic reinforcement. The Lamborghini Gallardo, seized in an operation against financial fraud and positioned at the centre of the space, exemplifies these

actions. Although handed over to the FP by the judiciary, the vehicle was not used for the institution's routine activities but was directed exclusively toward exhibitions, events, and educational actions against organised crime.

2.2 Contextualization and differences between the police systems of Brazil and Belgium

Cultural differences in policing must be considered before conducting any research involving police institutions (Noppe & Verhage, 2017). This is not a comparative study, which would require additional elements; however, it is not possible to discuss policing without providing context that encompasses not only the culture involved but also its structure and functioning. Although this is a study of a Brazilian police force, and is addressed to different audiences, it is important to provide such context, highlighting relevant differences for both Belgian and Brazilian readers. Considering the dual nature of this doctoral research, spanning two fields of knowledge (Criminology and Sociology) and two countries (Brazil and Belgium), it is important to provide some considerations about the two policing systems in order to draw comparisons, distinctions, and similarities, both regarding the systems themselves and the formative processes that led to their current configurations.

One example of these differences in studies on policing, highlighted by Noppe and Verhage (2017), is that most research on police use of force focuses on the North American context, where civilian firearm possession is more widespread than in Europe, for instance, which also implies differences in police responses. In Norway, for example, police fired their weapons only twice in 2014, without injuring anyone (Noppe & Verhage, 2017). This reality is far removed from studies on the U.S. and is almost a chasm compared to the Brazilian context, where the police, particularly the military police, are highly lethal. Even considering the high homicide rates in Brazil, 14% of intentional violent deaths result from police

intervention, which represented more than 44,000 people killed in police actions in 2024, according to data from the Brazilian Public Security Yearbook (2025)³⁶. In Brazil, the police not only fire their weapons frequently but also kill in large numbers. There are many other issues as well. According to the same report, the rate of police suicides in Brazil is a serious problem that continues to grow each year. The point here is that these cultural differences must be taken into account in this research.

Another consideration concerns the differences in police–citizen relations and what is culturally deemed acceptable (Noppe & Verhage, 2017). By law, Belgian police officers may use force in certain situations, conduct identity checks, perform body searches, and use handcuffs (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2013; Noppe & Verhage, 2017). Thus, as in Brazil, police in Belgium are also authorised to carry firearms during routine patrol activities. In both countries, police officers also generally carry, or are permitted to carry, lethal weapons, as well as batons and incapacitating tools, such as pepper spray or, in Brazil, tasers (as less-lethal weaponry). In these aspects, the legislation is quite similar to Brazilian law, although operational practices differ significantly, which again highlights cultural differences in how the population accepts police actions.

Providing context, beyond the aspects already highlighted in the policing literature, helps to make sense of certain findings and to explain why they are not necessarily self-evident. What may appear to Brazilian audiences as merely a traditional feature of policing, when compared with other police forces, reveals how such symbols are constructed, why they are presented as they are, and how this is done intentionally.

³⁶ It is important to highlight that, although all police forces are lethal in Brazil, a large proportion of civilian deaths occur through the Military Police, which carries out ostensible state policing and which also has the largest number of police officers in Brazil. These rates are very different from those found by the PF, which is the object of this study, in which the civilian fatality rate is very low.

Although the name may suggest similarities between the Belgian Federal Police and the Brazilian Federal Police, their trajectories differ considerably. When considering processes of change in recent years, other police forces can offer useful points of reference, such as the transformation of the National Gendarmerie, for example. The Belgian police reform also provides valuable insights, as features of policing in Brazil are often regarded by Brazilians themselves as resistant to change, while at the same time offering perspectives on elements of reform that may already be underway. Although this is not the primary focus of this study, such aspects are important to take into account when examining police institutions. Brazilian and Belgian police forces differ both in structure and in the processes that shaped their current configuration: while in Brazil the main milestone for the contemporary structure of the police was the 1988 Constitution, following a long period of dictatorship, in Belgium the police underwent a recent reform in 2001, after legitimacy crises involving the previous structure.

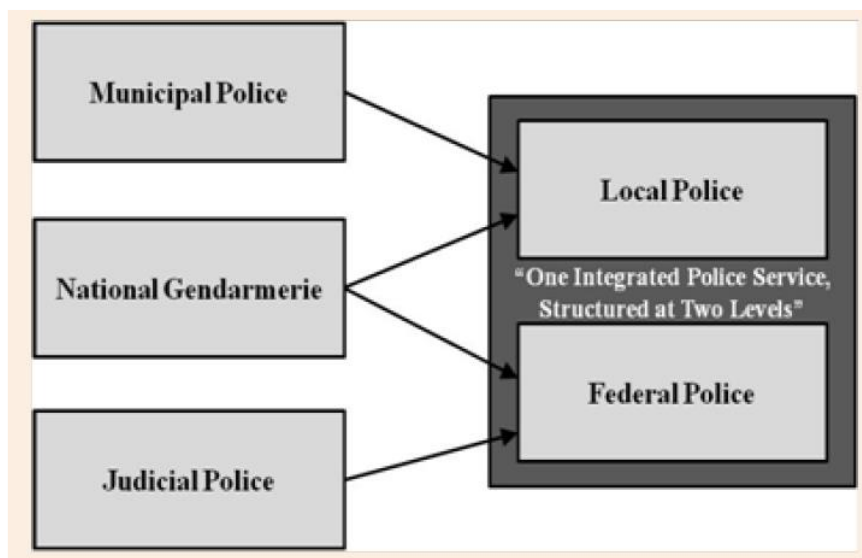
In 2001, a police reform was implemented in Belgium. It occurred in stages, with various modifications, and was considered successful by public opinion (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2013). The Belgian police reform, which began with a proposal in 1998, received both academic and political consensus, from the government as well as the opposition, and promoted a comprehensive overhaul of the structure, relationships with authorities, and the manner in which policing would be conducted, accompanied by a regulatory framework (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2013, 2018).

Before the reform, Belgian police were divided into three forces: the Municipal Police (which emerged with the creation of municipalities in 1795), the Gendarmerie (originating from the period of French occupation of Belgium), and the judicial police at the public prosecutor's office (established after the end of World War I, in 1919) (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2013). Studies indicate that there was no clear definition of competencies, either

geographically or by task, among the three police forces, resulting in a competitive and tense environment (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2013). After 1985, the Belgian police became the target of protests, generating a climate of scandal and legitimacy crisis for the country's police forces. The reform divided Belgian police into two levels, which represent the current configuration: a local police force and a federal police force, which together form an integrated police system. The majority of personnel work in operational functions, but some hold non-policing roles, in administrative and logistical support (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2013). Local police forces also ceased to be organised by municipalities and were reorganised into zones, reducing the number of municipal police from 589 to 196 zone-based forces, as illustrated in Figure 5 (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2018).

Figure 5

Organisational chart of police reform in Belgium



Source: Devroe and Ponsaers, 2018.

The law also established integration between the two levels of police: each Belgian police force has autonomy, but together they must ensure integrated community policing

(Devroe & Ponsaers, 2013). Regarding competencies, the local police is responsible for providing basic policing, while the federal police has subsidiary competence, in addition to administrative and judicial police duties, and must provide support to the other local police forces (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2013). In Brazil, federal police forces also have subsidiary competence. The authors indicated that several years after implementation, local police were positively evaluated by the public, which did not occur to the same extent for the Belgian federal police (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2013). In Brazil, the opposite is currently observed: Federal Police are better evaluated by the public than state police.

In March 2016, following a series of attacks in Europe, Brussels was targeted by terrorist attacks that once again marked the country and its approach to security issues. One attack occurred at Zaventem Airport and another on the same day at a busy metro station in the capital, leaving dozens dead and hundreds injured. In response, the government implemented a series of counterterrorism measures, which largely involved increased surveillance and the creation of specialised agencies, the tightening of legislation, an increase in the security budget, and greater use of technology (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2018). These measures were not free from responses by civil society, which raised concerns about potential threats or limitations to civil rights (Devroe & Ponsaers, 2018).

Following the attacks, and considering the global context of counterterrorism, it can be said that policing strategies also underwent changes. Since then, the primary approach to combating terrorism has been criminal, although experts acknowledge that this is not the most effective approach. The approach is predominantly reactive, focusing on offenders and the acts committed, but it does not provide structural solutions (Hanard et al., 2022). As measures, there has been an increase in the number of criminal offences related to terrorism and in investments for investigations, along with the expansion of the criminal justice system (Hanard et al., 2022).

Policing has a close relationship with people's sense of fear and the responses the police can provide to increase perceived security and reduce perceived threats. These relationships are also influenced by culture and the profile of criminal activity, which is reflected in the symbols that the police project to maintain the population's sense of safety. It can be said that, while in Europe people are more fearful of terrorist acts, in Brazil urban crime is what most alarms the average person, requiring the police to respond, or at least to convey the image that a response is being provided to the challenges faced. These cultural differences explain, for example, why acts of terrorism appear only minimally in the Federal Police's communication data, given that they are not considered a threat that generates fear among the Brazilian population.

Terrorism in the form it occurs in Europe and Belgium is a discussion far removed from the Brazilian reality and constitutes little, or a very different, presence in the security debate. In Brazil, interest groups focus on the definition of the crime of terrorism, which could be used, for example, to characterise acts by criminal organisations, thereby justifying actions under a logic of warfare rather than policing³⁷. The definition of terrorism could also be used to frame threats to democracy, although these applications are aimed at addressing internal acts, not those of external agents³⁸. This is not to say that external threats are non-existent; arrests and investigations of terrorists on Brazilian soil do occasionally occur³⁹.

37 In the police operation that claimed the lives of over 120 people in October 2025 in Rio de Janeiro, some groups attempted to use the concept of terrorism or narcoterrorism to justify the violent police action.

<https://www.bbc.com/portuguese/articles/cvgwrn9l4v2o>

38 Law 13260/2016, in its article 2, defines terrorism as "the practice by one or more individuals of the acts foreseen in this article, for reasons of xenophobia, discrimination or prejudice based on race, color, ethnicity and religion, when committed with the purpose of provoking social or widespread terror, endangering persons, property, public peace or public safety".

39 <https://g1.globo.com/sp/sao-carlos-regiao/noticia/2024/12/13/homem-presos-por-terrorismo-no-interior-de-sp-recrutava-brasileiros-para-o-estado-islamico-e-tinha-produtos-para-explosivos-em-casa.ghtml>

However, among the many other internal issues, terrorism does not constitute a primary concern on the same scale as it does in Europe.

For these reasons, any attempt to establish comparisons between the configurations of Brazilian and Belgian police forces, whether before or after the reform, would be flawed, as the contexts are very different. Even the judicial police, which existed in Belgium before the reform, or the current federal police forces, are very different from the configuration assumed by the Federal Police in Brazil today, which functions as both judicial and federal police, although some of the responsibilities of the two judicial police forces (Brazilian and Belgian) overlap. Therefore, given the substantial differences in context, it is not necessary to claim that this study applies beyond the Brazilian reality or could be replicated in other countries with different policing cultures. However, it represents a significant case study in a country of continental proportions, where the use of digital media is widespread.

2.3 Criminology and the concept of public security in Brazil

The differences regarding the fields of study and the positioning of policing studies also need to be contextualised. Unlike in Europe, where criminology is a well-established discipline, criminology in Brazil has followed a very different academic trajectory, which is relevant for understanding the paradigms that have shaped research production to date, including studies conducted with the Federal Police.

Criminology in Brazil emerged in the last century, mainly influenced by the Italian school and the ideas of Cesare Lombroso in the nineteenth century (Alvarez, 2002). Thus, the initial approach was predominantly positivist and deterministic. In the 1970s, criminology studies gained momentum in Brazil, mainly due to the increase in state atrocities that occurred during the military regime (1964-1985), resulting in both political and academic movements

concerning criminal phenomena, with an increase in empirical studies in opposition to academic positivism (Carvalho, 2021). However, only from the 2000s onward did the discussion about criminology begin to be academically articulated, with the creation of research groups, specialised journals, and postgraduate courses (Freitas, 2016).

In Latin America, although it does not constitute a consolidated field, criminology has gained ground in recent years, situated between Law and Sociology, in studies on crime, policing, victimisation, violence, race, class, organised crime, and control institutions (Bailone et al., 2021). As Law studies frequently rely on textbooks, empirical research on these topics has increasingly found space to be developed within Sociology (Duarte, 2017). Thus, although studies on control are primarily associated with criminology, in Brazil, these studies permeate other areas and mainly integrate what has been consolidating in Brazil as Public Security studies, another term for a field closely related to criminology in Brazil, together with studies on violence and victimisation.

The notion of security has undergone changes in recent years in Brazil and worldwide, due to different factors, such as the changes after September 11, the emergence of threats related to new technologies, and, in the countries of Latin America and Africa, the increase of inequalities, armed conflicts, violent crimes, and the inefficiency of public authorities in containing criminality (Lopes & Paes-Machado, 2021). The term "public security," as established in the current Constitution, refers to two main aspects in Brazil: as a collective good to be protected and promoted by the State and as an area of knowledge within the academic sphere (Sapori et al., 2018). Public security as an area of knowledge has also been constituted through the regulation of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, normally linked to the areas of Criminology, due to the similarity of the topics addressed, Law, and Sociology. Since 1988, studies have emerged on police institutions, violence, the criminal justice system,

prisons, overcrowding, justice systems, punishment, as well as studies on policing, which have recently stood out within the field (Sapori et al., 2018).

Unlike what occurs in European countries, the term Public Security in Brazil is understood as synonymous with state policing, intrinsically carrying within its conceptualisation the elements of a paradigm present during the period of re-democratisation (1988). State policing can occur in different forms, aiming primarily to protect different legal goods, so that the narratives and concepts involved in what is understood as state policing determine the conduct of public policies in one direction or another. As a collective good, the 1988 Constitution introduced a new security paradigm, which aims to preserve public order, the safety of people and property, in contrast to the previous paradigm in which the interests of the National State prevailed (Sapori et al., 2018). To understand the evolution of public security policies in Brazil, it is necessary to comprehend the paradigms that have guided these policies over the last decades⁴⁰. In public security policies, three paradigms have predominated in recent years in Brazil: National Security, Public Security, and Citizen Security.

The first paradigm, National Security, was in effect during the military dictatorship in Brazil, from 1964 to 1985. This period was marked by the suppression of fundamental rights, concentration of power by the armed forces and the presidency, which was also held by military leaders. The National Security paradigm was based on the notion of the supremacy of national interest, with the intense use of force against what were considered threats, whether internal or external. National Defence was the main objective of security policies, with emphasis on the Armed Forces, the creation of repressive apparatuses such as the National Intelligence Service (SNI) and the Internal Defence Operations Detachment – Operations

40 The focus will be on the military dictatorship period, because this is when the configuration of the security forces in the country began to take shape in its current form, but the past of colonization and other authoritarian regimes, which left deep marks on the history of Brazil and Latin America, is not disregarded.

Information Centre (DOI-Codi), which were also responsible for tortures, disappearances, and other human rights violations that marked the period. After prioritising the confrontation with external enemies, the idea of the “internal enemy” emerged, which was to be combated in the name of national interest (Dutra Freire, 2009).

The second paradigm, Public Security, gained strength after the 1988 Constitution, a period characterised by re-democratisation in Brazil with the end of the military dictatorship. The Constitution, marked by broad debate across various sectors of society, established in its text that public security is the duty of the State and the responsibility of all, and listed the agencies responsible for public policing and their competencies, among them the Federal Police. Following the threats to national interests in the previous paradigm, greater attention began to be paid to threats to physical integrity and property (Dutra Freire, 2009). The new constitutional text also listed, in another article, the legal competence of the Armed Forces, intended for the defence of the Fatherland, the guarantee of constitutional powers, and the maintenance of law and order. With the separation of these two competencies in the constitutional text, the police and the Armed Forces, it became evident that the Armed Forces are not responsible for Public Security, except for the general responsibility that belongs to all members of society, also distinguishing the paradigms of National Security and Public Security in the new text. Consequently, there is a clearer separation of the roles of the police and the army, after a period in which the Armed Forces held (almost) full powers (Dutra Freire, 2009). This differentiation is also crucial for understanding the organizational fields in which the police operate, distinguishing them from the actions of the Armed Forces, but eventually allowing for collaboration or contestation depending on state dynamics.

In this second moment, the States gained greater importance and autonomy in the constitutional text for the implementation of their security policies, and today they maintain the largest police force in the country. However, according to Dutra Freire (2009), this

increased autonomy granted to the States made it more difficult to formulate a national security policy, which could provide greater effectiveness in the repression of criminality. It was only in 1997, with the creation of the National Secretariat of Public Security (Senasp), that greater integration and planning in the area among the federative entities began to take shape.

The third paradigm, Citizen Security, has taken on a prominent role in Latin America, influencing debates on the topic, especially after the 2000s. The concept of Citizen Security is based on the premise that criminality is multicausal, requiring prevention in addition to repression, which was the focus of the previous paradigms. Thus, integrated public policies at the local level, involving different public institutions and civil society, are valued across various dimensions, such as education, sports, leisure, and health, among others, aimed at increasing social inclusion and reducing risk factors. Social participation and decentralisation are fundamental to the concept of Citizen Security (Dutra Freire, 2009). However, the consolidation of this third paradigm faces challenges, both in terms of implementation by police institutions and by civil society, which does not fully understand the importance of collaboration among different agencies in reducing criminality (Dutra Freire, 2009). Although marked by distinct temporal periods, the paradigms can overlap and coincide, especially during transition periods. Thus, the Public Security paradigm can coexist simultaneously with that of Citizen Security today, as it represents a period of transition. Its definition is also not rigid, being subject to changes over the years, while still maintaining its main characteristics (Dutra Freire, 2009). The three paradigms, even if they are not simultaneously predominant in public policies, can permeate police activity in Brazil, across its heterogeneous groups.

Furthermore, even with the change of paradigms in Brazil, which represented advances for public policies, few changes were observed regarding the organisation of police forces compared to the dictatorial period. The 1988 Constitution changed the term to “Public

Security,” with modifications in relation to the previous concept of “National Security,” incorporating democratic principles, but without defining what the term should entail, and maintained the bipartite model of the police, distinguishing the state civil and military police (Lima et al., 2016). In 2019, an amendment included penitentiary agents in the constitutional roster of police forces, granting them a new status and creating the penal police. Thus, the already complex structure gained an additional police force. There is also political pressure for the current municipal guards to acquire police status, which would result in seven different state police forces in the country, in addition to the Armed Forces and other non-police institutions that provide security, such as the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN), for example. As illustrated in Image 2 in the Introduction, the differences in competencies among the various public police forces can be geographic, with state or federal jurisdiction, or functional, such as investigation, repression, or execution of custodial sentences. Currently, there are six different police forces in the country, although one of them, the Federal Railway Police, is practically non-existent.

Understanding the paradigms that guide security policy in the country is also important for understanding the Federal Police's (FP) role and position within the State. During the military dictatorship (1964–1985), which drastically affected the relationship between society and state institutions, the FP played a secondary role, as repression was carried out primarily by the Army. With the 1988 Constitution, the FP was able to renew its state role, strengthening itself institutionally. However, the constitutional text did not establish effective mechanisms for integration among the police forces, so there is ongoing conflict among them over resources and the delineation of competencies.

In the process of re-democratization, beyond the maintenance of the structure, which preserved the state military police as the largest police force in the country, Saporì et al. (2018) highlight the persistence of a military-style organization, with rigid hierarchy and

discipline, which previously made more sense in defending against an external “enemy,” but under democratic models, in plural and heterogeneous environments that require autonomy and decision-making by the agents involved, may not be as effective (Sapori et al., 2018). Although Brazil’s re-democratisation, with the current 1988 Constitution, sparked important debates and reforms regarding the relationship between the police and society, continuities remained, both legal and in practices inherited from authoritarian periods, with police organisations persisting in a culture based on the defence of the State rather than of society (Lima et al., 2016).

(...) structures and allow citizens to enjoy broad rights, with freedom, participation, and access to justice, as foreseen in our legal framework. Secondly, overcoming the political-institutional challenge implies an alliance between incremental measures focused on education, management, and technological modernisation of the State; and the implementation of an agenda of structural reforms that are not merely legal in nature (Lima et al., 2016, p. 64)⁴¹.

Even though the concept of “internal security” was reformulated by legal instruments with re-democratisation (in 1988), the *modus operandi* remains, being reinterpreted and structured around the defence of the State’s interests (Lima et al., 2016).

The legitimised pronouncements continue to be those originating from the legal-penal universe and the fight against the enemy. In the first case, it is merely a matter of reducing social conflicts to criminal types, disregarding the nature of the conflicts and their configurations, which engender rules and patterns of sociability, constitute and

41 Translated from the original in Portuguese: "em primeiro lugar, uma enorme dificuldade da sociedade brasileira de se desvencilhar de suas históricas estruturas autoritárias e deixar que o cidadão usufrua de amplos direitos, com liberdade, participação e acesso à justiça, tal como previsto no nosso marco legal. Em segundo lugar, vencer o desafio político-institucional implica na aliança entre medidas incrementais com foco no ensino, na gestão e na modernização tecnológica do Estado; e a efetivação de uma agenda de reformas estruturais, que não sejam apenas de natureza legal" (Lima et al., 2016, p. 64).

confront individual and collective identities. In the second case, social segments are seen as intrinsically dangerous and the constant object of surveillance and neutralisation. The penalising and technical vision consequently delegitimises social participation and the contribution of other professionals and knowledge to conflict management (Lima et al., 2016, p. 57)⁴².

The current public security problems in Brazil also have a complex structure involving different factors. Brazil is one of the few countries in the world with a division of police activities among different institutions, a structure established during the imperial period in the 19th century (Sapori et al., 2018). While one institution performs patrol duties, another carries out investigations, still maintaining institutional differences between federal and state spheres. While private security services are provided by numerous companies, which are regulated by the Federal Police (Lopes, 2011), the security promoted by the State primarily comes from the different public police forces, each with distinct responsibilities.

The increase in criminality has also placed public security prominently on the governmental agenda. Brazil faces severe problems of urban violence, with high homicide rates compared to other emerging nations, which has led to numerous studies aimed at understanding its causes (Lima et al., 2016). Although homicide rates have declined in recent years, with 21.2 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants recorded in 2023 (the lowest rate in 11 years, down from 31.6 in 2017), they are still considered high (Atlas da Violência, 2023). In addition to organised crime, a problem increasingly discussed in the country due to its

42 Translated from the original in Portuguese: “os enunciados legitimados continuam a ser os provenientes dos universos jurídico-penal e do combate ao inimigo. No primeiro caso, trata-se apenas da redução de conflitos sociais a tipos penais, desprezando a natureza dos conflitos e suas configurações, que engendram regras e padrões de sociabilidades, constituem e põem em confronto identidades individuais e coletivas. No segundo caso, segmentos sociais são vistos como intrinsecamente perigosos e objeto constante de vigilância e neutralização. A visão penalizante e técnica deslegitima, em decorrência, a participação social e a contribuição de outros profissionais e saberes para a administração de conflitos” (Lima et al., 2016, p. 57).

growing proportions in recent years, police corruption and police lethality are also longstanding issues that have been little explored academically in Brazil (Lima et al., 2016).

However, it is essential to highlight that criminality in the country, especially regarding homicides, has social, racial, gender, class, and age dimensions. Intentional violent deaths, although varying between states, predominantly affect young, Black, male individuals, and people residing in more vulnerable areas, with armed violence being the main form of victimisation. These data reveal the multiple social factors interconnected with the rise of violence. Furthermore, the growth of criminality is also linked to the intensification of the illicit drug trade in recent decades, both in Brazil and globally (Sapori et al., 2018). According to Lima et al. (2016), Brazil has implemented only incremental measures, which are insufficient to resolve structural problems. Almost all discussions and solutions, however, still revolve around the police, both because they are the frontline agents in judicial and control procedures and because of the size of the police workforce in Brazil, which necessitates that solutions involve the main labour force of the security system (Lima et al., 2016; Proença et al., 2009).

Lima et al. (2016, p. 60) emphasise the importance of paying attention to informal police organisations, which are formed by informal knowledge and professional networks, beyond the frameworks established by law. In this context, penal tightening, which is frequently proposed as a solution to these problems, especially in political debates, proves to be ineffective (Lima et al., 2016). This informal dimension of the police implies that any reform proposal must take these aspects into account (Lima et al., 2016). It is necessary to understand “how certain practices are institutionalised, how identities are formed, how new concepts and actors are incorporated, and how conflicts are structured” (Lima et al., 2016, p. 56). This study contributes to the understanding of one of these aspects: practices, identities, and concepts.

2.3.1 The Federal Police in Brazil

In order to better delineate the current configuration of the Federal Police, it is important to contextualise its current structure and legal basis. The Brazilian Federal Constitution (FC), where the legal provision concerning the FP is found, may be considered complex. In the period of redemocratization (1988), when the FC was promulgated, there was a concern to include in the constitutional text the rights that would underpin the new democracy, so that groups would be included in its agendas, as well as to ensure that the structure would be maintained in a legislative text presenting fewer possibilities of amendment in comparison to the other legislation of the country⁴³. Thus, the constitutional text addressed several distinct themes, comprising 250 articles, numerous subsections and paragraphs. Furthermore, some of the provisions containing fundamental rights are regarded as entrenched clauses, with even greater obstacles to amendment, as they constitute pillars of the legal order and of the system of legal guarantees. Even with greater difficulties imposed on amendments in comparison to other legislation, the FC has already been amended more than 140 times since its promulgation, according to the Federal Senate, evidencing the disputes among interest groups in which the country's principal legal norm remains embedded, such as civilizational and decivilizational movements, in the terms of Rezende (2010), for the reform or maintenance of power structures.

The current Federal Constitution contains 8 major parts, referred to as Titles: Principles and Fundamental Rights (Titles I and II), with an extensive catalogue of rights and guarantees; Organization of the State (Title III); Organization of the Legislative, Executive

⁴³ In addition to the Constitution and Constitutional Amendments, there are also other types of laws, such as Complementary Laws, Ordinary Laws, Delegated Laws, Provisional Measures, Legislative Decrees and Resolutions. These other forms of legislation have an easier procedure to be amended compared to the Constitution, with a lower quorum requirement, for example.

and Judicial Powers (Title IV); Defence of the State and Democratic Institutions (Title V); Taxation and budget (Title VI); Economic and financial order (Title VII); Social Order (VIII); and General Provisions. These Titles are further subdivided into Chapters and Sections in order to better organise the subjects. In Title V, section III, are the provisions concerning the security bodies: in chapter II are listed the provisions relating to the Armed Forces; and in chapter III those relating to the public security bodies. There is an evident division, not only of competences, but also a formal one, between distinct chapters within the constitutional text itself. Public security (which constitutes the part of the security system directed toward civilians), thus, must be exercised through one of the six police bodies listed therein, without direct relation to the Armed Forces. The Federal Police is provided for in Item I of the list, and its competence is defined in §1, of art. 144.

§ 1 The Federal Police, established by law as a permanent body, organised and maintained by the Union and structured in a career system, is intended to:

- I - investigate criminal offences against the political and social order or to the detriment of assets, services and interests of the Union or its autonomous entities and public companies, as well as other offences whose practice has interstate or international repercussions and requires uniform repression, as provided by law;
- II - prevent and repress the illicit trafficking of narcotics and related drugs, smuggling and contraband, without prejudice to the actions of the tax authorities and other public bodies in their respective areas of competence;
- III - exercise the functions of maritime, airport and border police;
- IV - exclusively exercise the functions of judicial police of the Union.⁴⁴

44§ Translated from the original in Portuguese: 1º A polícia federal, instituída por lei como órgão permanente, organizado e mantido pela União e estruturado em carreira, destina-se a:

The FP has many internal divisions across different sectors, such that the complete organisational chart, which is available on the website, is excessively large and its full organisation is not relevant to this study. The principal sectors are arranged in hierarchical order, by the Directorate-General, Directorates, Coordination, followed by Divisions, specialised Units, advisory offices and other sectors. The main structure may be better visualized in Annex VIII – Main organizational chart of the Federal Police. The General Coordination of Social Communication is directly linked to the Directorate-General, the FP's highest hierarchical position.

One of the principal studies on the FP in Brazil was conducted by Rocha (2004), who analysed the attributions and configuration of the FP after the Constitution, as well as possible external and internal disputes within the agency, whether to seek independence, to demarcate competencies, or to dictate the new rules of the game that were taking shape. Rocha's (2004) work was written in the wake of only a few years after Brazil's redemocratization process and bears a marked historical character, including a mapping of the limited references at the time concerning the institution, which traced its trajectory over the previous century up to the moment of the author's research. The author's work was also published during one of the largest and one of the earliest investigations with significant media prominence involving the FP, the investigation of the Banestado case⁴⁵, in mid-2003. On that occasion, the investigation into corruption involving one of the country's largest banks, Banestado, projected the FP onto

I - apurar infrações penais contra a ordem política e social ou em detrimento de bens, serviços e interesses da União ou de suas entidades autárquicas e empresas públicas, assim como outras infrações cuja prática tenha repercussão interestadual ou internacional e exija repressão uniforme, segundo se dispuser em lei;

II - prevenir e reprimir o tráfico ilícito de entorpecentes e drogas afins, o contrabando e o descaminho, sem prejuízo da ação fazendária e de outros órgãos públicos nas respectivas áreas de competência;

III - exercer as funções de polícia marítima, aeroportuária e de fronteiras;

IV - exercer, com exclusividade, as funções de polícia judiciária da União.

45 The investigation found the diversion of illegal remittances abroad, in addition to other crimes, totaling 30 billion dollars. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/folha/brasil/ult96u57148.shtml>

the media and political stage, and redefined its prominence within the new security landscape that was still in formation (Rocha, 2004).

The FP was initially created as the Federal Department of Public Security in 1944, under the government of President Getúlio Vargas (1937–1945), one of Brazil's dictatorial governments known as the *Estado Novo* (New State)⁴⁶. Subsequently, in 1960⁴⁷, the headquarters of the FP was transferred from the city of Rio de Janeiro to the country's current capital, Brasília, in the Federal District. The current configuration of the FP emerged in 1967, under the name Department of Federal Police (DPF), which over time came to be referred to simply as Federal Police in its communication channels.

For Rocha (2004), the configuration assumed by the FP shortly after the *Estado Novo* (1937–1945), when it was created, was that of a political police. The author emphasises that, “if we compare the growth of other state institutions, we can observe the expansion, professionalisation, and specialisation of the police function in the service of the central government. And the axis of this growth was the political police”⁴⁸ (Rocha, 2004, p. 76). With the creation of the National Information Service (SNI), during the military dictatorship (1964–1985), which centralised operations and the flow of information and served as a repressive organ of the military government, the DPF assumed a secondary role, with the predominance of a “registry office-type performance” (Rocha, 2004, p. 81). According to him, “it is not that

46 *Estado Novo*, or Third Brazilian Republic, was a Brazilian dictatorship established by Getúlio Vargas on November 10, 1937, which was in force politically until October 29, 1945, and formally until January 31, 1946. It was characterized by the centralization of power, nationalism, anti-communism and its authoritarianism. It is part of the period in Brazilian history known as the Vargas Era.

47 In 1960, under the government of President Juscelino Kubitschek (1956–1961), the capital of Brazil was transferred from Rio de Janeiro to the city of Brasília, in the Federal District. The new Capital was designed and built with the purpose of centralizing power decisions and the main State bodies, including the PF headquarters.

48 Translated from the original text: “se compararmos o crescimento de outras instituições de Estado, podemos observar o crescimento, profissionalização e especialização da função de polícia a serviço do governo central. E o eixo deste crescimento foi a polícia política” (Rocha, 2004, p. 76).

the FP did not operate, but it operated little and was not a protagonist”⁴⁹ (Rocha, 2004, p. 91). For Brandão (2022), at that time the FP functioned as a registry office of repression that, together with the SNI, composed the federal repressive apparatus: the DPF as the civil judicial organ of the Executive Branch, and the SNI as “the body that would produce, disseminate, and control a large flow of information at various levels of the country’s administrative structure, allowing the federal government to exercise a form of social control never before seen in the country”⁵⁰ (Brandão, 2022, p. 104). The DPF thus played a role in state repression during the dictatorship by assisting other, more active bodies, such as the SNI, but this role was secondary, which allowed it to reinvent itself during the period of redemocratization in 1988, unlike the SNI, which was extinguished.

For Brandão (2022), the broad amnesty granted to both left-wing militants and members of the military at the end of the dictatorial period (in 1988) allowed the principal institutional structures of the regime and the actors involved in them, including the Department of Federal Police, to remain intact. Although the main repressive bodies were abolished, the structure of the police forces remained unchanged. To serve democratic interests in promoting Transitional Justice, the reform of repressive institutions constitutes one of the essential conditions, which did not occur with the FP and several other police bodies (Brandão, 2022). With redemocratization, responsibility for internal security returned to the FP and the state police forces. However, the institution’s initial configurations changed little in relation to the period of repression. For Brandão (2022), this is explained by the very dynamics of the creation of these institutions, which are linked to political power, especially to the configurations of the Executive Branch. Since security bureaucracies are created and

49 Translated from de original text: “não que a PF não operasse, mas operava pouco e não era protagonista.” (Rocha, 2004, p. 91).

50 Translated from de original text: “o órgão que produziria, disseminaria e controlaria um grande fluxo de informações nos vários níveis da estrutura administrativa do país, permitindo ao governo federal o exercício de um controle social nunca antes visto no país” (Brandão, 2021, p. 104).

tied to the executive branch, the legislative and judicial branches have little authority over them, which would require disputes among the branches, generating a high cost of reversing the institutional design already established (Brandão, 2022).

Rocha (2004) also analysed the political disputes in which the institution was involved at the time, indicating that these disputes were manifested primarily in police discretion, emphasising that “the difference between state security and government police lies precisely in the power to determine which investigation is more urgent than another”⁵¹ (Rocha, 2004, p. 63). The disputes, both internal and among state bodies, were already occurring at that time, having subsequently been restructured and acquiring new contours and actors in the following years. One of the principal findings of Rocha’s (2004) research was the internal dispute between delegates and agents. Delegates were accused of abuse and authoritarianism, in addition to demanding to be addressed as “Doctor”, which culminated in internal conflicts between the police officers who operate in the streets and the delegates who make decisions from within their offices, disputes that intensified with unionisation (Rocha, 2004).

Moreover, in Brazil, which had only recently emerged from the military dictatorship, the alliances of former delegates with military officers who had occupied the Institutional Security Office (GSI) during the dictatorship generated tensions. There was also a dispute over centrality within a federal security system that appeared fragmented (Rocha, 2004). Among the disputes identified at that time, Rocha (2004) investigated a possible conflict between categories within the FP and delegates allied with the GSI and members of the military, finding that the relationship between the FP and the armed forces, more specifically the GSI and the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN),⁵² was characterised by friction and

⁵¹Translated from de original text: "a diferença entre segurança de Estado e polícia de governo se dá justo no poder definidor de qual investigação é mais urgente que a outra" (Rocha, p. 63, 2004).

⁵²The Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN) is Brazil's civil intelligence service, being the central body of the Brazilian Intelligence System.

disputes over prerogatives. There were also jurisdictional disputes between the FP, the GSI, and the National Secretariat for Drug Policy and Asset Management (SENAD), disputes that occurred primarily in situations involving the fight against drug trafficking; while the disputes between the FP and ABIN took place especially in intelligence activities.

Rocha (2004) also emphasises the intense relationship between the FP and United States police agencies, especially the CIA, particularly during the decades of its formation and the onset of the military dictatorship. According to him, “whether or not one accepts the official or unofficial figures, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was undoubtedly a marked presence in the country’s own security policy, which signifies a direct interference in the affairs of the Brazilian State” (Rocha, 2004, p. 92). At the end of the dictatorship, the FP already had a relevant role in combating drug trafficking, subsequently intensifying its coordination with the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), and in combating financial crimes, such as currency counterfeiting, together with other national bodies, such as the Council for Financial Activities Control (COAF)⁵³ and the Central Bank of Brazil (Rocha, 2004).

Rocha (2004) indicated in his work that although investigative activity at the federal level constitutes the core function of the institution, insofar as this represents its distinguishing feature in relation to other police forces, the legal culture reflected in the requirement of a law degree for the position of delegate, as well as the prominence of tactical-operational groups, stands out more than the investigative activity itself. With regard to the first argument he presents, however, contrary to what the author suggests, investigative activity is understood not to be dissociated from what he calls “legal culture”, since investigations must also comply with the norms of the legal system, even though they

⁵³The Council for the Control of Financial Activities (COAF) is Brazil's financial intelligence unit, linked to the Ministry of Finance, responsible for monitoring, analysing, and identifying operations suspected of money laundering and terrorist financing.

constitute a phase regarded as inquisitorial rather than adversarial. Thus, although the issue extends beyond the mere requirement of a law degree, involving class-based disputes over hierarchy, working conditions, and privileges, the legal foundation does not necessarily represent a contradiction with the core function of an investigative police force.

Rocha's (2004) second argument, concerning the emphasis on tactical-operational groups, aligns with part of the findings of this study and is intrinsically linked to the activities of the communication team. The prominence of tactical-operational groups, more than that of investigative activity itself, represents an inversion of the institution's core function, even though these groups are formally described merely as supporting units for investigations and as essential to the fulfilment of its constitutional duties. This is not to suggest that such groups are not relevant. On the contrary, the formation of specialised units is essential to support the wide range of activities carried out by the FP and the crimes it investigates, given the high-risk profile and specific characteristics of its targets. Tactical groups are indispensable to ensuring that investigations culminate successfully in the apprehension of targets, without imposing greater risks on the lives of agents, who already perform an inherently dangerous activity. Investigations involving targets connected to criminal organisations undoubtedly require specialised groups to carry out highly technical operations, which, if assigned to regular agents with standard training, would not achieve the same level of performance and safety as those units specifically trained for high-risk and high-precision activities. Nevertheless, there are indications of a reversal of priorities, already identified by Rocha (2004) two decades ago, and likewise observed in this research when addressing the institution's communication and publicity strategy regarding its activities.

Contrary to what occurs in other countries, the specialisation of police activities in Brazil is extra-organisational; that is, one police force is responsible for ostensive policing while another carries out criminal investigation (Medeiros, 2004). According to Medeiros

(2004), in Brazil this arrangement hinders the exchange of technical and institutional resources among police forces, thereby impeding the consolidation of a cohesive police field. Costa and Medeiros (2003) identified that police institutions in Brazil belong to at least two organisational fields: the field of the State's coercive apparatus, corresponding to the field of defence, and the field of the criminal justice system, such that the degree of identification with each of these fields may vary. The same argument is advanced by Medeiros (2004), for whom police institutions in Brazil occupy a peripheral position, responding to the demands of other fields, namely the justice field and the defence field, rather than occupying a central position within a purported autonomous police field (Medeiros, 2004).

The FP thus performs this ambiguous role, at times responding to the demands of the criminal justice system, and at other times to the demands of the field of public security. It is important to underscore, however, the rise and strengthening that this institution has undergone in recent years, a phenomenon that may have contributed to a more advantageous institutional positioning within these fields of symbolic dispute. In addressing white-collar crimes and the theories surrounding their impunity, Costa et al. (2016) emphasise that the focus on repressing such crimes, particularly combating corruption by public officials, began around 2003, surpassing operations against drug trafficking in 2007. This period coincides with a significant increase in the number of operations conducted by the FP. However, according to the authors, the increase in the FP's effectiveness in combating corruption, as well as the expansion of operations, also occurred, and primarily so, due to greater integration between the agency, the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the judiciary, rather than solely as a result of the FP's individual initiative. Of the total number of operations carried out between 2003 and July 2008, 43% were conducted jointly with other agencies (Arantes, 2011b, 2019).

Social representations of the police are neither univocal nor permanent, and may vary according to class, skin colour, circumstances, among other factors (Muniz & Proença Jr.,

2014). Beyond these nuances, what has been observed is that some police institutions are more successful than others in reinforcing themselves as an essential part of the democratic system. This may occur due to the different police functions (judicial police versus ostensive police), or it may be the result of effective social communication work. These two factors can also jointly contribute to such success. Azevedo and Pilau (2018) highlight that the FP is recognised by its personnel as an “elite police force,” both because of its internal structure, with highly qualified agents and substantial federal funding for its operations, and because it is responsible for investigating agents and criminal organisations operating within the upper echelons of society. Furthermore, the high salaries of FP personnel, when compared to the remuneration of other police forces in Brazil, also contribute to the characterisation of the institution as an elite police force (Costa et al., 2016a). With the 1988 Constitution, the FP was institutionally consolidated as an “investigative police force and agency of the Union government subordinated to the Ministry of Justice⁵⁴, whose attributions include judicial policing, state security, and police intelligence” (Costa et al., 2016, p. 102).

According to Arantes (2019), the mechanism through which the FP has achieved institutional strengthening in recent years has been the proposal to improve the quality of evidence in criminal investigations. In the author’s words, “the case of the FP reveals the decision of a corporation to move out of the Executive’s purview in order to establish its point of junction within the justice system”⁵⁵ (Arantes, 2019, p. 116). This decision, although not preventing political interference in the agency, reduces partisanship and increases its autonomy vis-à-vis other state institutions. To expand their space within the institutional “fit,” state actors seek to enhance and extend their competencies, as exemplified by the FP’s

⁵⁴ Recently, the Ministry of Justice underwent changes with a merger in its structure, becoming known, from 2019 onwards, as the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. http://planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2019-2022/2019/Decreto/D9662.htm

⁵⁵ Translated from the original text: “o caso da PF revela a decisão de uma corporação de sair da alçada do Executivo para fixar seu ponto de junção no sistema de justiça” (Arantes, 2019, p. 116).

engagement in tasks beyond combating corruption (Arantes, 2019, p. 108).

In previous research on the FP's social media (Avanzi, 2021), it was observed that communication on these platforms reinforces, in addition to the fight against corruption, areas of activity such as the defence of human rights and the environment, which are traditionally assigned to the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office due to its constitutional attributions. Communication in these areas was emphasised more than the institution's actual engagement with these issues, indicating a deliberate choice to reinforce its image in these domains of activity (Avanzi, 2021). By changing its field of action, the institution also chooses, or accepts, the actors with whom it will have relations, whether cooperative or conflictual, but who will share the same rules and premises. This study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the strategy employed by the FP in constructing its institutional image, as well as its positioning within organisational fields.

The FP is not immune to the politicisation that has affected other judicial and police bodies in recent years (Engelmann & Pilau, 2025; Arantes, 2007). Historically, the FP has maintained the image of an independent police force, particularly after the end of the military dictatorship and through the first two decades of the century. However, because it is directly linked to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (MJSP), it is subject to fluctuations in funding and changes in its general directorate, both of which depend on changes in government (Engelmann & Pilau, 2025). According to Engelmann and Pilau (2025), while the autonomy of the FP and political interference in the institution were subjects of public debate during the Bolsonaro government (2019–2022), a simultaneous movement toward expanding the FP's presence in spaces considered political was occurring. During Bolsonaro's administration, there was an intensification and diversification of FP personnel participation in governmental spaces, especially among delegates, who increasingly engaged with political sectors such as the leadership of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security. Conversely, once

the Lula government (2023–2026) assumed its third term and replaced the institution's directorate, the authors note that a movement of depoliticisation was again observed, indicating that this shift did not necessarily reflect alignment with either right- or left-wing agendas (Engelmann & Pilau, 2025). From 2010 onward, the agenda of combating corruption gained greater political prominence, emerging as an “electoral asset” (Engelmann & Pilau, 2025, p. 8). Furthermore, the anti-corruption agenda has been highlighted as a central institutional banner in recent years, especially during Operation Lava Jato, bringing the FP closer to judicial and institutional oversight bodies (Engelmann & Pilau, 2025).

This alignment on certain agendas, such as combating corruption, and the corresponding mode of operation, also partially results in a distancing from other security institutions, which are associated with more traditional elements of repression. The trajectory of the institution and studies on it indicate that it is embedded in the dynamics of dispute and competition, both among internal sectors and with other state institutions (Brazilian and international), as well as that this scenario changes and fluctuates depending on political conditions. Understanding these disputes and the positioning of the FP is important for comprehending one of the elements in state dynamics and symbolic contests.

3 NEW INSTITUTIONALISM

3.1 Field theory and analytical concepts

Organisational field theory is the analytical tool that will guide the present research in order to address the questions posed. Organisational field theory does not represent a static and rigid conception to be employed, but rather an approach pathway for understanding the phenomenon under study. We will present below the evolution and foundations of this theory, as well as its possible application to police studies, and specifically to the Federal Police (FP).

Field theory is not recent in academic studies. It initially emerged with Kurt Lewin in the early twentieth century in studies of psychology, gaining prominence in sociology with the theory of Pierre Bourdieu (2004, 2007). Subsequently, field theory was refined by Paul DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell (1999) to explain the role of state institutions within organisational fields. The theories of its three precursors, although maintaining distinctions, point in the same direction (Martin, 2003). Although Lewin's theory was the first to address the theme, it is predominantly oriented toward psychology (Martin, 2003). Thus, in this study, we are concerned with the conceptualisations advanced by Bourdieu (2004, 2007) and with the specificities of organisational field theory.

Bourdieu's field theory (2007) seeks to map the relations that structure power, without disregarding the subjectivities that shape these structures, subjectivities constituted by habitus. In order to understand the dynamics presented, it is important to explain the concepts mobilized. Bourdieu (2007) employs the concept of field of power to designate the relation of forces among agents over the monopoly of power, who mobilise capitals to impose their definition of the world in a legitimate manner. Social space, in Bourdieu's (2007) conception, is multidimensional, composed of various simultaneous and autonomous fields of struggle, which may relate to one another and are not necessarily antagonistic. Social space is

inherently a space of symbolic disputes, a field of forces and struggles for the power of domination. Although social space, for Bourdieu (2004), often resembles physical space, since agents who are physically proximate tend to make similar choices, they are not identical. Within these fields of struggle, capitals are distributed unequally among agents, and what distinguishes agents and social groups is the relative position they occupy in this space, which may vary in each field. The same actor may occupy different positions depending on the different fields. The FP, for example, may occupy a prominent position in a given field and a secondary position in another, even though it participates in power struggles in all those of which it is part.

For Bourdieu (2004), the State is not a finished entity, but rather composed of agents and institutions that speak in its name and in the name of the universal interest, yet are engaged in constant disputes over what he terms the power of legitimate nomination. Although agents are endowed with the legality that derives from the State, their position within the field of struggles drives them to continually reinforce this power, mobilising various forms of capital to increase their symbolic power and impose their vision of the world (Bourdieu, 2004). In this sense, although the police are authorised by the power of the State to speak and act on matters of security, this power of nomination is in constant dispute, both among police forces and among other state agencies. Such nomination is never fixed, it is always conditioned.

Symbolic power, a diffuse and abstract element, is the power to impose a vision of the world and to construct reality. This power does not derive solely from legal norms, having the capacity to reinforce the legitimacy of the institutions that hold it, whether vis-à-vis the other branches of government (Legislative, Executive and Judiciary), or vis-à-vis other institutions within the same federal branch (Federal Highway Police, Office of the Attorney General of the Union, for example). It is described by Bourdieu (2007, p. 7) as “this invisible power

which can only be exercised with the complicity of those who do not wish to know that they are subject to it or even that they exercise it". However, symbolic power does not result from the simple mathematical sum of the capitals acquired, since capitals may possess different values among themselves, and across the different fields in which they are employed.

Bourdieu (2007) emphasises the character of domination inherent in symbolic power, which, when used by agents, tends to impose individual interests as if they were collective interests, thereby promoting the maintenance of the power of the dominant over the dominated.

Different groups and classes are constantly engaged in a symbolic struggle to impose their vision of the world in accordance with their particular interests. Thus, symbolic power manifests itself, is constituted, and resides in this relationship between the dominant and the dominated, in this relation of forces and of power: "what makes the power of words and slogans, the power to maintain order or to subvert it, is the belief in the legitimacy of the words and of the one who utters them, a belief whose production is not within the competence of the words themselves" (Bourdieu, 2007, p. 15).

Moreover, Bourdieu (2004) refers to the so-called effect of official nomination, which consists of the juridical legitimacy to confer upon someone a socially recognised title deriving from the State. The State holds the capacity for legitimate nomination and official classification. However, for Bourdieu (2004), the official point of view of the State is not to be conflated with the official discourse articulated by its agents, which represents the authorities' point of view. This does not mean that official authorities possess an absolute monopoly over the imposition of a legitimate vision of the world, but rather that they are engaged in a constant struggle for this power (Bourdieu, 2004). Although the power of legitimate nomination constitutes a relatively autonomous force when compared to other social forces, the position of agents within this game is also fundamental for the exercise of this power in the field of struggles.

The importance of the content of the discourse delivered is underscored, since for Bourdieu (2007, p. 185), in the field of political disputes, “to say is to do”, to make others believe that what is said is true, that these are “watchwords”, capable of creating the very social order. In this respect, the importance of belief in the one who utters the watchwords is also reinforced, since symbolic power is closely linked to the recognition of the authority of the one who proclaims words of order or subversion (Bourdieu, 2007). What the FP says or expresses, for example, may strengthen or weaken movements, demands, and concepts regarding security in the country.

Thus, the authority of state institutions does not consist solely in the objective legality that confers power, but also in the subjective belief in the validity of those who respect that authority. It is not sufficient for bureaucratic institutions to be endowed with legality in order to exercise their authority; the support of belief in this legality, deriving from customary procedure, is also necessary. In symbolic disputes within the sphere of the State, it may be in the FP's interest to increase its symbolic power by employing strategies in constructing its institutional image. It may also be in its interest to convey to the population a firm stance in the investigation and combating of organised crime, and the image of an institution that is upright in the fulfilment of its duties, even though it is already legally invested with this function, a prerogative constitutionally guaranteed.

A field can be understood as the specific “social space” in which social actions and interactions occur (Thompson, 2018). However, the boundaries of a field are often imprecise. Unlike on a football field, in the analogy used by Thompson (2018), the boundaries between fields can be enduring and difficult to identify, as well as constantly changing depending on strategies or the inclusion of new actors (Thompson, 2018). Fields are spaces of struggle, and for this reason, they have a constant potential for change, due to the very logic of their theory, through the application of habitus and the mobilisation of capitals by agents, which also alters

the positions and configuration of the field (Thompson, 2018).

In relationships between individuals and institutions, multiple subfields may be present simultaneously, and there may also be relationships between fields (Thompson, 2018). Just as there is a hierarchy among actors within fields, there can also be a hierarchy among the fields themselves, so that the configuration of some of them shapes the others, referred to as subfields. The definition of legal rules within the state bureaucracy, for example, can shape and condition the implementation of public policies in a given area.

In this research, the three indicated fields do not present hierarchical differences, at least within the scope of this study (Thompson, 2018). Although the characteristics of the fields are described herein, the objective is not to analyse their configurations, which would require a separate study, but rather to understand how the FP seeks to convey an image through the exercise of symbolic power on its digital media in order to better position itself within the fields in which it is inserted. This may occur through the production and imposition of perceptual categories that structure the understanding of the social world in a manner favourable to it, thereby allowing it to accumulate more symbolic capital and convert it into other forms of capital relevant in power struggles. Beyond understanding the configurations of a field, analysing the positioning of one of the main security actors in Brazil enables comprehension of its strategy and mobilisation, which subsequently impacts the very reconfiguration of the fields (Bowden, 2024).

Initially, this research sought to evaluate the positioning of the FP within the three organisational fields that encompass its activity: the field of defence, the field of criminal justice, and the field of international policing. However, still based on the theoretical scope of field theory, some of the results also indicated the mobilisation of other concepts related to these three categories. Thus, considering these three fields, the analysis also incorporated the mobilisation as capital or the construction of habitus, which in this research will be identified

as identity, as will be further explicated.

Capital can be understood as the “currency” used within fields, employed for better positioning and the promotion of change (Moore, 2018). For Bourdieu, capital is embedded in a broad system of exchanges of different types within fields. Economic capital is the most easily identifiable, due to the very structure of monetary exchange in capitalism, but there are others that are equally important, such as cultural capital (manifested in the form of knowledge, credentials) and social capital (derived from relationships such as networking and participation in groups, for example) (Moore, 2018; Bowden, 2018). Capitals can be presented in different forms: objectified, such as monuments, galleries, books, etc.; incorporated, reflecting in bodily posture, lifestyle, etc.; or as *habitus*, composed of attitudes and dispositions (Moore, 2018). All forms of capital contribute to the increase of symbolic capital. Bourdieu (2004) further emphasises that the social world is marked by the logic of difference through the unequal distribution of capital. It is the logic of difference that guarantees domination over the dominated. It is the recognition of differences that ensures the legitimate power of one identity over another (Bourdieu, 2007).

Habitus is understood as the orientation of practices by regular social conduct, even when such conduct is not codified in written or explicit rules (Maton, 2018). It can be considered a “property” of actors (whether individuals, groups, or institutions) who are embedded in a “structuring and structured structure” (Maton, 2018; Bowden, 2018). Although *habitus* is structured by the past, it is structuring because it contributes to shaping the structure for the present and future. Social practice results from “a double obscure relation,” the interaction of *habitus* and capital within a field, even when this interaction occurs unconsciously (Maton, 2018, p. 77). It constitutes a double relation because the field structures the *habitus*, and the *habitus* contributes to the redefinition of the field. It is obscure because it is not possible to identify precisely the limits and terms in which this interaction

occurs. This process is continuous and ongoing, linking the history that structured us to the conditions we will create thereafter. It is neither linear nor predetermined; choices constantly construct new paths from innumerable possibilities (Maton, 2018).

Habitus encompasses our “ways of acting, thinking, and being,” as a reflection of history and as this history appears in current circumstances to support and condition choices that must be made at certain moments, which also define the future, generating new practices, beliefs, perceptions, feelings, etc. (Maton, 2018, p. 77). Theoretically, the concept of habitus seeks to overcome a theoretical dichotomy present in studies prior to Bourdieu, such as the dichotomies between past and future, social and individual, objective and subjective, structure and action; thus, constituting a link between these dimensions. Habitus appears not as that which is mobilised in the field for the purpose of acquiring symbolic capital, but as practice resulting from historical conditions and from choices made based on that history (Maton, 2018).

Part of the results from the field research suggest the presence of habitus. However, evaluating habitus would imply observing other internal aspects (such as the institution’s own mode of action, relationships with other actors, and its historicity, for example), which fall outside the scope of this study (Maton, 2018). In his study on the security field, which will be presented in the following section, Bowden (2018, 2024) encountered the same limitations, concluding that it is not possible to confirm the consolidation of habitus in the field he studied solely based on data about the actors. For this reason, considering the scope limitations, the concept of identity will be used to present part of the results.

The concept of identity can encompass various overlapping dimensions: personal identity, social identity, work identity, and organisational identity (Machado, 2003). Organisational identity permeates the previous dimensions due to the impact that work exerts on the formulation of these identities (Machado, 2003).

Personal identity can be understood as the “process under construction defined by the constant intermediation of assumed identities and aspired identities” (Machado, 2003, p. 53). Personal identity is maintained in this balance between what one is and what one projects, resulting from multiple identifications and occurring in relation to others. According to the author, “by living these experiences, the individual seeks a notion of self, of subjective presence, in an attempt to define the boundaries of the self, to preserve them, and to rediscover them” (Machado, 2003, p. 54). Social identity arises from belonging to a group, as well as from groups to which the individual does not belong (Machado, 2003). The author states that “this identity is guided by the individual’s need to exist in the world, as well as by their need to belong to social groups. This occurs because the definition of the other and of oneself is largely relational and comparative” (Machado, 2003, p. 56). Work identity is linked to the exercise of roles, involving processes of categorisation and social bonding, as the work environment constitutes an important space for socialisation that shapes the identity structure. It also involves experiences of power relations and collective norms, which compose work identity (Machado, 2003). Machado (2003), in a reference study, indicated a tendency to identify with superiors at work as an attempt to differentiate from subordinates, which can be “interpreted as the product of a permanent evaluation of the means available to the individual to engage in the struggle against the established order, sustaining their difference within the social system in which they are inserted” (Machado, 2003, p. 59). In a police institution, marked by strong hierarchy, this tendency may be even stronger, reproducing, including symbols and behaviours that were not initially favourable.

Work identity also unfolds on the affective and cognitive level. Living within a structured institution establishes a kind of collective mentality, with which the individual conforms, assimilating its rules and behavioural norms and forming affective bonds with the people with whom they interact in this environment. This

process may result in identifications on the part of the individual, which can contain distorted meanings. Especially when the spaces of individual autonomy within the organization are limited, there is the possibility of generating identification processes of a projective nature, in which the individual imagines themselves in the place of another, thereby seeking to displace the position occupied, or of an introjective and imitative nature, in which the individual copies another and seeks to live the life of the other (Machado, 2003, p. 59)⁵⁶.

Organisational identity, in turn, involves beliefs shared by its members about “what is central, what distinguishes it, and what is enduring” (Machado, 2003, p. 61) within institutions. Organisational identity, often associated with management concepts, can also be considered the set of elements that an organisation uses to position itself, encompassing mission, values, vision, and organisational culture. Machado (2003) further emphasises that, although organisational identity and organisational image are not identical, image is related to identity, since identity represents an internal perspective, whereas image is also associated with an external perspective.

Identity within police forces is composed of these dimensions: organisational identity; work identity, represented primarily by the roles that police officers perform; and social and personal identity, reflecting how the officer is and how they socially project themselves in interpersonal relationships. Throughout the research, it was necessary to broaden the

⁵⁶Translated from the original in Portuguese: “A identidade no trabalho também se processa no plano afetivo e cognitivo. O fato de viver sob uma estrutura institui uma espécie de mentalidade coletiva, com a qual o indivíduo se conforma, assimilando suas regras e normas de comportamento e estabelecendo vínculos afetivos com as pessoas com as quais convive nesse ambiente. Esse processo pode derivar em identificações por parte do indivíduo, as quais podem conter significados distorcidos. Sobretudo quando os espaços de autonomia do indivíduo na organização são reduzidos, há a possibilidade de engendrar processos de identificação que tenham natureza projetiva, nos quais o indivíduo se imagina no lugar do outro, buscando assim a destituição do lugar ocupado, ou os de natureza introjetiva e imitativa, quando o indivíduo copia o outro e procura viver a vida do outro” (Machado, 2003, p. 59).

conceptual scope in order to identify not only in which field the FP seeks to position itself, but also to what extent the elements found contribute to its organisational image. Thus, the concepts of capital and identity, already originating from the theoretical framework, were incorporated into the analysis to understand subsidiary elements that emerged from the data.

3.2 Organisational Field

Organisational field theory constitutes a perspective linked to that of Bourdieu, serving as an analytical tool that permeates his theory and extends beyond it in the understanding of institutions. It suggests that institutions exhibit a certain regularity, enabling the anticipation of actors' actions within the same field. Martin (2003) identifies three understandings of the notion of field: the field as an area in which people or institutions are positioned; the field as an organisation of forces; and the field as a site of contestation and struggle. One understanding does not exclude the others; all three are equally applicable to field theory.

An organisational field is understood as the set of organisations that comprise a recognised area within the institutional environment, with a focus both on the interaction among these organisations and on the so-called “structural equivalence,” which consists of the sharing of rules and values (Powell & DiMaggio, 1999). Addressing formal organisations, Meyer and Rowan (1999) emphasise that they are guided by practices and procedures socially accepted and defined as valid, which are frequently employed by the institution to enhance its legitimacy. These practices reflect what the authors term institutional myths, which are independent of the institution’s effectiveness in its technical activities and are typically accompanied by ceremonial rites. In this sense, organisations are not solely the product of networks of institutional relationships but are strongly linked to the propagated understanding of social reality. According to Meyer and Rowan (1999), it is not enough for organisations to

conform to myths; they must also maintain the appearance that these myths actually function. Thus, the implementation of organisational programs also occurs by virtue of social prestige and public opinion, so that institutional myths become integrated into the formal structure of the organisation itself (Meyer & Rowan, 1999).

The organisational field is characterised by a process of “isomorphism,” in which some organisations share the same myths and sources of legitimacy, exchanging resources, and are referred to as institutionalising organisations (Meyer & Rowan, 1999; Medeiros, 2004). In this way, they also share the same rules of the game, defining the functioning of the institutional field and promoting the success and survival of organizations (Meyer & Rowan, 1999). Competition is present in the dynamics of organisations, which contend not only for resources but also for legitimacy and political power (Powell & DiMaggio, 1999). Furthermore, Medeiros (2004) adds that institutions positioned on the periphery of fields may join efforts to enter and strengthen their presence within them, through alternative means or even by creating new institutionalising organisations to dictate the rules of the game.

There are three “isomorphic forces”: the mimetic force, involving the imitation of other institutions; the coercive force, involving the imposition of control; and the normative force, involving the claiming of rights by those within the same category (Powell & DiMaggio, 1999). The mimetic force is the one of interest in this research and can occur either intentionally or unintentionally. According to Costa and Medeiros (2003, p. 72), who used organisational field theory to understand a possible demilitarisation of the police in Brazil, the mimetic force occurs when “organisational structures are poorly understood, when objectives are ambiguous, or when the social environment generates indecision.” When unintentional, this occurs through the transfer of personnel and practices; when intentional, it results from decisions made by the organisation’s own leadership (Costa & Medeiros, 2003).

Costa and Medeiros (2003) also identify the normative force within civil police forces.

According to the authors, civil police officers began to adopt a model similar to that of the criminal justice system, with the requirement of a Law degree for the position of delegate. The same occurs in the Federal Police, where delegates must hold a Law degree, a requirement that even generates internal friction between officers and delegates within the institution (Costa et al., 2016).

When addressing the organisational fields in which police forces operate, as well as a potential police field in Brazil, Medeiros (2004) points out that organisational theory distinguishes between those organisations operating in technical environments and those operating in institutionalised environments. Police forces generally fall into the latter group, as the environments in which they operate tend to exert greater institutional than technical pressure. Furthermore, Medeiros (2004) emphasises that “institutional myths” are the principal instrument of protection for these institutionalised organisations. According to the author, three factors contribute to the emergence of myths: the formation of networks of relationships among organisations within that institutional environment; the process of legal regulation of the institutional environment; and the relationship of leadership within this institutional environment, aimed at constructing and reinforcing these institutional myths. This research seeks to advance the analysis of this third aspect, regarding the positioning of Federal Police leadership in the construction and maintenance of these “institutional myths.” The Federal Police’s own narrative as an “elite police force” can itself be understood as the construction of an institutional myth.

By highlighting an ambiguity in the operation of judicial police institutions in Brazil, Medeiros’ (2004) work leads to the central hypothesis of this project: that the Federal Police could employ the mimetic force to reinforce itself in other fields, given that its operations, or even the configuration of fields for police institutions in Brazil, are permeated by indecision. In this sense, the positioning of leaders is fundamental for this new restructuring within the

field. This study aims to elucidate the existence, or absence, of this mimetic force within the Federal Police; that is, it seeks to investigate the extent to which the institution attempts to reinforce itself in an organisational field different from the one traditionally designated for police forces, adopting positions and constructing its image in a manner similar to the agencies operating in other fields.

3.3 The field of Security in Criminology

Among studies on fields of power, the security field has emerged as a subject in criminology research, focusing on its configurations and the relationships among different actors (Bowden, 2018, 2024). Other authors have also employed Bourdieu's theory to understand criminological phenomena, concentrating on the analysis of two main fields and their interactions: the police field and the "street field." For example, Quinlan (2021) analysed the New York Police Department in the post 9/11 context; Shammass and Sandberg (2015) developed the concept of the "street field"; and Sandberg and Fleetwood (2016) examined the street field based on narratives from drug traffickers. In his study conducted in Ireland on the security field, Bowden (2024) analysed the relationships among security actors in that context, using field theory as an analytical tool to understand the phenomenon. In his work, Bowden (2018, 2024) seeks to integrate the theoretical strands of criminology and policing studies that have emerged in recent decades (such as plural policing and nodal governance) under Bourdieu's notion of the field, which adds a relational perspective, linking especially the theories of security governance and the police field (Bowden, 2024).

The study of the security field has emerged as a result of recent currents in criminology, focusing on how crime and security have been governed. Among the issues of interest that have arisen are community policing, policing plurality, police legitimacy, and fear of crime (Bowden, 2024). Factors such as increases in crime, prevention strategies,

criminal justice system reforms, criminological theories, and the role of public police forces have also gained prominence in these discussions (Bowden, 2024).

Discussions on the diminishing power of the state in the face of the pluralisation of actors have also entered the debates, noting that despite this reconfiguration, the state remains the central authority, even though relationships are more horizontal than before (Bowden, 2024). Attention shifted to the role of the state and public police in crime control, which assumed a leadership function, with the focus on “security governance” (Bowden, 2024). The presence of private and civilian actors in this task, along with the notion of state decentralisation in crime governance, contributed to the incorporation of the concept of the field into criminological debates. According to the author, the term “security” began to reframe aspects of crime control, and the security field emerges as a result or connection of the greater pluralisation of policing (Bowden, 2024). Beyond the plurality of actors, however, it is important to understand the relationships that are formed, a possibility that field analysis enables. The concept of the security field has entered the debate in order to understand the dynamics among these different actors (Bowden, 2024).

The security field emerges from a fragmented police field, whose core lies in the police field itself, but this fragmentation has allowed other actors to share policing functions in the provision of security (Bowden, 2024). The regulation of the private sector in Ireland in 2001 distinguished regulated private security actors from those still operating without regulation. Private security operates between two pillars: policing and the technological/industrial sector. Being involved with industrial sectors, private security actors maintain relative autonomy from the police, as they sustain their own flow of economic capital. Their relationship with the public police is limited but exists, benefiting from data exchange. However, the habitus of these other actors remains largely police-oriented (Bowden, 2018). Bowden (2024) emphasises that the public perceives the public police as

holders of symbolic power, which also frames the actions of other actors, such as private security, who adapt their habitus to that of traditional police forces (Bowden, 2024). In the study by Diphorn and Grassiani (2016), private actors also appropriated symbols used by public police, such as uniforms, as a means of increasing their symbolic power. Despite their autonomy in terms of economic capital, the police still hold greater symbolic power, since they possess the authority to classify and determine the position of other actors within the field (Bowden, 2024).

In response to the plurality of actors, Diphorn and Grassiani (2016) developed the theory of “securitising capital,” grounded in Bourdieu’s theory, which seeks to understand how different security actors mobilise capital within the field to increase their legitimacy and power. The authors identify three main types of capital mobilized in the security field in their study: social capital, such as the social relationships created through training schools and conferences; cultural capital, such as the sharing of intelligence information, knowledge acquired during training, or transmission of military experience; and economic capital, which is more easily measurable in the form of budgets, sponsorships, and donations. Securitising capital can be understood as the acquisition of symbolic capital within the security field through the mobilisation of other capitals, in order to increase the authority, and consequently the value and status, of the actors (Diphorn & Grassiani, 2016). In the FP’s media, the mobilisation of these capitals can also be identified, such as the promotion of training as a reinforcement of cultural capital; joint operations with other agencies as social capital; and vehicles and buildings as economic capital.

The security field is increasingly understood as organised across multiple levels, with these levels encompassing the broad concept of the “security field” or “multiple security fields” (Bowden, 2018, 2024). As examples of these different levels, or distinct subfields, Bowden (2024) mentions military intelligence, national security, local policing, and

international policing. The author also identifies specific areas that have recently emerged within the field, such as community security, private security, and crime prevention. In the case of Brazil, the fields indicated in this research (the defence field, the criminal justice field, and the international policing field) may constitute different levels of the security field in its broad sense, subfields, or even autonomous fields with their own characteristics. In Brazil, other specific areas may also emerge due to both cultural differences and variations in organisation and scope (Bowden, 2024).

Bowden (2024) seeks to analyse the organisation of the security field in a specific context, Ireland, which, like Belgium, also underwent a police reform in 2005. He aims to understand how state and non-state actors are organised in crime suppression, how they are positioned, the rules of the field, and the relationships, exchanges, and movements of actors within the specific social space. The study focused on mid-level actors in the field and the relationships they established, operating across distinct levels while maintaining connections among them (Bowden, 2024). In his study in Ireland, the author initially identified the network of actors that form the security field, as well as the relationships among them, in addition to the presence of different types of “security clients,” such as victims, offenders, and business actors. Bowden’s study (2024) demonstrates how symbolic power is distributed and used unevenly among actors who provide security. It also evidenced the exchanges of capitals among actors, in the form of information exchanged, or informational capital, which can eventually be converted into economic or cultural capital (Bowden, 2024).

The study of the security field in Ireland identified an accumulation of cultural capital by local police forces in the form of data on crime and security issues, which arose from local conversational practices (Bowden, 2024). During local forums with other actors, this capital was converted into action agendas. In these forums, communicative actions originating from community policing could be transformed into cultural and social capital as they were shared.

In the field analysed by the author, political capital could also be mobilised, emerging from interactions between local security actors and politicians, through cooperation to achieve results. The data also appeared as cultural capital that could later be converted into economic capital. An example of converting cultural capital into economic capital occurred when this information was used in “city cleansing” actions targeting undesirable groups, in order to favour local commerce. The collection of local data was intended for crime control but also served as a decision-making tool to offer personalised services to potential clients (Bowden, 2024). In the Irish security field, a dynamic of exchanges was evident, with relationships that convert capitals into new forms of capital (Bowden, 2024).

Bowden’s (2024) study identified the security field in Ireland as a field still in formation, not yet fully established, since the study did not observe autonomy or the development of a distinct habitus within the field. The examination of field configurations, struggles, and capital conversion also revealed a new form of selectivity, focused on socially vulnerable groups, such as the poor, addicts, and thieves, as primary threats to property relations. The concept of the security field presents new possibilities for criminological research. Having conducted his study on the configuration of the field, Bowden (2024) also highlights the challenges of the approach, such as mapping actors’ positions and discourses, as well as the strategies adopted to maximize capitals. This research aims to address some of these gaps in a very specific context, focusing on understanding the strategy of one of the main actors within this field in Brazil. However, unlike the study conducted in Ireland, which sought to map the field, this study aims to understand the position of one of the principal actors responsible for the provision of security in Brazil, within the main state fields in which it operates, also identifying how the mobilisation of capitals through its social media seeks to increase its symbolic power within these fields.

Unlike what has occurred in other countries, Medeiros (2004) argues that in Brazil the

institutionalisation of a police field has not been realised, so that police forces, situated at the margins of other fields, respond to the demands of the Justice and Defence fields, dominated by the centrality of actors from the judicial system and the Army, respectively. According to Medeiros (2004), a properly constituted police field should encompass organisations that perform any of the three activities considered by specialised literature as core police functions, as well as their representation by ideal types: investigation, as criminal police; use of paramilitary force, as order police; and patrolling public spaces, as urban police. Historically, criminal police and order police have been intertwined with justice and the military, respectively, while urban police would represent the modern character of policing.

Although Brazil is not an exception compared to other countries in terms of the number of police forces, in the country, specialisation is extra-organisational, meaning that each force possesses a different specialisation, unlike in other countries where specialisation is intra-organisational (Medeiros, 2004). According to the author (Medeiros, 2004, p. 279), this characteristic hinders personnel exchange, due to having “different professions,” as well as the sharing of structures, command division, and resource exchanges. These factors have impeded the consolidation of a police field in Brazil. For this reason, considering that the literature indicates the movement of Brazilian police forces within these fields of power, this research will analyse the symbolic reinforcement of the FP through its digital channels across the three possible fields in which it operates.

However, even though the structure does not promote the exchange of personnel and resources, in practice, the police forces engage in constant exchanges among themselves, despite their distinct competencies and “professions.” One recurring issue within the police is personnel turnover, which also occurs due to migration between forces, particularly from those that pay less to those offering better working conditions. Although migration is not formally regulated, it is not uncommon for Military Police officers to move to the Civil

Police, who may later migrate to the Federal Highway Police or the Federal Police, and eventually to the Brazilian Intelligence Agency (ABIN). Clearly, they may also “jump” between institutions without necessarily passing through intermediate stages, and they may seek higher-paying positions, such as police commissioners, compared to agent-level positions.

An example of this phenomenon can be found in data from the Federal Highway Police, which, despite holding recurring public examinations to fill positions, maintains a stable number of personnel due to retirements and migration of positions between police forces and other public offices (Avanzi, 2024). Although few studies exist on police migration, this movement sometimes appears indirectly in the management reports of police institutions, which indicate the need for career valorisation and the continuous holding of public examinations to fill positions, in order to reduce the personnel gap caused by departures from the institution for multiple reasons.

The exchange of resources and knowledge is also intense, especially with the increase in joint operations across the country and the creation of the Unified Public Security System (SUSP), which also promoted unified training programs to improve police performance. Many professionals are also seconded to other institutions (such as the Courts of Justice or the executive and legislative offices), which increases the personnel gap at their original posts but facilitates the exchange of resources (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança, 2024). This exchange is indicated as a strategy to gain prestige, as it allows police officers to work alongside decision-makers (through proximity to governors and legislators, for example), also bringing their agendas and requests for greater autonomy. Furthermore, police officers are “loaned” to specialised joint task forces, such as the Special Action Groups for Combating Organised Crime (GAECOs), composed of members of the police and the Public Ministry, among other professionals. Thus, even though the literature indicates the lack of consolidation of a police

field, these perspectives of integration among police forces should be considered, including for the analysis of the data collected.

3.4 Organisational fields in Brazil

3.4.1 Defence field

The main characteristic of the defence field in Brazil today is militarism. The discussion about the military issue is not new in Brazilian society; it refers both to the fact that it constitutes an institution, the military, which integrates the State and society, and to “a mode of thinking that has its own logic, articulated and rational, disseminated in society in the form of discourses, symbols, and rituals, and assimilated by social actors” (Santos, 2011, p. 125), represented by a “militarist culture.” This culture is also expressed through a military or warrior language and vocabulary, both in the legal, police, and penitentiary environments (Santos, 2011).

According to Batitucci (2011), the militarisation of police organizations constitutes one of the main elements historically associated with the professionalisation of the police, together with other prominent factors, such as professional self-awareness; the growth of professional associations; broader public administration reforms; the expansion of training and educational programs; as well as the use of technology for mobility and communication. Modern police forces were shaped by a framework of ideas promoted by the concept of professionalism (Batitucci, 2011). This pillar of militarisation was reflected primarily in the application of military discipline, aimed at increasing control over police activities, implementing performance measures based on meritocratic criteria, as well as fostering an ideal of service, which the author identifies as “the fight against crime,” guided by parameters

of warfare (Batitucci, 2011, p. 68).

According to Batitucci (2011), as part of professionalisation, the increased use of technology during the emergence of modern policing, around the first half of the 20th century, impacted the consolidation of the separation between police work and the community, resulting, for example, from the use of motorised patrol vehicles that allowed for greater policing coverage. This separation was initially considered positive, as it prevented deviations and partiality, but was later revisited under other frameworks, with the valorisation of community policing. The neutrality emphasised in the professional-bureaucratic model of policing resulted in the reinforcement of the image of “the police officer as a technically skilled, highly trained, and extremely efficient individual, performing the role of law and order agent in the war against crime” (Batitucci, 2011, p. 71).

Modern policing also consolidated “the progressive ideological and conceptual prevalence that the police’s fundamental activity is crime fighting, which is rendered more objective and tangible through the use of police statistics and, especially, the number of arrests or detentions as a measure of efficiency” (Batitucci, 2011, p. 70). Although the author refers to the period of police modernisation, what he identified as tangibility through the use of police statistics remains observable in Brazil today, with the constant publication of arrest and seizure numbers, since other activities that comprise policing are considered of lesser value. The professionalisation of the police is essential to meet society’s evolving demands, which change over time depending on new cultural patterns and crime profiles (Costa, 2023). The 2025 Atlas of Violence⁵⁷ highlighted, among many other issues, a considerable increase in virtual fraud crimes compared to previous years, which also requires a policing response to

⁵⁷ The Atlas of Violence is an annually published document resulting from a partnership between the Brazilian Forum on Public Security and the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA). The document seeks to portray violence in Brazil, mainly based on data from the Mortality Information System (SIM) and the Notifiable Diseases Information System (Sinan) of the Ministry of Health. <https://forumseguranca.org.br/publicacoes/atlas-da-violencia/>

repress these new types of criminality.

For Brazil, the defence field can be characterised primarily by institutions of a military nature, such as the Military Police, with a repressive focus, and with centrality of the Armed Forces bodies, especially the Army. Medeiros (2004) provides a retrospective of the historical milestones that brought the police in Brazil closer, at times, to the justice field, and at other times to the defence field, without creating institutional autonomy for an independent field. For him,

The belonging of the Military and Civil Police to the Defence and Justice fields does not imply their subordination to the armies and courts. My assertion is only that—in an environment in which the police exchange institutional resources with other organisations—these exchanges have favoured the Defence and Justice organisations, rather than the police themselves. The coercive forces that exist are neither unique nor irresistible (Medeiros, 2004, p. 28)⁵⁸

The history of democracy in Brazil has an unfortunately close relationship with state repressive bodies, especially the Armed Forces. Over the last century, there were two dictatorial periods involving the army: the Estado Novo (1937–1945) and the Military Dictatorship (1964–1985), which also influence the relation with the symbolic elements of militarism. With the separation between the Military Police and the Army in Brazil in 1934, the Military Police were declared “auxiliary forces of the army,” which changed the conditions of subordination. Although they became subordinated only in terms of control, Medeiros (2004) highlights that other dimensions of militarisation (such as organisation, training, employment, intelligence, and justice), were influenced by military organisational

⁵⁸Translated from the original in Portuguese: “O pertencimento das Polícias Militar e Civil aos campos da Defesa e da Justiça não implica sua subordinação aos exércitos e tribunais. Minha assertiva é apenas que – em um ambiente em que as polícias trocam recursos institucionais com outras organizações – as trocas privilegiaram as organizações da Defesa e da Justiça, e não as próprias polícias. As forças coercitivas que existem não são únicas nem irresistíveis” (Medeiros, 2004, p. 281).

models, incorporating disciplinary codes, employment strategies, or militarised hierarchies, even if these dimensions did not imply direct subordination (Costa & Medeiros, 2003; Medeiros, 2004). Some dimensions, such as disciplinary codes, present a higher degree of militarisation than others (Medeiros, 2004).

The Armed Forces in Brazil, the main actor in the defence field, are composed of the Army, as the land force; the Navy, as the naval force; and the Air Force, all subordinated to the Ministry of Defence. In 2024, they had an active-duty personnel of 362,574, not including retirees and pensioners. As previously noted, the Federal Constitution separates the competencies of the Armed Forces from those of the police, providing in Article 142 their role in defending the homeland, guaranteeing constitutional powers, and maintaining law and order. Although this does not apply to the Federal Police, two of the main police forces in Brazil are currently militarised (the Military Police and the Federal Highway Police), in addition to the Armed Forces, which are not considered police institutions.

According to data from the Brazilian Public Security Forum (2024), the total police force in Brazil in 2023 was 622,859 officers, of which 404,871 (65%) were State Military Police and 12,882 were Federal Highway Police officers (2%), representing approximately 67% of Brazil's police force with a militarised organisation, primarily focused on ostensive policing. The Federal Police had a force of 12,900 officers (2%), slightly higher than that of the Federal Highway Police. Moreover, as indicated in this research, even though the other institutions are not formally militarised, they heavily incorporate militarisation elements in their processes, communication, and training.

Although the 1988 Constitution marked the redemocratization, as previously mentioned, a considerable part of the policing structure remained unchanged, including with regard to the military police. Thus, the States regained some autonomy with the possibility of appointing the commanders, but were unable to alter the structure of the state military police,

the only forces legally responsible for carrying out ostensive policing. The state military police are also subordinated to the military legal regime, including subordination to the Military Justice in Brazil, which is responsible for judging the majority of crimes committed by military personnel (Costa, 2023).

In Brazil, there is a debate regarding the need for the demilitarisation of the police. In a study conducted by Costa (2021), which analysed the processes of organisational mimicry that shaped the police based on military institutions, the author highlights that many police institutions worldwide have their roots in military institutions, which culminated in a structuring also along military lines. This resulted in a tendency toward homogenization among institutions in order to maintain a militarised profile (Costa, 2021). Beyond the personnel exchange, which Costa (2021) defines as a fundamental factor in institutional mimicry, various regulations, manuals, career structures, the content of training courses, and other aspects were also copied from the armies (Costa, 2021). The author emphasises that in Brazil, historically, there has been an intense relationship between the police and the army, with the states recruiting their officers directly from the army ranks, training conducted by the army, including the enrollment of military police in courses offered (Costa, 2023).

According to Costa (2021), the degree of militarisation of the police involves a process of identities, of identification with the military field, of “belonging to a group of organisations that share military beliefs, values, and knowledge” (Costa, 2021, p. 288). The degree of the police’s identification with the military field can vary considerably. From the 20th century onward, Costa (2021) highlights that there was an effort at differentiation from the armies, so that the police began to distance themselves from the military field and move closer to a police identity. According to Costa (2021, p. 294), this differentiation from the armed forces has occurred along four dimensions: in the ethos of the use of force; in the mechanisms of supervision and control; in the forms of employment; and in labour relations.

The first aspect, the authorised use of force, is what distinguishes the police and the armies from other state institutions. The difference regarding this aspect between these two institutions, however, lies in two conditions: in the situations in which this force may be employed, since the police operate in everyday contexts and the armies operate in specific situations; and in the manner in which they employ this force, choosing the means most appropriate to the situation (Costa, 2023).

Differentiation also occurs in the mechanisms of supervision and control (Costa, 2023). While supervision in the armies is intense, most of the activities of the military police occur far from their superiors, resulting in considerable discretion on the streets. According to Costa (2023), structuring this police discretion has been one of the main challenges for the police, since it is necessary for the daily performance of their functions, while it should not be unlimited. Although the armies are increasingly used for everyday situations in Brazil (such as their mobilisation for internal conflicts), this use occurs inadequately, since the deployment of the army on national territory should be exceptional (Costa, 2023). Furthermore, the control of police activity is essential in a democratic society, precisely because of this difference in profile compared to the exceptional activities of the armies. There is a fundamental difference in the training itself, since the army is not responsible for controlling the use of force, whereas for the police this is essential.

A third differentiation occurs in the manner of deploying personnel and equipment (Costa, 2023). One example provided by the author is the use of horses: while in the armies they are used for parades and competitions, in the police they are employed for routine activities, such as crowd policing, for instance (Costa, 2023). There is also a trend toward the creation of paramilitary police units, which represents greater militarisation in the deployment of personnel by the police. These units initially emerged to operate in specialised high-risk and complex activities, differentiating themselves “through highly standardised training, using

equipment and weaponry similar to those employed by the special operations units of the Armed Forces” (Costa, 2023, p. 90). However, the operation of these units in routine situations has increasingly been observed, such as in the policing of demonstrations. These units “constitute a distinct group within Brazilian police forces, with a strong professional identity and high social cohesion” (Costa, 2023, p. 91).

There are many similarities between the armies and the police in Brazil, such as the authorisation to use force; structuring through internal regulations that tend to be more relevant than the actual results of the work; and the military model of discipline. This has led the police to structure themselves along military lines, which were further reinforced during the military regime (1964–1985) (Costa, 2023). Differentiating from these patterns has encountered barriers in several factors: the high number of civilian deaths caused by police⁵⁹, which are grounded in the idea of confrontation and war on crime based on a military logic; the difficulty of replacing the military model of discipline with other control structures; and the challenge of creating a distinct professional identity, for example through the development of a specifically police field (Costa, 2021, 2023).

As a rule, organisations can be divided into technical environments and institutional environments. In technical environments, efficiency is rewarded, whereas in institutional environments the priority is the conformity of activity to rules and beliefs considered legitimate (Medeiros, 2004). These two positions are not mutually exclusive; institutions can be more technical than institutional and vice versa, to a greater or lesser degree (Medeiros, 2004). In fields of power, as a rule, there is a sharing of myths, sources of legitimacy, and the same rules of the game, which results from the intense exchange of technical and institutional resources in a process of isomorphism (Medeiros, 2004). As the police are highly

⁵⁹ In Brazil in 2024, 14% of intentional violent deaths resulted from police intervention, according to data from the Brazilian Yearbook of Public Security (2025). <https://forumseguranca.org.br/publicacoes/anuario-brasileiro-de-seguranca-publica/>

institutionalised environments, similar to schools, legitimacy to act often counts more than the actual efficiency of the work performed (Medeiros, 2004). Highly institutionalised organisations are protected by so-called institutional myths (Medeiros, 2004). For Medeiros (2004)

Myths are social understandings of reality: rationalised and impersonal prescriptions—whose acceptance lies beyond the discretion of individual actors—that lend a technical nature to social objectives, normatively specifying the means to achieve technical purposes (Medeiros, 2004, p. 273)⁶⁰.

One of the institutional myths employed by the police in cases of legitimacy crises can be understood as the resolution of crises through large-scale operations intended to demonstrate police efficiency. Medeiros (2004) also identifies joint operations as indicators of mimetic forces among the police. While crises change, the solutions adopted by the police remain. In 2004, Medeiros presented as an example the operation to arrest the trafficker Elias Maluco by the Civil Police of Rio de Janeiro⁶¹. Recently, following the homicide of the former general delegate of the Federal Police, Ruy Ferraz Fontes, numerous operations against organised crime were again carried out⁶². These operations, which have never ceased and have increased significantly since Medeiros' (2004) study, have come to represent one of the main characteristics of the *modus operandi* of the police in Brazil today. This may have occurred, for instance, with the multiplication of “qualified repression operations,” which

60 Translated from the original in Portuguese: “Os mitos são entendimentos sociais da realidade: prescrições racionalizadas e impessoais – cuja aceitação está além da discricionariedade de atores individuais – que emprestam natureza técnica a objetivos sociais, especificando de forma normativa os meios para atingir propósitos técnicos” (Medeiros, 2004, p. 273).

61 Operation carried out in Rio de Janeiro involving more than 500 police officers to arrest one of the biggest drug traffickers of the time. <https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff1809200201.htm>

62 Police conduct operation to arrest suspects involved in the death of former police chief Ruy Ferraz. <https://g1.globo.com/sp/sao-paulo/noticia/2025/09/17/policia-faz-operacao-para-prender-suspeitos-de-envolvimento-na-morte-do-ex-delegado-geral-ruy-ferraz-fontes-em-sp.ghml>

would not constitute the standard *modus operandi* of the police, but which, in order to conform to the rules of the game, adopted the same solution to criminality problems, even though the police involved have distinct competencies.

The defence field has traditionally held prominence in Brazil. This occurs both due to the historical aspect of repression in the country, in which the military forces participated in abrupt seizures of power, and because of the large personnel numbers that militarised security forces still maintain today, both in the Armed Forces and in the State Military Police and the Federal Highway Police. In this context, other non-militarised police forces (such as the Federal Police, for example), although having different responsibilities and significant importance in Brazil, and comprising a smaller personnel contingent, may undergo a mimetic process both in training and in other operational aspects influenced by the militarised characteristics of the defence field.

This mimetic process does not occur exclusively with the police, but can also occur with other security forces, such as municipal guards and private security personnel. It is also important to analyse whether it represents the actual interest in operating in a given field, or merely the mobilisation of other concepts, such as the mobilisation of capital and the construction of identity.

3.4.2 Criminal justice field

The field of criminal justice is the field of origin in Law that contains the legal institutions responsible for the system of criminal prosecution. The institutions of the criminal justice field as a rule are those that operate in three phases of criminal prosecution: the investigation, such as the police; the criminal process, such as the public prosecution service, public defender offices and courts of justice; and the execution of sentences, such as penal

police. Within it may be found both institutions of the judiciary, such as courts of justice, as well as institutions of other branches that operate in criminal prosecution, such as the police (which in Brazil are part of the executive branch). Depending on the differences of the justice system in other countries, institutions from other stages may also integrate the field.

Most studies on the criminal justice system seek to assess how crimes and criminality are punished, focusing on social control and on how the institutions involved operate within this control. In addressing the criminal justice system of United Kingdom and United States in his classic study on the culture of control, David Garland (2008) indicates that until the mid-1970s there was a social structure regarded as settled, although its different actors had processes of consolidation from different periods. Police systems had more than 150 years of existence, whereas correctional structures (such as rehabilitation, individualised treatment, parole, treatment programs, for example) would have been created during the twentieth century (Garland, 2008). From 1970 onward, however, these reformist structures came to represent the system itself, gaining consensus among governments and professionals in the field. Garland (2008) lists as the main characteristics of modern criminal justice systems the historical processes of differentiation, nationalisation, statization, bureaucratisation, and professionalisation, characteristics similar to those identified by Bayley (2006) in the formation of modern police forces.

Thus, the modern system for the apprehension, prosecution, and punishment of violators of criminal law became specialised and, at the same time, differentiated, constituting part of the apparatus of the modern State. Over time, it came to be administered by professional bureaucracies, by functional institutions, by laws, and by sanctions specifically designed for this purpose (Garland, 2008, p. 97)⁶³

⁶³Translated from the original in Portuguese: “Assim, o sistema moderno de captura, acusação e punição de violadores da lei penal se tornou especializado e, ao mesmo tempo, diferenciado, constituindo parte do aparato

In addressing differences and similarities in comparative criminal justice, with a focus on the procedural aspects of different arrangements, Francis Pakes (2025) listed the role of some of these actors within justice systems in several countries around the world, such as the police, prosecutorial bodies, and sentencing authorities. For the author, the comparative study of justice systems involves not only understanding their processes and actors, but also the cultural issues that underpin these processes. Among the differences, Francis Pakes (2025) mentions that in some countries, such as England, prosecution in criminal proceedings was conducted and prepared by the police themselves, leaving to prosecutors only sensitive or particularly difficult cases. The prosecution service in the form in which it exists today is a relatively new institution and of lesser importance in England, when compared to the courts and the police. This scenario differs from that found in Netherlands, which originated in the French system, in which prosecutorial bodies are large and influential, governed by the Ministry of Justice, with training even similar to that of judges (Pakes, 2025). In the Netherlands, one of the countries in which the author analysed the criminal justice system, the prosecution plays a predominant role in criminal proceedings, being responsible for directing criminal investigations, prosecuting offenders, and enforcing decisions. Police work is constantly subject to supervision by prosecutors, who perform a dual role in this relationship, both as partners and as overseers of police activities. In Brazil, in addition to prosecuting offenders, the prosecution service may also investigate crimes, a competence that is occasionally the subject of disputes with the police⁶⁴. These examples of different roles

do Estado moderno. Ao longo do tempo, veio a ser administrado por burocracias profissionais, por instituições úteis, por leis e por sanções, especialmente designadas para este propósito” (Garland, 2008, p. 97).

64One of the conflicts regarding the competence to investigate crimes in Brazil occurred with the attempted approval of Constitutional Amendment Proposal (PEC) 37 in 2013, which was met with widespread mobilization from various sectors of society. The proposed amendment aimed to grant exclusive investigative powers to the police and encountered significant resistance from the Public Prosecutor's Office, which currently also conducts investigations in Brazil, with concurrent jurisdiction. <https://mppr.mp.br/Pagina/Por-que-o-MP-e-contr-PEC-37>

performed by actors within the criminal justice system also highlight the different configurations that the field may assume across countries.

Thus, as in the other fields described in this work, in order to understand the configurations of the criminal justice field it is also important to identify the characteristics of its central actors, who may eventually relate to the FP in contexts of dispute or cooperation. In Brazil, the criminal justice system is generally composed primarily of police institutions, judicial bodies, and penal enforcement agencies. The central actors within the criminal justice field in Brazil include the Public Prosecution Service, the Federal Police, the Public Defender's Office, the Federal Supreme Court, and the criminal trial courts, in addition to other institutions with ancillary roles, such as the Council for Financial Activities Control (COAF), the Brazilian Federal Revenue ⁶⁵ and the Brazilian Office of the Comptroller General (CGU)⁶⁶, for example, which play an important role in supporting investigations.

Arantes (2007) indicates that these institutions that compose the judiciary also constitute a political power, given their capacity to control the acts of the other branches (such as the executive and the legislative) through judicial or constitutional review. In recent decades, as a result of a movement toward the expansion of rights that occurred in Brazil and worldwide, the judiciary also came to be mobilised to ensure the effectiveness of these new guarantees and no longer merely to mediate private conflicts (Arantes, 2007). After the Constitution of Brazil, what Arantes (2007) describes as a legal subsystem emerged in Brazil, characterised by the central role of the Public Prosecution Service as the principal actor in the defence of these newly established rights. Vargas (2014) defines Brazilian criminal justice as a loosely articulated system, with different actors operating in a

65 The Federal Revenue Service is the body of the Federal Government, linked to the Ministry of Finance, responsible for the administration of federal taxes, inspection, customs control and combating tax evasion, smuggling and contraband.

66 The Comptroller General of the Union (CGU), a body of the Federal Government responsible for defending public assets, transparency, and combating corruption.

partially autonomous manner. Integration within the system occurs due to the integrated flow of roles or through the “social construction of types” (Vargas, 2014, p. 418), whereas loose articulation results from orientation toward distinct and conflicting logics, especially regarding what should be considered most efficient in crime control. Thus, the police, the Public Prosecution Service, the Public Defender’s Office, and the criminal courts, although operating in an integrated manner in procedures involving police inquiries, precautionary measures, criminal proceedings, and penal enforcement, possess distinct operational logics that prevent the flow from being strongly articulated (Vargas, 2014).

With the 1988 Constitution, the institutions composing the Brazilian justice system underwent a process of greater independence and strengthening. These institutions, however, did not operate in an integrated manner, which has increasingly occurred in recent years with the rise of anti-corruption operations (Arantes, 2011a). In analysing the arrangements for combating corruption in the country, Arantes (2011a) investigated three shifts in these actions that enabled greater engagement and effectiveness of the bodies: from the civil sphere to the criminal sphere; from the state level to the federal level; as well as from disarticulation to greater integration among the institutions.

Even though the structural conditions were not sufficient to promote strong articulation within the criminal justice system, the discourse of accountability fostered greater interaction among the actors in the field, including the Federal Police, centred around an agenda of enhanced control and access to justice. These discourses opened possibilities for institutional innovation, which has occurred in most institutions within the criminal justice field in recent years (Arantes & Moreira, 2019). For the authors, this process is more the result of internal interest policies, a notion of institutional self-assertion, than of external causes or a reflection of political-party interests (Arantes & Moreira, 2019).

The actors within the federal criminal justice field gained prominence in the integrated

actions to combat corruption in the country, especially Operation Car Wash, regarded as the “largest anti-corruption operation in the country”⁶⁷, which lasted approximately seven years and included dozens of different phases of activity. Despite controversies surrounding the performance of actors in criminal prosecution during the operation, it directed media attention toward the actors of the criminal justice system involved in the operation. The institutions that participated, directly or indirectly, had to reconsider how they related to the media and the public, even if unintentionally, also resulting in a reconfiguration of the field.

Considering the prominence of anti-corruption and public accounts control operations, in which the Federal Police actively participated and which drew greater attention to the institutions of the criminal justice field, it may be in the Federal Police's interest to increase its symbolic power within this field.

In an extensive work on the investigation and criminal prosecution of economic crimes and corruption in Brazil at the federal level, organised by Costa et al. (2016), the authors conducted a survey of the actors involved in this agenda, also mapping, to some extent, the main actors of the criminal justice field. The collection provided information on the Federal Police, the Federal Public Prosecution Service, and the Federal Courts, detailing their trajectories, functioning, legal basis, competencies, and main challenges. It then presented other institutions relevant to supporting financial investigations, such as those involved in fiscal and financial control in the country. While it is evident that the field includes other agendas beyond crimes against public administration, as well as other actors, considering the prominence of this agenda in recent years, particularly due to the significance of Operation Car Wash, the mapping of the institutions involved is highly representative of the main institutions of prominence in the field.

The Public Prosecution Service has been the actor in the field that has received the

⁶⁷What was Operation Lava Jato? <https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/nacional/o-que-foi-a-operacao-lava-jato/>

most academic attention in recent years compared to other state bureaucracies. Although it consolidated a process of autonomy with the 1988 Constitution and through its strong performance in the following years, the Public Prosecution Service was already undergoing a process of autonomy prior to this period (Arantes & Moreira, 2019; Viegas, 2022). With the Constitution, the Public Prosecution Service came to operate in virtually all branches of power, across different issues. Consequently, its leadership established an agenda that enabled the greatest conversion of bureaucratic power into political power (Viegas, 2022).

Subsequently, other bodies also attracted academic interest, with the growth of studies on the Public Defender's Office (Ribeiro & Fondevila, 2023); the Penal Police (Silva & Ribeiro, 2024; Oliveira, 2018); the Federal Supreme Court (Da Ros et al., 2022), an institution that is part of the criminal justice field; as well as the Federal Police, which is the focus of this research.

Another central actor of the federal judiciary and the field is the Federal Supreme Court (STF), which has gained greater academic and political prominence recently, although its relevance dates back several decades. The STF has consolidated itself as a central institution in the criminal justice field, in close relation, whether of conflict or cooperation, with the Federal Police. The STF can currently be understood both as a bureaucracy and as a political institution, also interacting with other state institutions (Da Ros et al., 2022). The new Constitution allowed greater access to the STF, particularly through actions of constitutional review and the expansion of procedural instruments to bring cases before the court. This also broadened the range of issues on which the STF has had to take a position recently, covering a wide spectrum of societal topics. Its decisions have also come to have a greater impact on the political system, leading the court to adopt a more “interventive” role, especially in cases of omission by the other branches (Da Ros et al., 2022, p. 11). The authors indicate that the STF has been an “important vector in redefining numerous public policies

and rights, as well as the very relationships between powers, federative entities, elites, and political parties in contemporary Brazil” (Da Ros et al., 2022, p. 11).

In a comparative analysis of three of the main actors in the criminal justice field (the Public Prosecution Service, the Federal Police, and the Public Defender’s Office), from the perspective of state pluralism, Arantes and Moreira (2019) highlighted the main milestones in the (re)construction of these actors in recent years. The authors identified a pattern of institutional assertion present in all three institutions, based on their trajectories, even though the similarity is not intentional, analysing three elements of the institutions’ trajectories: organisational fit, internal cohesion, and capacity to withstand external adversities.

Regarding internal cohesion and resistance capacities, the results do not affect the interests of this research and have already been addressed in other sections. Concerning organisational fit, the three institutions analysed by the authors underwent different fits to strengthen their positions. The Public Prosecution Service found its fit as the “extraordinary representative of society in the defence of diffuse and collective interests” (p. 107); the Public Defender’s Office as the “provider of legal and judicial assistance to the legally needy population” (p. 107); and for the Federal Police, it was the recovery of the quality of evidence. For the authors, these institutional fits represented windows of opportunity to promote their interests and institutional assertiveness. These fits are not static, and the discourse can later be modified or expanded to address new interests. In the case of the Federal Police, for example, other agendas may emerge beyond anti-corruption efforts, which have driven the agenda in recent years (Arantes & Moreira, 2019).

Unlike what occurred with the Public Prosecution Service, where prominence had endogenous causes, for Arantes (2011b) the greater involvement of the Federal Police in prominent agendas, such as anti-corruption, had external causes, resulting from a new government policy. The organisational fit of the Federal Police occurred through two main

movements: first, a strengthening of administrative control bodies at the end of Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government (1995–2003); and subsequently during the Lula administration (2003–2007), with the restructuring of the institution, its organisational structure, human resources, and remuneration. This also placed the institution in a position of greater centrality within the field.

In a short period of time, the Federal Police would leave behind the image of an ill-equipped and inefficient police force, gain the trust of the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office and the Federal Courts, and begin to operate, in the form of a Task Force, alongside agents from the Federal Revenue Service, the Comptroller General of the Union (CGU), technicians from various ministries attacked by corruption, as well as officials from other oversight bodies (Arantes & Moreira, 2019, p. 114)⁶⁸.

Specifically regarding transformations in the justice system and anti-corruption enforcement, the Federal Police proved effective in restoring the prestige of investigation and the police inquiry. For the authors, this also represented an intentional shift of the institution, “moving out of the Executive's purview to establish its junction point within the justice system,” a shift that was strategic in the pursuit of greater autonomy (Arantes & Moreira, 2019, p. 116). Positioning within the criminal justice field does not occur merely as a result of some of the Federal Police's legal attributions, but as a strategic move to reinforce presence in a field that offers greater opportunities for state autonomy. According to Arantes and Moreira (2019), choosing the justice field as the preferred arena of action reduces the risk of politicization, although no institution is immune to political influences in its activities, and “attempts to unify its members in pursuit of an autonomy similar to that of judicial bodies,

⁶⁸ Translated from the original in Portuguese: “Num curto espaço de tempo, a PF deixaria para trás a imagem de uma polícia desaparelhada e ineficiente, conquistaria confiança junto ao MPF e à Justiça Federal e passaria a atuar, na forma de Força-Tarefa, na companhia de agentes da Receita Federal, da Controladoria-Geral da União (CGU), de técnicos dos vários ministérios atacados por corrupção, bem como de funcionários de outros órgãos de fiscalização” (Arantes & Moreira, 2019, p. 114).

and recognition by other legal professions, something highly valued by these corporations” (Arantes & Moreira, 2019, p. 116).

For Arantes (2011a), the Federal Police is an example of institutional effort in the pursuit of better positioning and conditions. One of the changes identified by the author is that, over the past two decades, the Federal Police has begun using proper names for its operations, also recording the number of operations carried out, which allowed for greater dissemination of its actions. Arantes (2011b) emphasises that most operations actually consist of the execution of arrest or search-and-seizure warrants issued by the criminal justice system, following investigations that may involve partnerships with other bodies, such as the Federal Public Prosecution Service and the Federal Revenue Service. The manner in which these operations began to be publicised constitutes a new strategy within the institution. Certain aspects regarding the dissemination of operations through the Federal Police’s digital communication channels will be analysed in a later section of this research. Regarding the choice of operation names and their implications⁶⁹, the author adds that:

In a highly creative manner, many names are drawn from the Bible or Greek mythology, others originate from indigenous languages or local folklore, and many are humorous wordplays developed from the very crime uncovered. The fact is that they create an impact on public opinion and attract media attention and coverage (when the media itself is not directly involved in the operation). (...) The meaning conveyed by the proper name signals the purpose of the operation and suggests the likely outcome in terms of the culpability of those involved, in addition to promoting a kind of information economy with the media and public opinion, as it organizes the transfer of information between the corporation and the external environment, allowing, above

⁶⁹There are countless examples of Federal Police operation names with puns or curious names. Some examples include Operation Weak Meat (2017), which investigated fraud in meatpacking plants; and Operation Paper Boat (2026), which investigated irregularities in the acquisition of securities by a large bank in the country.

all, the press to follow the progress of operations in a more systematic and continuous manner. Conversely, this marker has also enabled the Federal Police's own communications sector to monitor the degree of media exposure and public repercussion of its actions (Arantes, 2011b, p. 106)⁷⁰

The strategy of increasing media visibility of its actions, despite the positive aspect of highlighting the institution, also generates an effect of public anticipation of guilt, which is criticised due to potential excesses by justice bodies (Arantes, 2011b). Interviews indicated that the Federal Police has recently changed its strategy again, although prominent operation names remain, as will be discussed in a later section of this work.

The performance of these actors in the criminal justice field has presented greater opportunities for the expansion of institutional spaces, especially after the 1988 Constitution (Arantes & Moreira, 2019). "It has been from the justice field that members of the Public Prosecution Service, the Public Defender's Office, and the Federal Police have fought for the attainment of privileged spaces of action and for specific points of anchoring within the constitutional structure of the State" (Arantes & Moreira, 2019, p. 98). The "language of rights," and later the language of accountability, as oversight of public power, anti-corruption enforcement, and access to justice, enabled actors in the field to access "normative values capable of supporting their pursuit of institutional assertion" (Arantes & Moreira, 2019, p.

⁷⁰Translated from the original in Portuguese: "De modo bastante criativo, muitos nomes são retirados da Bíblia ou da mitologia grega, outros são provenientes de línguas indígenas ou do folclore local e muitos são trocadilhos bem-humorados desenvolvidos a partir do próprio crime desvendado. O fato é que causam impacto junto à opinião pública e mobilizam a atenção e a cobertura da mídia (quando ela mesma não participa diretamente da operação). (...). O significado expresso pelo nome próprio sinaliza o sentido da operação e induz o resultado provável em termos de culpabilidade dos envolvidos, além de promover uma espécie de economia da informação junto à mídia e à opinião pública, pois organiza a transferência de informações entre a corporação e o meio externo, permitindo sobretudo que os órgãos de imprensa realizem um acompanhamento mais sistemático e permanente do desenrolar das operações. E, de modo inverso, esse marcador tem permitido ao setor de comunicação da própria PF monitorar o grau de sua exposição na mídia e de repercussão pública de suas ações" (Arantes, 2011b, p. 106).

98).

This prominence of actors in the justice system has had implications for the political system in Brazil, a phenomenon that has been termed the “judicialization of politics” (Avritzer & Marona, 2017), or as the “political activism of state actors” (Arantes & Moreira, 2019, p. 103), a phenomenon that constitutes a new research agenda. The criminal justice field, for the reasons outlined here, has become a fertile space in Brazil for the expansion of the Federal Police’s institutional interests, primarily based on the pillars of the rights framework emphasised by the new Constitution.

3.4.3 Transnational policing field

In addition to the field of defence and the field of criminal justice, another field in which the Federal Police is situated is what may be called the field of transnational policing. The notion of a transnational field was developed primarily in studies of international relations, with the works of Bigo (2011, 2016, 2020a, 2020b) and Villela (2021) providing important contributions to reflections on this field and its characteristics.

Studies on transnational actors are not new in the literature, including those addressing the presence of such actors in the field of policing. The term “transnational” has been used in International Relations texts since the 1970s as a consequence of the process of globalisation and has gained prominence in recent years. However, the terminology is usually employed to refer to non-state actors, such as multinational companies and labour unions. For a long time, private actors have been recognised for their activities that transcend state barriers, while little emphasis has been given to state actors, such as public police institutions (Villela, 2021). Only in recent years has the autonomy of public actors in this field begun to be recognised by researchers, still with limited studies on this performance and on the new configuration of the field of forces. The presence of private institutions, free from sovereignty constraints,

generates greater acceptance among other actors than acknowledging or understanding the presence of organised public actors with their own interests (Bigo, 2016). The boundaries between the public and the private in the field of security are widely recognised in the literature as fluid. However, although the presence of private policing intersects with this research due to its strong presence in these fields, the study focuses on the performance of public institutions, especially the Federal Police.

One issue that arises in defining the transnational field concerns its relationship or dependence on the state field, namely whether it in fact constitutes an autonomous field rather than merely an extension of State powers (Bigo, 2011). Does the transnational field exist only through national fields, with characteristics and rules similar to those of state fields, or does it possess its own characteristics and interactions? In terms of this research, does the performance of the Federal Police in the field of transnational policing occur solely on behalf of the Brazilian State, within the rules established in the state field, or does it transcend these limits and establish new dynamics? Before addressing how the Federal Police seeks to strengthen its position within this field, it is important to present some considerations.

When reflecting on the possible controversies involved in conceptualising a transnational field, Bigo (2011, 2020b) presented important considerations regarding new state configurations. Despite a classical Weberian perspective of the State as the holder of the monopoly of the legitimate use of force, exercised horizontally, the author emphasises that State formation also occurs through transversal forces, such as wars, demographic trends, and other factors that influence decision-making processes (Bigo, 2020b). By considering the evolution of the State in recent years, rather than viewing it merely as a static field of power, specialised literature has also come to take into account the inclusion of other relevant actors, such as large internet companies, banking conglomerates, and the relations of these groups with intelligence and security services (Bigo, 2020a, p. 62). According to the author, these

new actors have come to constitute state relations, occupying relevant positions, including with regard to national security:

The field of power is now frequently constituted by relations where the capacities (capital) of certain private companies like Google, Apple, Facebook, and Amazon to voice that they represent the state and protect national security better than the “old public bureaucracies” allow them to play against the political class of their country of origin, which is accused of being incompetent (Bigo, 2020a, p. 72).

Activities linked to the State are no longer restricted to the limits of national territory or to entities endowed with the same nationality. When considering this new state configuration, Bigo (2020a, p. 73) also presents a definition of the concept of the transnational:

Transnational is therefore neither an intermediary “level”, a path towards homogenization and the global, nor a specific set of actors playing a specific game in a particular arena. It is on the contrary a set of “transversal lines”, of relational practices of power structuring the ways by which actors struggle to impose their own views of what is claimed to be the “common principles of vision and division of a specific set of practices in the social world (Bigo, 2020a, p. 73).

The transnational field, in this sense, is not constituted as a transitory layer, but as an independent social space, with its own characteristics and rules, traversed by other power relations. Moreover, these social spaces are neither rigid nor insurmountable. The national and the international are not opposed, but rather overlap and continue into one another (Bigo, 2016). For Bigo (2011), the European Union constitutes an example of how these struggles intersect.

Given that the transnational field possesses its own dynamics that distinguish it from the state field, another issue relevant to the concept of transnationality concerns the possibility

that a state actor may assume a transnational position that is not strictly related to its state affiliation. What was initially called into question was the group's autonomy vis-à-vis the State. The police, for example, were not even considered an issue within international relations, insofar as they were strictly linked to the State to which they belonged, and their independent international activity was not contemplated (Bigo, 2020b). According to Bigo (2011), certain bureaucratic fields have emancipated themselves from the limits of the State, assuming new boundaries. The study of these fields endowed with a certain degree of autonomy is essential for understanding new power dynamics. The author further adds that, upon closer examination, most state bureaucracies studied in recent years are involved in transnational networks (Bigo, 2016).

Based on his research on security professionals, Bigo (2011, p. 248) argues that these new power dynamics take the form of different fields of power organised in groups of bureaucratic professionals, which do not necessarily act in alignment with governmental interests. These actors began to develop an autonomous positioning centred on professional activity, forming the so-called “professional clubs” (Bigo, 2016). These clubs, or transnational guilds, are groups of professionals of different nationalities connected through their profession around common objectives, establishing rules of interaction and solidarity (Bigo, 2011, p. 248). The practices of the actors who constitute these groups operate at the local, national, and international levels, establishing connections among these spheres. For the study of these groups, Bigo (2016) coined the term “Sociology of Professional Guilds”.

Fields created through affinity derived from professional activity may even appear more legitimate than the local field itself, promoting a reconfiguration or displacement of loyalties (Bigo, 2016, 2020a). Unlike what occurs in the state field, in which the logic is centripetal, the logic of the transnational field is centrifugal, such that the distancing of an actor from the centre may confer greater power rather than less (Bigo, 2016). An actor who

demonstrates greater autonomy in relation to their State or to the political relations established within it may attain greater prestige in the transnational field.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, with the emergence of a discourse of global struggle against crime, police officers have been able to justify the establishment of links among professionals from various nation-States. This category has been more successful in establishing such relations than criminal judges, for example, since the latter would supposedly face greater limitations due to their jurisdiction (Bigo, 2011). The “police clubs,” as designated by Bigo (2011), which were later institutionalised, transformed relations of exchange among police institutions, especially in matters related to counterterrorism, intelligence services, borders, and immigration (Bigo, 2011, p. 252). These exchanges and struggles over the monopoly of defining the threats to be confronted created “circuits of legitimation,” leading to the emergence of new practices aimed at the exchange of data and technologies, with the definition of their own agendas and priorities articulated transnationally (Bigo, 2011; Villela, 2021). Cooperation among actors occurs in different ways within the transnational field. These relations almost always develop around technical issues that enable the accumulation of information and symbolic power, as highlighted by Bigo:

Most of the time, they are rooted in the history of the cooperation between agents of diverse national fields with the creation of informal clubs, of transnational organizations specialized on so-called technical subjects (but de facto highly political), and of specific technologies permitting speed in the exchange of data (and often some secrecy). These meetings, organisations, and techniques (software and surveillance tools) permit the accumulation of specific symbolic capital over information concerning risk and threats and may challenge the national professional of politics when they claim to assess the truth about danger (Bigo, 2011, p. 248).

These practices go beyond traditional nationally dictated practices of threat definition,

leading to a reconfiguration of the relationship between security and national sovereignty (Bigo, 2011, p. 253). The digitalisation of systems and communication plays a crucial role in this exchange of information and has enabled the autonomy of actors in relation to traditional systems. A form of solidarity at a distance has thus been fostered, reinforced by the digitalisation of communication and the sharing of experiences, allowing professionals of different nationalities to connect. Such sharing may occur through the exchange of information by digital means or through rapid visits, for example, which confer upon these groups a specific view of the world and of the relations that are formed (Bigo, 2016).

The new configuration of fields is important for understanding the loyalty of professionals when they are divided between national groups and groups of professionals who share the same values within the so-called professional guilds. The displacement of loyalties also gives rise to new dynamics in both the transnational and the state fields. Research indicates that when divergences arise between national political authorities and intelligence professionals, the latter's position tends to prevail, even when this entails political consequences for the former group (Bigo, 2016). This occurs because the relationship of these professionals with political authorities may be one of obedience, but may also involve disregard or disagreement, thereby generating such dilemmas of loyalty (Bigo, 2016). Within this dynamic, Bigo (2016) emphasises that individual actors possess a high degree of autonomy.

The dilemma faced by intelligence professionals also imposes new forms of positioning. According to Bigo (2020a, p. 63), “the intelligence services are cleft between the ones that refuse to change their role from informing politics, letting politicians decide and be responsible for failures, and the ones that have the ambition to build total information awareness”. Thus, police institutions that perform intelligence activities may be moving away from their former role to assume new relational formats within this new configuration of

fields, in pursuit of greater autonomy and prestige in the transnational field. According to the author (Bigo, 2020a), intelligence services composed of police officers tend to follow a traditional logic, although highly digitalised, whereas internet-based intelligence services maintain intense transnational activities, generating a field that traverses the state field. What is at stake in this case is the question of loyalty regarding to whom these intelligence services are accountable, for instance, in situations involving classified data concerning national subjects. Bigo's research (2020a) indicated that, in moments of crisis, intelligence services cooperate more effectively among themselves than with other institutions of the same State. Solidarity emerges more easily around shared interests, such as global risks and threats, than around notions of nationalism. For the author, this constitutes evidence of changing patterns in intelligence activities worldwide and of this displacement of loyalties (Bigo, 2020a).

In seeking to understand the connections between the Brazilian Federal Police and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in the so-called war on drugs, Villela (2021) analysed the transnational roles of both institutions in the development of this activity and the direct relations established between them, often independently of governmental authorities. As in the present research, the author also employed field theory as an analytical tool to understand the strategies adopted, examining how exchanges of capital, resources, and influence occurred between the two organisations within the field of disputes. According to the author, this exchange was only possible due to the consolidation of a transnational policing field, which enabled interactions that were often informal, as a result of a shared space of socialisation.

According to Villela (2021), although police functions are restricted to law enforcement, which is directly linked to the State, their performance may occur simultaneously at national and transnational levels, within the same spaces and at the same time. It is not possible to define such performance solely on the basis of institutional nature.

The study revealed that interactions occur beyond the state-centred perspective. In Villela's (2021) research, two characteristics marked cooperative relations among police institutions in the transnational field: autonomy and informality. In line with the approach proposed by Bigo (2016), one of the main findings highlighted in Villela's study (2021) was the relative autonomy of these bureaucracies in relation to their governments. Interaction among police institutions does not merely reflect decisions taken by the highest levels of government, but also reflects the autonomy that these bureaucracies exercise in their routine activities.

In the study in question, Villela (2021) identified a relative autonomy of DEA agents in relation to governmental decision-making, indicating that the interests of that organisation were often more closely aligned with the transnational policing field than with state interests. In the case of the DEA, the institution established ties capable of being sustained despite governmental fluctuations (Villela, 2021). In Brazil, one example of the autonomy of these relations in relation to the governmental agenda cited by Villela (2021) is the telephone interception of the then President of the Republic, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, by an office financed by the CIA, exposing information to non-Brazilian institutions with the authorisation of national police institutions. Furthermore, the FBI's intervention in Operation "Lava Jato" constitutes another example that ran counter to the interests of the upper echelons of the Brazilian government, demonstrating a significant degree of independence from state directives. According to Villela (2021), Brazilian agents demonstrated a sense of prestige in working alongside FBI agents. The studies indicated that the implementation or non-implementation of governmental plans also depends upon autonomous day-to-day decision-making processes. There exists a relative autonomy of institutions vis-à-vis the State within the transnational policing field, as well as a relative autonomy of individual agents in daily decision-making processes. Considering such autonomy in routine activities, the Federal Police could mobilise its digital media in pursuit of greater institutionalisation of its relations

within the transnational field, with the aim of maintaining its institutional autonomy in relation to governments. Although they are characterised by relative autonomy in relation to governmental decision-making, this does not mean that such forms of cooperation are apolitical. Even though they occur predominantly within technical domains, these cooperative practices reflect the institution's political decisions.:

this does not mean that DEA– PF relations constitute a “technical” or simply “problem solving” cooperation; rather, they have to comply with a political agenda led both by the government that creates the agencies and assigns missions and budgets to them and by the police agencies themselves, which mobilize and dispute resources, power, and prestige in their interaction with other police forces (in the field of transnational policing) and state agencies (in the meta-field of the state) (Villela, 2021, p. 122).

Another important element highlighted by Villela (2021) in these new forms of relations is informality. Although legal instruments support practices of international cooperation (such as laws, treaties, and conventions), Villela (2021) emphasises that these police bodies frequently interact outside formal and institutional structures. Through spaces of socialisation among agents from different institutions worldwide, the construction of a direct channel of interaction among police institutions was established, characterised by informal cooperation. In her study, Villela (2021) found that cooperation between the two institutions included various routine activities, such as the sharing of information and the obtaining of records, for example, including the execution of payments to the Federal Police through nominal deposits intended to finance the management of operational matters (Villela, 2021).

According to the author (Villela, 2021), this interaction among police institutions has become increasingly common. Cooperation occurs in various forms, such as courses, training programs, the provision of technology, and the sharing of information. One of the elements of cooperation identified in the documents analysed by Villela (2021) between 1992 and 2013

was the supply of equipment and technologies to the Brazilian police. In the joint Brazil–United States efforts to combat drug trafficking, Villela (2021) emphasises that the joint production and sharing of intelligence constitute fundamental instruments of cooperation, resulting in numerous operations and frequent meetings for the exchange of information. Villela (2021) also highlights the importance of conferences, events, and training activities in transferring knowledge and strengthening institutional ties, functioning as a direct channel of interaction. Workshops and training initiatives contribute to the construction of a transnational network of police professionals, enabling the sharing of information, contacts, and closer institutional engagement.

Several factors enable the transnational sharing and transfer of knowledge between state bureaucracies, such as the comings and goings of professionals who attend training, seminars, and conferences in other countries; the dissemination of scientific and pedagogical materials such as manuals, magazines, and articles specialized in the theme; and also the development of a security industry that generates technology transnationally shared and commercialized, creating conditions for the application of this knowledge (Villela, 2021, p. 126).

The position and importance of actors are also fundamental for understanding the dynamics of the field. In the relations examined by Villela (2021), the DEA emerged as an actor of significant importance within the field, concentrating and defining the resources under dispute, such as prestige, knowledge, and technology, including in relation to the Federal Police. Whether through the provision of resources or training activities directed toward the Federal Police, the DEA maintained its central position within the transnational field analysed by Villela (2021). One consequence of the prominence of this institution is that the Federal Police began to demand and reproduce practices of the United States institution considered “advanced, efficient and morally superior” (Villela, 2021, p. 114). Access itself to

the training programs and resources provided by the DEA became an important element in the Federal Police's relations with other police institutions that do not have access to such resources, such as state police forces, for example. Considering the prestige and international recognition held by the DEA within this field, Villela (2021) emphasises that the Federal Police came to "demand and reproduce disseminated practices considered advanced, efficient and morally superior" (Villela, 2021, p. 123). The study on the relations between the DEA and the Federal Police conducted by Villela (2021) evidenced exchanges of resources, such as technologies and knowledge, within a transnational policing field. Furthermore, the importance of the DEA as a central actor in this field was observed, defining and centralising the resources at stake within the field.

In the transnational policing field, the actors consist of security institutions, whether public or private, that operate internationally through the exchange of resources and technologies among their institutions. The perspective presented departs from the notion of police institutions as instruments at the State's disposal. This shift in perspective enables the configuration of this third possible field of disputes in which the Federal Police is involved, namely the transnational policing field, which traverses and extends beyond a state-centred perspective, while recognising the autonomy of agents in the pursuit of their own resources (Villela, 2021; Bigo, 2011). Whereas the first two fields, defence and criminal justice, are structured around state forces and the forms of capital provided by the State, as well as the rules imposed by it, the possibility of action within the transnational policing field only emerged through this breaking of State boundaries. It is within this field that the Federal Police may operate with greater independence, and has done so in certain respects.

International security fairs constitute important spaces in which these interactions and exchanges of capital among public and private agents take place. One of the most relevant studies on security fairs was conducted by Grassiani (2022), who analysed fairs held in Tel

Aviv, Israel. Beyond the establishment of commercial relations, the author identified other forms of relationships and sociability operating within an environment governed by its own rules. In addition to serving as venues for commercial activities, international security fairs also function as spaces for political alliances. Within them occurs the diffusion of knowledge, mentalities, and technologies. The idea of demonstrating technology and power lies at the core of security fairs, which trace their origins to national and world fairs held during the previous century (Grassiani, 2022), such as the Brussels World's Fair of 1958, during which the Atomium, a structure measuring 102 meters in height and still a major tourist attraction in the city, was constructed. Following this same logic, the author emphasises that the nation itself came to be conceived as a brand, capable of being displayed and marketed.

Technological demonstrations dominate both the central spaces of the fairs and the lectures, featuring equipment and weaponry endowed with an affective dimension, combining sounds, visual effects, and even scents. By bringing together public authorities from different countries, Israel seeks to validate itself as a provider of solutions for all, enabling the commercialisation of its image and expertise to other international actors. More than products, political messages are constructed and commercialised concerning who represents a threat or not, who requires protection, and how such protection should be carried out. According to the author, politics within security fairs is enacted in multiple ways, through spaces, discourses, visual representations, demonstrations, and the definition of threats or solutions (Grassiani, 2022). Among the actors observed by Grassiani (2022) were former military generals who founded private technology companies after retirement, maintaining constant circulation between public and private roles. However, the author also identified the presence of officials from various countries, including military personnel and police officers, often recognisable by the uniforms of different units and battalions, thereby evidencing the strong presence of public actors within this space.

Security fairs in Brazil have also gained prominence due to the political relations and demonstrations of power and meaning displayed within them, although they have not yet achieved the same impact as the Israeli fair, for example⁷¹. The 3rd Congress of Police Operations (COP), a security fair held in São Paulo between October 25 and 27, 2023, is characterised on its official website as the “largest Latin American event on Public Security”⁷² and presents several elements indicative of the political relations established in that space. In addition to the significant presence of public actors, information regarding the fair reveals elements similar to those found in international fairs, such as the definition of threats, technological demonstrations, and the valorisation of police expertise.

Sociological studies on security fairs remain limited, and studies addressing the presence of public actors as active agents within these spaces are virtually non-existent. Although existing studies indicate the significant presence of private actors (Grassiani, 2022), the participation of public actors has become increasingly evident, indicating intense relations within this transnational policing field, for which fairs constitute one of its loci. Beyond the trade in security technologies and equipment, relations among public and private actors, such as security companies, representatives of military forces, and public police institutions from various States, mobilize, exchange, and accumulate multiple forms of capital in addition to economic capital (which constitutes the primary driving force of the fair), including cultural capital (through the exchange of information) and, above all, symbolic capital.

The principal example of the performance of a public entity within this field is that of Israel, which not only sponsors and organises such fairs, but in addition to demonstrating its technological capacity and power, reinforces itself not only as a strong nation but also promotes the image of a State capable of ensuring security against potential enemies. These

⁷¹ <https://ponte.org/feira-de-negocios-de-seguranca-em-sp-mostra-relacao-nebulosa-de-estado-com-setor-privado/>

⁷² <https://cop.international/>

are not merely commercial relations, but rather demonstrations of power and institutional strategy. There are still no substantial academic studies addressing the presence of public police institutions at international fairs, although various journalistic reports have documented the participation of these institutions in such spaces. Another element indicating strong international relations is the acquisition of technologies and software employed by police institutions worldwide, whose diffusion, updating, and promotion take place within security and technology fairs. Controversies involving technologies marketed by large corporations are not uncommon, whether due to the possibilities of access to private data that do not always comply with legislation concerning individual rights, or due to potential irregularities in the contracting of such services. This does not imply that other companies are capable of providing the same services with equivalent quality and technical capacity, nor that the contracted services are not essential or do not incorporate improvements into national public security services. Nevertheless, it suggests that the contracting for and use of services from certain companies continue to involve degrees of opacity, preferences, and decision-making processes governed by rules that extend beyond mere supply and demand. Security fairs and the participation of public police institutions in the relations established within them may therefore provide indications and analytical elements for understanding the dynamics underlying these technological acquisitions.

The sharing of technologies, information, and training programs constitutes the principal elements of exchange within transnational policing fields, in the form of technological, informational, and cultural capital, respectively. In recent years, several security technologies have been adopted in Brazil and worldwide, such as body-worn surveillance cameras, drones, facial recognition software, and large-scale data analysis programs. However, Melgaço and Van Brakel (2021) argue that the effectiveness of such technologies is rarely questioned, configuring what the authors describe as “security theatres”.

There exists a political and commercial appeal, such that other influential actors participate in the process of adopting surveillance technologies, guided by distinct interests and power relations. Consequently, the use of certain technologies may not be as effective as the notion of effectiveness publicly conveyed suggests (Melgaço & Van Brakel, 2021). Theatres, according to the concept established by Melgaço and Van Brakel (2021), are linked to opportunity and demand, made possible through effective communication strategies. A security theatre that is not publicised fails to fulfil its purpose. This “theatre” may occur with the objective of enhancing valuation within the transnational field, through the dissemination, for example, of technological acquisitions and participation in fairs, training programs, and international events.

Thus, as in the other two fields analysed, namely defence and criminal justice, communication strategies are not directed solely toward other actors within the field of power. The interviews provided indications that the target audience of such publications is diffuse, making it impossible to map it at this stage. Nevertheless, communication may seek to reinforce the institution’s image as an active participant within that field, highlighting the principal elements valued therein as a strategy to achieve better positioning and to increase its symbolic power within the transnational policing field. In this sense, the Federal Police may employ its communication channels and the construction of its institutional image toward strengthening its position within a transnational policing field, substantially different from other fields, possessing its own dynamics and resources, as a strategy to enhance its symbolic power. The Federal Police may use its digital media to convey the image of active engagement within the transnational policing field, as a means of increasing its symbolic power in this field, and mobilise its international relations as a form of capital to be employed across different state fields. These two aspects will be addressed in the analysis of Federal Police data.

4 SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS AND DISCOURSE

Lá fora faz um tempo confortável

A vigilância cuida do normal

Os automóveis ouvem a notícia

Os homens a publicam no jornal

(Zé Ramalho)⁷³

Studies on communication in social relations emerged a few decades ago, with the rise of mass communications. The currents, however, were at times divided between pessimism, understanding the media as autonomous and manipulative forces, and optimism regarding technologies, as saviours of humanity's problems (Maigret, 2010). Maigret (2010) proposes that studying discourses in the media requires adopting a third path, understanding that even though technologies allow new reach, new networks, these networks are always connected to culture and to the power networks established by humans.

Applying the perspective of the social sciences to the media is, first and foremost, to reject both idealism and sophistry. The social is not reducible to technique, neither to be submerged in it nor to be regenerated by it; it has its own dynamics. Human reason does not rest on "eternal truths" to be shared only through dialogue: it is, above all, a confrontation of reasons in a process in which common truths are gradually established without being transcendent. Media, by connecting people, form cultures and participate in cultures, while they favour, sabotage, or stabilise powers. They exist within the networks of power, but they do not constitute networks of power in themselves, nor autonomous demonic entities. (...) Studying the economic, cultural,

⁷³ This is an excerpt from a Brazilian song, which can be translated as: "It's comfortable weather outside, Surveillance takes care of the normal, Cars hear the news, Men publish it in the newspaper".

and political consequences of changes induced by the media is, therefore, to avoid invoking magical virtues or unknown powers, and instead to return always to those who invent and use them—human beings—and to the relations that bind them on the dual plane of action and ideology. (Maigret, 2010, p. 48)⁷⁴.

The relationship of the police with the media involves understanding this dual dynamic, which avoids extremes: neither of the media as autonomous entities of manipulation, nor of the police as victims or perpetrators, who would have in the media merely a technical means. This connection between the media and the police has assumed different forms across various communication channels in Brazil and worldwide. The most widely studied is the relationship between the police and television newspapers, as in the classic studies by Reiner (2000), which addressed the symbolic meaning of the police in mass media, and by Garland (2017) on the effects of mass media on popular perceptions of crime. In Brazil, studies have been conducted, for example, on the massive presence of the police in various reports on public safety, as the main voices in police news (Ramos & Paiva, 2007); and on the effects of sensationalist press and the so-called “pinga-sangue” newspapers on collective thought (Angrimani, 1993).

The emergence of new channels related to new information technologies has imposed new formats, aimed at the different audiences that access them. The emergence of

⁷⁴ Translated from the original in Portuguese: “Aplicar o olhar das ciências sociais aos meios de comunicação é, primeiramente, rejeitar o idealismo tanto quanto a sofística. O social não se reduz à técnica, nem para ficar submerso nela, nem para ser regenerado nela; ele tem sua própria dinâmica. A razão dos homens não repousa sobre “verdades eternas” a serem compartilhadas somente pelo diálogo: ela é, antes de tudo, confrontação das razões num processo em que verdades comuns são pouco a pouco estabelecidas sem serem transcendentais. Os meios de comunicação, pelo fato de ligarem os homens, formam culturas e participam de culturas, enquanto favorecem, sabotam ou estabilizam poderes. Eles estão nas redes do poder, mas não constituem redes de poder em si, entidades demoníacas autônomas. (...) Estudar as consequências econômicas, culturais e políticas das mudanças induzidas pelos meios de comunicação é, então, evitar evocar virtudes mágicas, poderes desconhecidos, mas voltar sempre àqueles que os inventam e os utilizam, os seres humanos, e às relações que os unem no duplo plano da ação e da ideologia (Maigret, 2010, p. 48).

technologies used for policing, such as drones and body cameras, for example, also represents an evolution in communication by police institutions. The format of communication is no longer restricted to TV channels, nor is it limited to the police reporting their version of events. While body cameras have imposed new limits, technologies like these have also opened new opportunities to show and, in part, sensationalise police work. Videos of operations, pursuits, and aerial images, which were previously seen only in police films, have become routine on the social media of various police institutions in Brazil. When Atef Abu Saif (2016) narrated the use of technologies by drones in the conflict in the Gaza Strip in his personal account, he also narrated a logic of technology use that would become so common as to “sit down to dinner with it,” and that would change the entire logic of new conflicts and the relations between security forces and the population. With technologies so present, police communication has also evolved.

Recently, social media has assumed a certain prominence, with studies on the tools and implications of the online presence of the police still scarce. Whereas previously the television in the living room was the communication vehicle transmitted to all family members, today the broad access to smartphones has fragmented the tools for making information available. For Zémon (2009), public communication represents a paradox: everyone has the right to the same information, while the receivers form heterogeneous groups that interpret this information at different levels.

By arguing that communication is composed of three dimensions, culture, politics, and technology, Maigret (2010) proposes that before we consider technological apparatuses, with their limitations and possibilities, communication is imbued with the cultural and political dimensions. In this sense, even though this study addresses specific channels of the Federal Police, which reflect the institution’s choices at a specific time, the data must be analysed under these cultural and political aspects, in which rests the essence of the communication

presented. The media chosen by the Federal Police could be different, the successful platform of the moment could have another name or another format. The aim is not to understand how the Federal Police acts in a specific digital locus, but how it promotes its communication in these spaces, in order to pursue its interests in whichever medium.

A discourse analysis of the collected data was conducted, which will be presented in this work according to the three dimensions of analysis indicated by theory (Fairclough, 2001). In the first dimension, the initial information and content analysis of the main external communication channels of the institution will be presented: digital media content (Instagram, Facebook e X-Twitter⁷⁵) and featured news on the website. The communication channels that will be presented were defined in a prior analysis of the institution's communication, and were subsequently confirmed in interviews with the professionals working in the sector:

*Interviewee 6: Today, the main dissemination channels are **the Federal Police website**, where most of our audience, the press, are journalists. The general public also accesses our site frequently, but they are mostly looking for services, such as obtaining a passport, criminal records, or a firearm license, for example. Social media has already reached a broader audience, which is not necessarily the press, but the end public, ordinary citizens in general. Today we have **Instagram, Facebook, and X.**"*

With the exception of a few social media posts made in English and Spanish, the data on the communication channels are all in Portuguese, the sole official language of Brazil. In order not to compromise the meaning of any figures generated from the original texts in Portuguese, some representations contain expressions in Portuguese, which are later translated into English in the respective tables in the appendices. The interviews were also conducted in

⁷⁵ In September 2023, the social network Twitter changed its name to X. As part of the data were collected during the period of the former name, and to avoid causing confusion for readers, it was decided to use both names jointly in this work.

Portuguese. To facilitate the reading of the work, they were transcribed into English, but the original transcriptions are included in the endnotes.

In the second dimension, the conditions of text production, the flow of publication, possible influences on agendas, and aspects of intertextuality will be presented. In the third dimension, the elements that relate to the research hypotheses and indicate institutional directions will be presented. The purpose of the discourse analysis is to examine how the institutional image is constructed by the Federal Police. In this section, we will present the strategies used by the Federal Police across its different analysed channels, according to the initial hypotheses and research questions, in order to identify differences and similarities in the discourses. The chosen channels were selected due to the lack of intermediation, or intermediation only by the platform itself, since it cannot be ignored that platforms also condition discourses and the format of communication, but those in which the Federal Police itself decides what to publish or not, and how and when to do so.

4.1 First Dimension: text

4.1.1 Digital Media

In the first dimension proposed by Fairclough (2011) for critical discourse analysis, the text, its structure, the terms used, grammatical choices, and language are analysed. Despite Brazil being a highly unequal country⁷⁶, it is one of the countries with the highest social media consumption in the world. Data from “Digital 2024: Brazil,” released by DataReportal (2024), indicate that around 78% of Brazilians were using social media at the time the

⁷⁶ The World Inequality Report 2022 pointed out that Brazil is one of the most unequal countries in the world, despite improvements after the year 2000 with income distribution programs, such as Bolsa Família.
https://wir2022.wid.world/www-site/uploads/2023/03/D_FINAL_WIL_RIM_RAPPORT_2303.pdf

research was conducted. In addition, the time spent is also high, with Brazilians spending about 9 hours and 13 minutes per day on the internet, of which approximately 3 hours and 37 minutes are spent accessing social media. Among social media users, besides WhatsApp, which ranks first among the most accessed, the report indicated that 91.2% use Instagram, followed by Facebook, used by 83.3%. TikTok ranks 4th with 65.1% usage, and X (Twitter) is used by 44.4%, in 9th place on the list.

These data indicate the intense use of social media by Brazilians, as well as some cultural differences. While in some parts of the world X (Twitter) is the most accessed social media, in Brazil Instagram leads the ranking, with more than twice the number of users. It is possible to find households in Brazil that lack many appliances, such as TVs and computers, or even basic sanitation, but whose residents have at least one cell phone with internet access to use social media. Considering the cultural and political aspect of the digital communication format in Brazil, the type of social network matters little. What matters is what is communicated on it, or on other media, in their different formats.

The main digital media used by the Federal Police at the time of the research were Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter). For the study, all posts on the Federal Police's official profiles on the three platforms in 2022 and 2023 were analysed, totalling 3,794 posts. For each post, the following information was collected: publication platform, publication date, post text, text contained in the image (when applicable). Although the images were not scraped, the collected information is sufficient for the purposes of this research, as the texts generally reflect the content of the images posted as a whole. In addition, some images will be presented to exemplify the discourses used. The digital media database can be represented by Table 2.

Table 2

Data collected from the Federal Police's digital media – 2022 and 2023

Social media database

Media	2022	2023	Total
Instagram	210	469	679
Facebook	122	305	427
X (Twitter)	944	1744	2688

After the initial exploration of the material, a first coding of the posts was carried out. Subsequently, a second coding was conducted, and some inferences were made from the data, in accordance with the purposes of the research, as proposed by Bardin (2016). Temporary posts on digital media, such as Instagram stories, for example, were not analysed due to the impossibility of monitoring and scraping, since they disappear after 24 hours. Part of the posts are repeated across the three media, with the content being reused. However, some posts also differ, either because of the audiences or the structure of the platforms, which can facilitate or hinder the dissemination of certain content formats. Thus, the contents and the differences between the platforms will be presented.

The first coding aimed to identify the general profile of the posts, distinguishing those that reflected actions or operations carried out by the institution from those identified as institutional in nature, with more general information about services and agreements, for example. This distinction, especially regarding the flow and content profile, was also indicated by the interviewees:

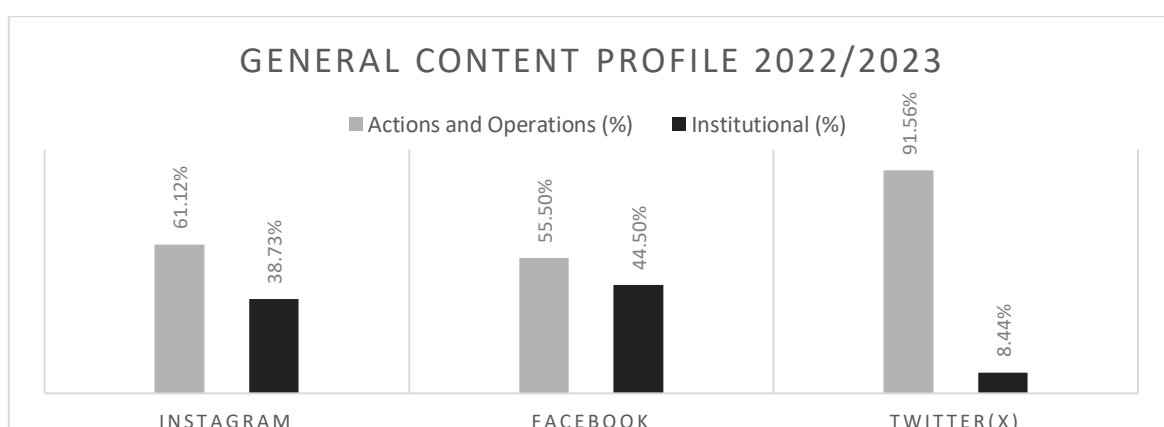
*Interviewee 4: I think that today I can say that, on the **institutional line**, we have **three posts per week**, which are planned content, produced, going through scripting, image capture, and editing, all that production. So, today, there might be three posts per*

week, but the actions, especially in terms of transparency, basically publish what happens, what comes in.^{vi}

Thus, initially, the data on the media have two main configurations: institutional posts; and posts about actions and operations, as presented in Graph 1.

Graph 1

General profile of posts on digital media – 2022 and 2023



Although institutional posts have significant representativeness, especially on X (Twitter) and Instagram, the actions and operations that indicate the dissemination of work carried out almost in real time carry more weight in the overall postings, representing the majority of posts across the three media. This may be a result of how the work is conducted within the sector, as will be indicated in the second dimension of the discourse. The interviews indicated that information about actions is passed on by the sectors from the police stations of the various federal units, so that the press office only needs to evaluate the relevance and refine the content, as will be presented in the second dimension of the discourse analysis. Although the flow is too large to cover the entire country, the work for these posts by the communications office is partial. The content of institutional posts, on the other hand, comes from the communications sector itself, which carries out the complete process for the

publication, including planning, content creation, text, graphic design, etc. When comparing the logistical differences, although action posts are the majority, a considerable effort by the communications sector to publish institutional topics is observed, as a strategy to reinforce the image, especially on Instagram and Facebook.

On Twitter (X), a higher proportion of posts about actions and operations was observed compared to the other media. This difference may occur due to the social network's own format, which allows more than one tweet on the same subject. Thus, an operation that was published in one post on Instagram may have had its information published in four or five tweets, for example, as a characteristic of the differentiated communication format on the platforms. Operations and actions may require more detailed information about the institution's activities, necessitating additional tweets to explain elements such as the type of crime, forces involved, efforts expended, number of targets, and other information the institution may consider relevant. This predominance of posts about actions and operations also results in a reinforcement of ostensive policing elements, as will be demonstrated below.

Regarding the actions or operations carried out on that day, the main information is usually summarised, accompanied by an image of the operation showing agents or seizures made.

Instagram. April 13, 2022. Text: The Federal Police launched on Wednesday (April 13) Operation No Way Home, which aims to combat the crime of reducing individuals to a condition analogous to slavery. The investigation examines whether a group of workers, including children and the elderly, were subjected to degrading labour, without proper hygiene, without guaranteed labour rights, and without adequate accommodation, as well as restrictions on freedom due to debts and constant surveillance. If the criminal hypothesis is confirmed, the investigated individuals could face a sentence exceeding 12 years, considering the presence of children and

adolescents among the victims.^{vii}

The interviews indicated that the communications sector prioritises using language that is easy to understand, as a characteristic of digital media communication. Often, to maintain this feature of quick and direct language, more than one post on the same topic is made, especially on X, in addition to including a link that directs to the website.

Post 1: *A team of Brazilian federal police officers will join the International Police Cooperation Centre (CCPI) at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar. Learn more:*

<https://t.co/zxvPPEtPqH> <https://t.co/hveQNOG3Jb>

Post 2: *The CCPI was created to ensure the security of the event through collaborative action among police representatives from the 32 participating countries and international organizations, such as @INTERPOL_HQ and @EUROPOL, under the leadership of the Qatar National Police. <https://t.co/3n4D3uxWas>*

Post 3: *Brazil was invited by the Qatar Security and Operations Committee to join the CCPI by sending an experienced team of federal police officers. The officers will work in the command and control centre and also have direct contact with Brazilian fans.*

@SeCommittee2022 <https://t.co/gzJy1gOsoQ>

Published on November 17, 2022, on Twitter/X.^{viii}

Posts about actions and operations are those in which a direct and measurable activity of the Federal Police in combating different crimes is disclosed. Actions occurring throughout Brazil are reported, with information sent to headquarters. These are usually actions that took place on the same day as the publication, with some exceptions for posts that disclose general data on the fight against certain crimes or a new image of an operation that occurred some time ago. As a rule, they follow a text pattern, including information such as the name of the operation, type of crime, actions undertaken, and results. They were divided according to the nature of the crimes against which the Federal Police acts. Institutional posts are those

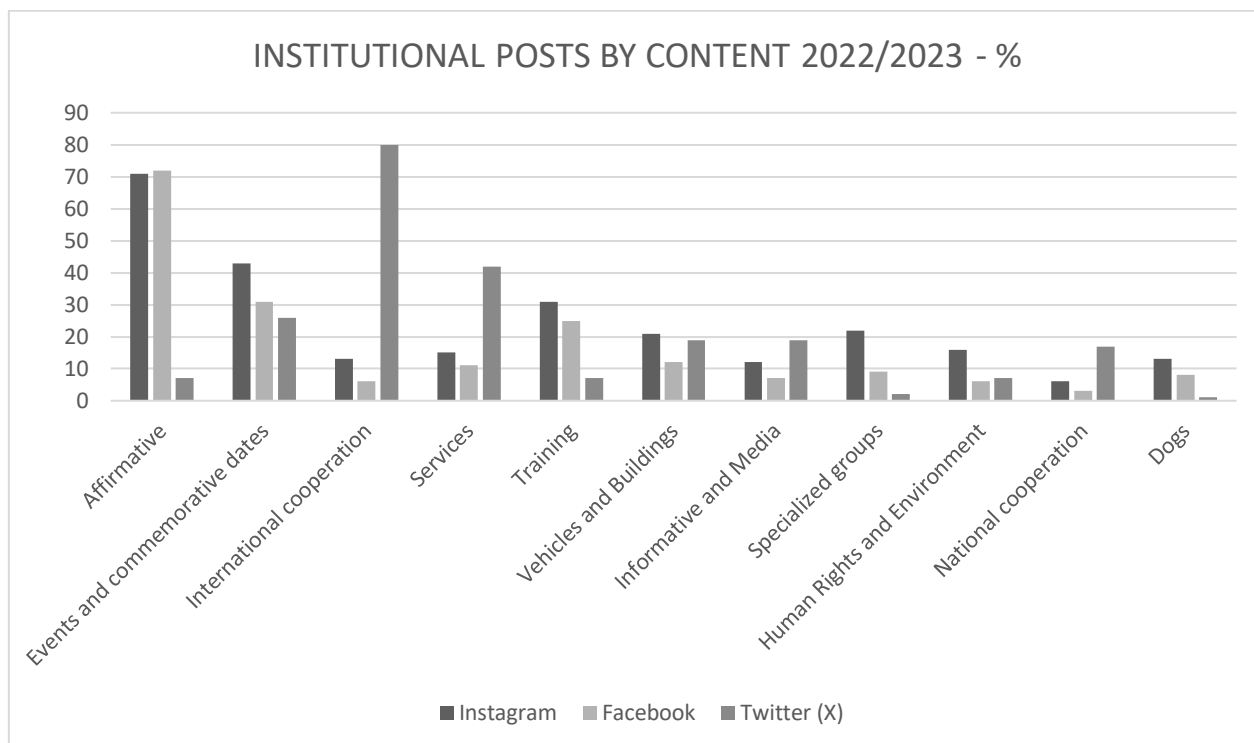
intended to reinforce the institution's image, without disclosing specific crime-fighting actions. The content of institutional posts is more diverse than that of actions or operations. Both profiles of posts will be analysed in more detail below.

4.1.1.1 Institutional publications

Institutional posts are those that provide information about the institution, excluding actions and operations, and may address various types of content. In institutional posts, although the communications sector is responsible for the entire content production (which does not occur in actions and operations, where part of the content comes from sectoral police stations), generating a greater workload, it is the space where strategies can effectively be developed. They were identified and coded according to the following content groups: Affirmative, events and commemorative dates, international cooperation, services, training, vehicles and buildings, informative and media, specialised groups, Human Rights and environment, national cooperation, dogs, as indicated in Graph 2.

Graph 2

Institutional posts on Instagram, Facebook, and X (Twitter) by percentage – 2022 and 2023
(%)



Posts with affirmative messages (Figures 6 and 7) are proportionally the most significant among institutional posts, especially on Instagram and Facebook. They carry the institution's values, some phrases of encouragement, and greetings such as good morning, good afternoon, have a good weekend, or good work. They are accompanied by images of operations or Federal Police structures, but do not provide relevant information about the institution or the actions carried out. They play a fundamental role in the Federal Police's communication strategy, as their purpose is to generate engagement on the page and bring followers closer with an easy and accessible language. Although they do not carry specific information about the Federal Police's activities, the messages and hashtags are always action-oriented, reinforcing the institution's image as continuously active.

Figure 6*Affirmative institutional publication*

Source: Publication from April 4, 2022, on Instagram. Post text: “With determination, discipline and unity we are always ready for the next mission. *#federalpolice #pf*”.

These posts may be associated with what the interviewees indicated as a strategy of “humanising” the police and bringing them closer to society. This is because they carry elements that reduce the symbolic distance between what is understood as the country’s main security force and the page follower. They convey the message that the police itself is communicating directly with each follower, reducing the distance that institutional texts normally carry. Although not the object of the study, this message becomes more evident when observing the numerous, equally affirmative, responses to these posts. Even so, they almost always include symbols of power, such as vehicles, uniforms, and badges, reinforcing the institution’s symbolic power.

Figure 7*Affirmative institutional publication*

Source: Publication from November 26, 2023, on Instagram. Post text: "*Happy Sunday to all. #pfnasruas #federalpolice #pfcombate #pfoperacao*".

Posts about commemorative dates and events are the second most prominent category among institutional posts. They show the leadership's agenda at important events, in addition to celebrating dates that also reinforce the institution's values or its role in crime prevention, such as National Day Against Smuggling, Black Awareness Day, and Federal Police Day, for example.

The dogs featured (Figures 8 and 9) are those that belong to the canine operations group, a technical unit primarily focused on combating drug trafficking. During the period, X (Twitter) had only one post featuring dogs, on February 18, 2022, of a technical nature, indicating differences in the profile adopted across platforms. Affective posts gained more prominence on Instagram.

Figure 8*Post featuring dogs on Instagram*

Source: Publication from April 30, 2023, on Instagram. Post text: *“Hello, I’m Odin, the future police dog of the Federal Police! Thank you very much to everyone who helped choose my name! I promise to do my best and support the Federal Police in the fight against drug trafficking! You can count on my keen sense of smell @canilpoliciafederal”.*

Some posts featuring dogs aim to inform about their work in specialised units, while others have an affective character, which can also be part of the strategy to humanise the police. The dog is not presented solely for its instrumental purpose, but as an element of entertainment on social media, intended to produce the same effects that popular kitten videos might have on any distracted social media follower. Like many profiles of specialised units within the Federal Police created in recent years, the Central Kennel of the Federal Police launched its Instagram account in March 2021 under the handle @pfcnilcentral. Since then, 468 posts have been published (as of 12 April 2026), indicating a high level of activity on social media. The highlighted content includes not only routine operational activities but also litters of puppies and retired dogs. Again, two elements are presented: a humanisation strategy, with a direct and familiar phrase, together with an element that refers to the police’s

power, such as uniforms and police emblems.

Figure 9

Post featuring dogs on Instagram

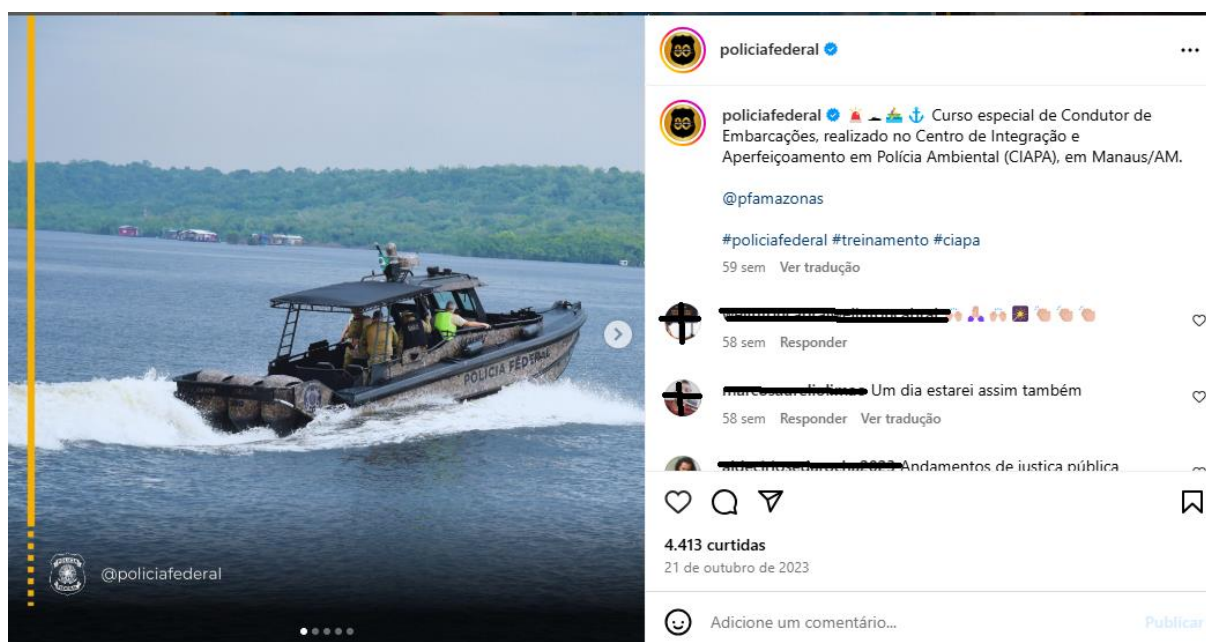


Source: Publication on Instagram on April 1, 2023. Post text: “*Have a nice sunny Saturday*”.

Posts about training and special units (Figure 10) aim to demonstrate the team’s improvement and specialisation across diverse operational fronts. They show that the team is prepared and continuously improving. The groups featured are the Federal Police’s internal specialised units, such as the Rapid Intervention Group (GPI), Special Maritime Police Unit (NEPOM), and Operational Aviation Command (CAOP). The trainings may be conducted by the Federal Police or by other institutions in which Federal Police agents participate, such as diving courses, shooting courses, police training courses, tactical operations courses, etc. Based on the theoretical framework, they may also represent the mobilisation of cultural capital in the media, indicating the transmission of knowledge by the police and expertise (Diphhoorn & Grassiani, 2016).

Figure 10

Example of a training post



Source: Publication on Instagram on October 21, 2023. Post text: “*Special boat driver course, held at the Environmental Police Integration and Training Centre (CIAPA), in Manaus/AM. #federalpolice #training #ciapa*”

In institutional posts on social media, the language is even more informal, with the purpose, as a rule, of fostering audience engagement and encouraging recurring visits to the profile, without the content always appearing similar and repetitive (as if only institutional operations were being posted, for example). Motivational phrases, institutional campaigns, commemorative dates, and similar content are shared.

Published content:

Post: Have a great weekend, everyone! 🍷🍷

Published on June 18, 2022, on Instagram

Post: 🍷🍷 *The week has started, and so have we!*

Published on August 14, 2023, on Instagram.^{ix}

In a dynamic of volatility and agility inherent to digital media, the interviews indicate

that image quality is a relevant factor. It is not enough to provide information about their activities; it is necessary to capture the reader's attention amid the rapid scrolling of the feed. Attracting public attention to institutional work is one of the challenges for the communications office, as reflected in the strategies it employs.

*Interviewee 7: Today I would say that the main challenges have a lot to do with the reality of people, of citizens, again noting that nowadays people have less and less time to dedicate to staying informed or studying. **Everything is very rushed; there is a constant bombardment of information. The major challenge is to find a language, whether textual or visual, that attracts a person who has increasingly less time to dedicate to reading or study. This is a permanent challenge.** It is a challenge of fitting good police work into a format, into a "recipe" that is attractive to the reader, so that, among the hundreds of pieces of information bombarding them, they recognise that this particular information from the Federal Police is relevant and click to see what it is about. So, it **is about creating engaging texts, providing compelling images that capture attention, always considering our audience amid the countless pieces of information people encounter daily.** I think that is the main challenge.*^x

A similar coding was presented in a previous study conducted on the Federal Police's media in 2017 and 2018 (Avanzi, 2021, 2022). In that study, the data indicated partially similar results, such as content aimed at affective engagement and positivity, including institutional greetings, affirmative phrases, and other elements beyond ostentatious symbols, such as the dogs. The studies also indicated the massive dissemination of the various crime-fighting areas in which the Federal Police operates, which remains the core of institutional communication. One of the highlights compared to previously conducted studies was the prominence of posts on international cooperation, which gained significant visibility, especially on X (Twitter), as shown in Graph 2. The posts (Figures 11 and 12) indicate both

the international agreements and events in which the Federal Police participates, as well as actions and operations in partnership with other police forces worldwide.

Figure 11

International cooperation post



Source: Publication on Instagram on December 16, 2023. Post text: “*Last week, the Federal Police participated in the 34th Meeting of the Working Group on Wildlife Crimes, held at the @interpol_hq headquarters in Lyon. The Director of Amazon and Environment of the Federal Police, Humberto Freire, presented the PF80 project, the AMAS Plan and explained the projects that are being implemented by the Federal Police to combat environmental crimes, with emphasis on the implementation of the International Police Cooperation Centre in the Amazon (CCPI AMAZÔNIA). The event also saw the election of the new Permanent Group to Combat Wildlife Crimes, with the election of a Brazilian representative as vice-president.*”

The international partners mentioned are diverse: INTERPOL; AMERIPOL; EUROPOL; CIC of the immigrant; ACNUR Brazil; IOM Brazil; EL PACCTO Europe-Latin America – Program for Assistance Against Organised Transnational Crime; UNODC; SENAD Paraguay (National Secretariat for Drug Policies); United States Special Operations

Command; U.S. Embassy; DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration); Europol; NCMEC (National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children).

Figure 12

International cooperation post



Source: Publication on Instagram on December 19, 2023. Post text: “*The Federal Police and @senad_paraguay launched Operation Ignis on Tuesday (19), which arrested one of the leaders of a violent criminal organisation that exercised control in the border region through drug and arms trafficking, in addition to carrying out several violent actions inspired by the main Mexican cartels. The individual arrested is considered one of the major suppliers of arms and drugs to criminals operating in Rio de Janeiro, and his group operated large international trafficking schemes that had Brazil as their destination. Nine arrests were made and a large arsenal of weapons was seized*”.

On X (Twitter), some posts were made in Portuguese and replicated in English (Table 3), which is not usual on social media in Brazil, possibly with the intention of communicating with an international audience. Although few compared to the rest, they indicate a tendency toward international communication and the use of these channels for this purpose. One post

was also replicated in Spanish on X (Twitter), following its publication in Portuguese and English.

Table 3

Posts on X (Twitter) in English

Twitter/ X	November 28, 2023	BFP attends in the opening of Interpol's General Assembly The 91st @INTERPOL_HQ General Assembly commenced on Tuesday, November 28th, in Vienna, Austria. Andrei Rodrigues, the Director-General of the Federal Police, is leading the Brazilian delegation. Also in attendance is Valdecy Urquiza, the Director of International Cooperation of the Federal Police, who currently serves as the Vice-President of Interpol for the Americas. Urquiza is the Brazilian candidate for the position of Secretary-General of Interpol. The General Assembly is the annual meeting of the 195 member countries of Interpol, where the main decisions affecting the direction of the largest global non-governmental organization, the resources necessary for international cooperation, working methods, finances, and activity programs are made.
Twitter/ X	September 14, 2023	On this Wednesday night (9/13), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs @ItamaratyGovBr and the Ministry of Justice and Public Security @mjspgov of Brazil have officially announced the brazilian candidacy to the post of Secretary General of @INTERPOL_HQ . Find out more: https://t.co/GOR5sfpuwa Federal Police Commissioner @ValdecyUrquiza was nominated as Brazil's candidate. In his speech, Urquiza presented his vision for Interpol and his commitment to global security. He also highlighted the need for a fast, innovative and inclusive organization, ready to face the challenges of a constantly changing international scenario.

		Valdecy Urquiza currently holds the positions of Interpol's Vice President for the Americas and Brazilian Federal Police's director of International Cooperation.
Twitter/ X	June 15, 2023	#InternationalCyberOffenderPreventionDay You may think that you're anonymous online, but you're not. We don't enjoy knocking on your door, the consequences may ruin your life. Use your cyberskills in a legal and positive way #CyberPrevent

The Federal Police also began to give more prominence to its role in INTERPOL, which was amplified by the appointment of the Federal Police Delegate as Secretary-General of the organisation in 2024. Since the digital media data are from 2022 and 2023, it was not possible to measure the direct impact of this appointment on the channels, only its growing prominence, especially on X (Twitter), in the years preceding the appointment. Although one of the main events related to INTERPOL, with the appointment of Valdecy Urquiza, occurred in 2024, the data indicate that the Federal Police had already been in a process of strengthening its image as internationally active. The data on internationalisation, which were also mentioned by the interviewees, indicate a movement to reinforce a possible field of international policing, as will be presented in the section on the third dimension of the discourse.

4.1.1.2 Publications of actions and operations

Posts about actions or operations (Figure 13) represent the majority of the content on digital media. As previously indicated, this is possibly due to the sector's dynamics, since the content is sent by the dozens of sectoral police stations in Brazil to the Federal Police press office in Brasília. They are called operations when the activity is pre-coordinated or involves

more than one target or more than one state force, as indicated by the content and for the purposes of this study. When the activity is isolated, with or without prior planning, such as arrests and flagrante delicto, for example, it is referred to as an action.

The Federal Police's work in combating different types of crime is extensive, covering, for example, crimes against Human Rights, tax crimes, and international drug trafficking. Nineteen categories of crime suppression were identified in the posts: Drug trafficking; Crimes against the Environment; Corruption and misappropriation of public funds; Fraud and Financial crimes; Sexual crimes; Illegal trade of products; Crimes against Human Rights; Crimes against democracy; Crimes against the social security system; Arms trafficking and irregularities; Multiple crimes or generic; Security and Inspection activities; Crimes against property; Counterfeiting money; Criminal organization and Militia; Money laundering; Murder; Electoral crimes; Terrorism.

Figure 13

Operation post on Instagram



Source: Publication on Instagram on December 23, 2023. Post text: “*Photo taken during Operation Golden Frontier, to combat illegal mining, on the border between Brazil and Colombia*”.

Regarding the actions or operations carried out on that day, the main information is usually summarised, accompanied by an image of the operation showing agents or seizures made.

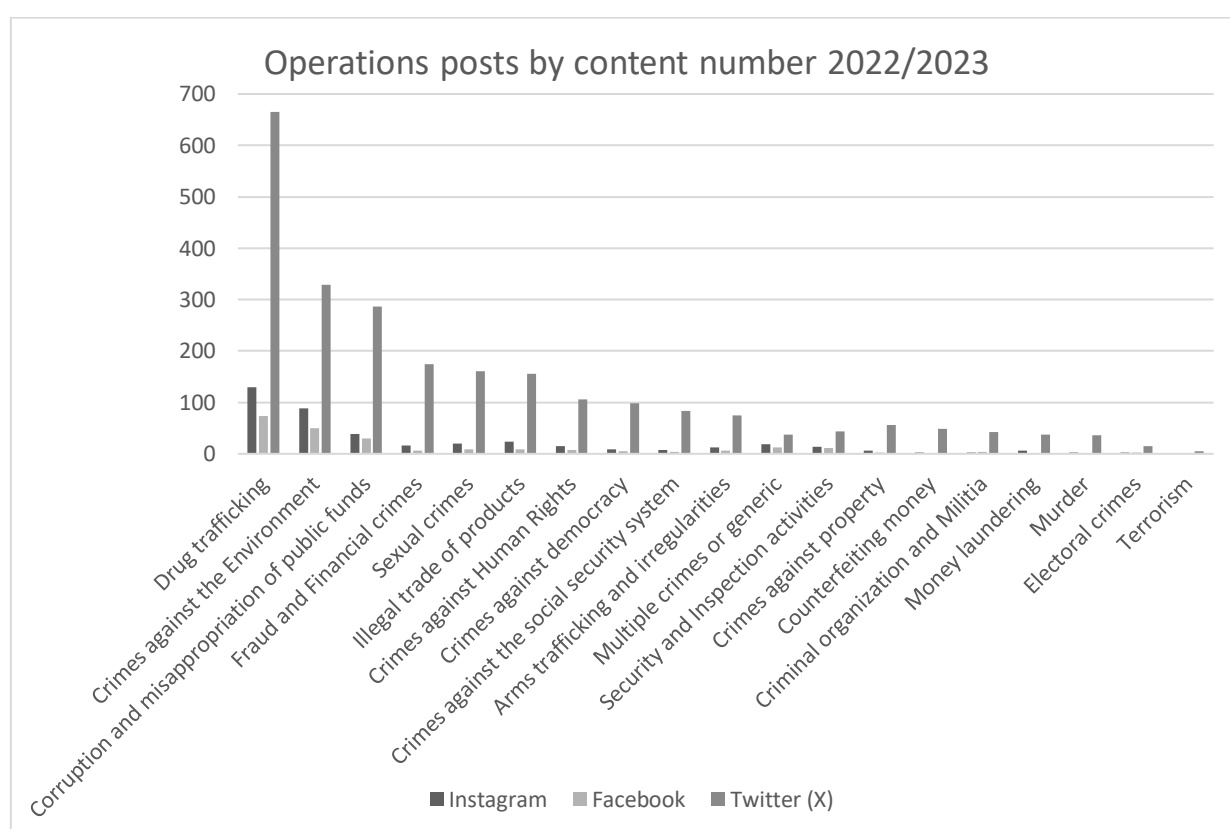
Instagram. April 13, 2022. Post text: The Federal Police launched on Wednesday (April 13) Operation No Way Home, which aims to combat the crime of reducing individuals to a condition analogous to slavery. The investigation examines whether a group of workers, including children and the elderly, were subjected to degrading labour, without proper hygiene, without guaranteed labour rights, and without adequate accommodation, as well as restrictions on freedom due to debts and constant surveillance. If the criminal hypothesis is confirmed, the investigated individuals could face a sentence exceeding 12 years, considering the presence of children and

adolescents among the victims.^{xi}

Graph 3 shows the profile of crimes indicated in action and operation posts across the three digital media platforms, by number of posts, without considering the proportions on each digital platform, in the years 2022 and 2023.

Graph 3

Number of action and operation posts by type of crime – 2022/2023

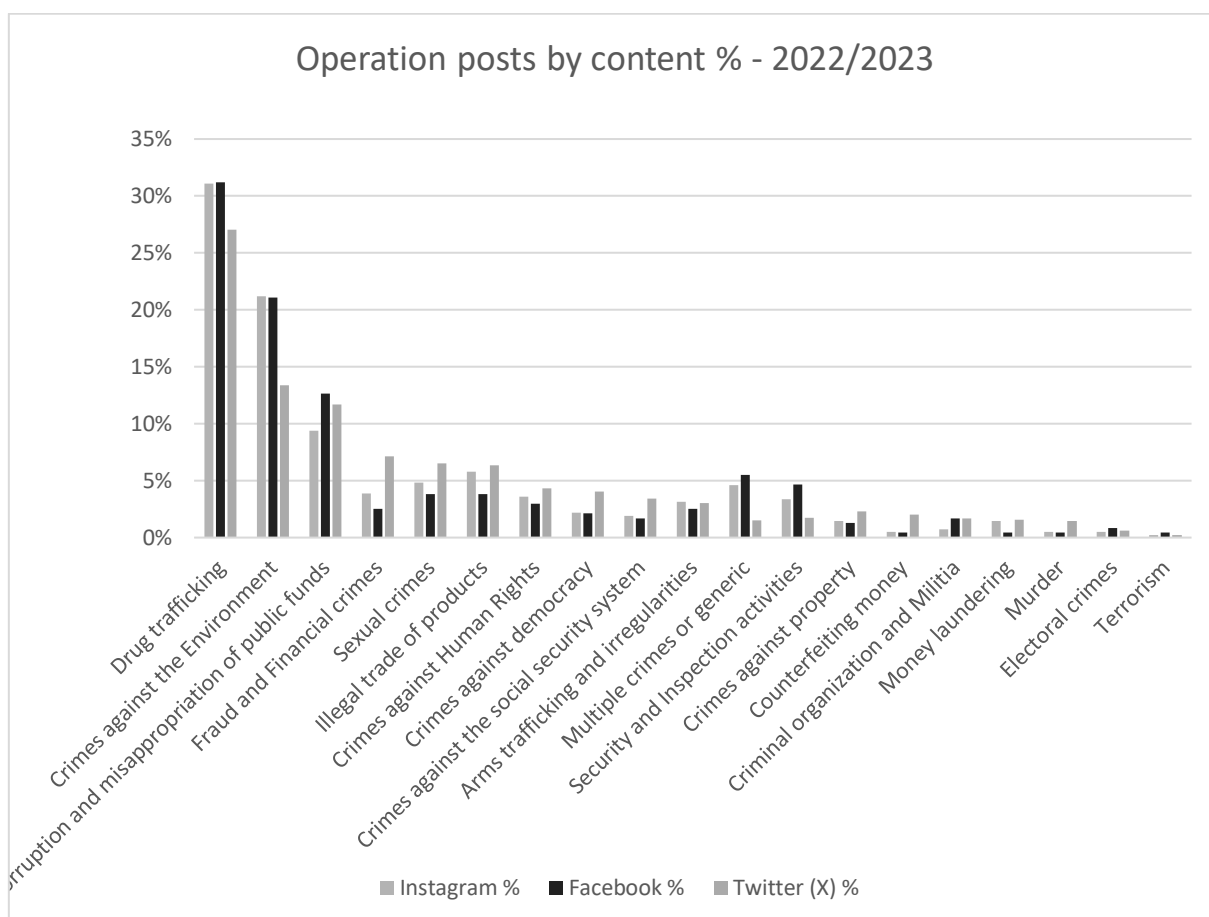


As previously indicated in Graph 1, X (Twitter) has a higher number of posts about actions and operations compared to the other platforms. In addition, posts on drug trafficking repression stand out, with 665 posts over the two years, while most of the other categories do not reach 100 posts each. Graph 4 presents the percentage of posts by crime groups, in comparison to the total number of action and operation posts, excluding institutional posts, in

order to draw comparisons within this category across the three platforms.

Graph 4

Percentage of action and operation posts by type of crime – 2022/2023



When examining the percentage of posts comparatively across each of the media platforms, it is observed that there are no major thematic discrepancies, but rather similarity among the percentages of posts in each category. As mentioned, this may occur due to the flow of information, in which material about actions is supposedly sent from regional police stations, processed by the press office in Brasília, and published on the platforms. Although numerically they present considerable differences, with X (Twitter) having more than five times the number of posts on the topic compared to Instagram, and ten times more posts than

Facebook regarding Federal Police actions and operations, proportionally they are distributed in almost the same way. The data indicate a predominance of posts on drug trafficking repression across the three media platforms, followed by Federal Police actions against environmental crimes, with repression of corruption and misappropriation of public funds ranking third. Among the 19 categories, the first three together represent more than half of the total number of posts.

Although Brazil presents a homicide rate considered high per number of inhabitants⁷⁷, the repression of homicide did not receive prominence in the media. This is because, in the distribution of competencies among police forces in Brazil, the investigation of these crimes is normally the responsibility of the state civil police. The Federal Police has jurisdiction to investigate homicides only when the crime has interstate or international repercussions. A different situation occurs with the repression of terrorism, for example, which would initially fall under the original jurisdiction of the Federal Police, since by its very nature it would have interstate or international repercussions, but which also received little prominence in the institution's media. As indicated in Chapter 2, the problems in Brazil are different from those presented in Europe, as is the population's sense of fear and the need for responses from the police. This highlights significant differences between police forces and discourses in Brazil and in European countries, for example, since the investigation of terrorism did not receive prominence in the institution's digital media communication.

Based on the theoretical framework presented, with the characteristics of each field of power and their dynamics of exchange, the main terms in the Federal Police's digital media, including the website, were identified as being associated with each of the fields. The terms are related to the criminal justice field, the defence field, and the transnational policing field, based on the collected data. This does not mean that these are the traditional elements of the

⁷⁷ As reported in the Atlas da Violência 2024, in 2022 the homicide rate in Brazil was 21.7 per 100,000 inhabitants. <https://publicacoes.forumseguranca.org.br/items/81f69453-baf0-4e6a-9f61-f4f6950b1317>

specific field of disputes, nor that other expressions of greater importance may not occur in other data sources of the Federal Police itself, but rather that, based on the data collected from communication, these terms best represented the relationships for the investigation in the research. Data analysis is dynamic; based on the collected data and previously conducted analyses, it was possible to infer the reference framework of terms below, and from it to draw new inferences.

In a general aspect, it was possible to identify three groups of words in the Federal Police's content, based on the collected data (Table 4). The first is related to ostensive activities, with words such as operation, seizure, search, warrants, arrest. The second is related to judicial police activities, such as investigation, investigated, investigations, objective, justice. The third includes elements of institutional reinforcement, such as communication, social, and the very name of the Federal Police is highlighted.

Table 4

Reference expressions related to the three fields of power

Criminal Justice	Defence	Transnational Policing
intelligence	arrest	International
technology	seizure	Cooperation
investigation	warrant	Agreement
criminal analysis	operation	Interpol
quality of evidence	drugs	abroad
data	trafficking	languages
forensics	pretrial detention	Urquiza
methodologies	flagrante delicto	treaty
objective	force	Ameripol
organization	action	America
work	crime	Transnational
dismantle	executed	Mercosur
activities	combat	director
judicial	weapons	global

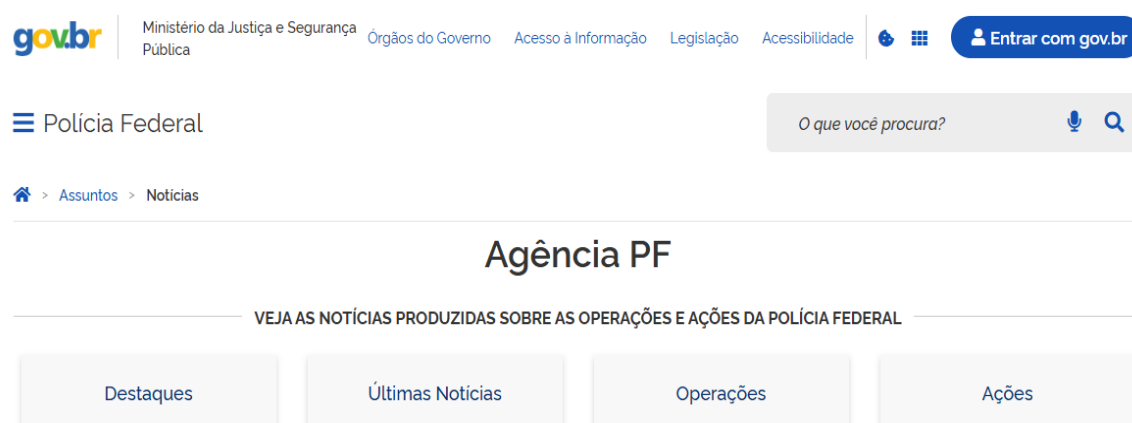
As indicated by Fairclough (2001), the terms and words used in texts carry meanings that reflect the struggles in which discourses are involved. Figure 14 represents the most recurrent terms used in publications in the three digital media, Facebook, Instagram and X (Twitter) (X), in the years 2022 and 2023. For the image, the words were configured in their exact correspondence, without derivations, excluding prepositions and generic terms. The list containing the translation into English, number of occurrences in the texts and weighted

4.1.2 Featured news

With the aim of identifying patterns and discourses in the other communication channels used by the FP, the featured articles (Figure 15) published on the official FP website in the years 2022 and 2023 were analysed. On the official website of the Federal Police, which is linked to the general website of the government of Brazil (gov.br), there is a section highlighting the recent news published by the agency, in addition to other links to institutional information. In the news tab, there are 4 pillars: Highlights; latest news; Operations; and Actions, as indicated in image 9. In the “latest news” section, all the articles published on the website are listed⁷⁸, in chronological order starting from the most recent, while in highlights are the news items that the institution considers most relevant, also in chronological order, starting from the most current to the oldest. It is also possible to select the news by State of the Federation, in an image with an interactive map.

Figure 15

News tab on the Federal Police website



Source: <https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias>. Accessed on 2025, October 2.

⁷⁸ The first news item published on the website in the “latest news” tab dates from November 2011 and the first news item in the highlights was published on the same day.

The news published on the FP website is frequently echoed by major media outlets in the country. The interviewees indicated that the primary intended audience of the website is journalists, who are expected to disseminate the content through local media and other communication channels. The example below (Figure 16) illustrates a report by CNN Brazil, which displayed the FP website itself when publishing the news on that day.

Figure 16

Webpage reproduced on a news outlet channel



Source: Broadcast on 08 July on the CNN Brazil TV channel. Text in the image: FP executes warrants for misappropriation of amendments in Ceará. Source.

The news has been published on the current website since November, 29 2011, the date of the first headline released by the FP, which reported the arrest of two men for drug trafficking. On the homepage of the website, there is a section where the four main news items and headlines are displayed daily. For this study, only the news items contained in the “Highlights” tab were analysed (<https://www.gov.br/pf/pt-br/assuntos/noticias/noticias->

destaque\), referring to the years 2022 and 2023. The selection was made on the grounds that these were the news items the institution considered most deserving of attention, thus reflecting its communication priorities. Considering that the objective of this research is to analyse the discourse employed by the institution, examining the news items featured in the Highlights section is appropriate to this purpose.

To understand the priorities highlighted in the media, 1,109 news items (Table 5) were analysed, representing all the news published in that section during the years 2022 and 2023, as shown in the table below. For each news item featured on the website, the title, subtitle, publication date, textual content, and place of origin were collected and categorised. As the purpose of this research is to assess the discourse employed, the images accompanying the news items were not included within the scope of this study.

Table 5

Highlights news on the website of the Federal Police in 2022/2023

Featured news on the website	
2022	955
2023	154
Total	1109

An initial observation indicates a reduction in the number of news items featured in 2023 compared to 2022. In 2023, the emphasis shifted to nationally oriented news disseminated by the General Coordination of Social Communication. News from other federal units continued to be published, mainly in the general section of the website, and also continued to be included among the highlights, but with less emphasis than in 2022. In the 2023 highlights, priority was given to information regarding the execution of warrants in

several states and joint operations between national and international agencies. For each news item, the title, subtitle, textual content, date, and location were collected and coded in order to identify patterns and similarities, as well as the distribution among the federal units. The NVivo software (Welsh, 2002) was used for data categorisation and analysis.

On the website, the content appears in a more detailed format, with texts ranging from five to seven paragraphs, although this may vary. The published material generally reports actions and operations carried out by the Federal Police in Brazil, including information such as the name of the operation, the crime addressed with reference to the applicable criminal legislation, sometimes the modus operandi of the suspects, the year in which the investigations began, as well as arrests or seizures conducted. The names or images of those under investigation are not disclosed, nor are other personal details that could lead to their identification. Although the language remains direct, the tone adopted on the website is more technical and informational.

Initially, the distribution of the news items by locality was examined. After verifying the word frequency list by locality, considering the 40 most frequently used terms and excluding words with fewer than four characters in order to avoid prepositions, the following list was obtained (Table 6). The distribution among the federal units was observed without significant prominence attributed to any specific state, with the exception of the General Coordination of Social Communication, located at the headquarters in Brasília, which appears at the top of the list.

Table 6*40 Most Frequent Words in the Localities Indicated in the News Items*

Word	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
comunicação	127	6,33
social	127	6,33
coordenação	98	4,89
geral	98	4,89
janeiro	82	4,09
grosso	63	3,14
mato	63	3,14
paulo	60	2,99
grande	53	2,64
federal	46	2,29
pernambuco	36	1,8
tocantins	34	1,7
polícia	33	1,65
ceará	30	1,5
rondônia	29	1,45
amapá	28	1,4
amazonas	27	1,35
paraíba	27	1,35
maranhão	26	1,3
roraima	25	1,25
bahia	22	1,1
gerais	22	1,1
iguaçu	22	1,1
minas	22	1,1
espírito	21	1,05
santo	21	1,05
piauí	20	1
acre	19	0,95
paraná	19	0,95
goiás	18	0,9
norte	18	0,9
santos	18	0,9
curitiba	16	0,8
guarulhos	15	0,75
sergipe	15	0,75
campinas	12	0,6
distrito	12	0,6
guaíra	12	0,6
santa	12	0,6
alagoas	10	0,5

Some words, such as “Grosso” and “Grande,” are part of the official names of more than one state or city, for example, the states of Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul and Rio Grande do Sul, which explains their higher frequency of occurrence. In addition to the highlighted news items, the news section of the website provides an interactive map through which it is possible to search for news by locality, thereby facilitating access. The institution often indicates not only the state but also the city where the event occurred, which results in several cities also appearing in the list, such as Altamira, in the state of Pará, and Marília, in the state of São Paulo, for example.

Brazil has continental dimensions, divided into 27 federative units, and some states may reach up to 45 million inhabitants, as is the case of São Paulo. For a national police institution headquartered in the federal capital, but with departments in all states, maintaining centralised communication capable of covering activities across the entire country in a coordinated manner may represent a challenge. For a relatively small communications team based in the capital, publicising both state-level actions and unified strategic operations does not appear to be a simple task.

This is also a relevant aspect in assessing whether there is any preferential treatment toward a specific region of the country in the communication managed by the headquarters, which was not observed in the data. The interviewees indicated transparency in their activities as a guiding strategy, with the publication of all actions and operations submitted to the communications office. The interviews further revealed that ensuring the dissemination of actions from all states constitutes an explicit concern of the Communications Office.

Interviewee 7: Even though a specific action in the field may seem small, it has an importance in that location that only those working on the ground can understand. So we handle it with great care here as well for publication. (...) I always say that the response we give is not for journalists, not for the leadership, nor anyone else; the

*response we give is for society. And that is where the journalist comes in to act as an interface between the Federal Police and society. So, **those on the ground feel the need to show that they are working, because... I have worked in more remote states and I know that people far away often think that the location is hidden and assume no one is working there. But the field teams work a lot and accomplish many things. They make a selection of what they consider relevant or not to publish, post it locally, and also send it to us.***^{xii}

*Interviewee 5: Everything comes to us. From environmental crimes to drug trafficking. So it is important that we post, because... all the Federal Police actions need to show the work being done. **And it also values those on the ground, because the people on the ground carry out the actual judicial police work there, right. And it is important that this is made public. Even somewhat aside, but through the feeling of belonging, knowing that what you are doing, what you did there, is being shown. I believe this also provides a sense of belonging for the people, for the collaborators.***^{xiii}

Subsequently, in order to identify patterns and similarities, the most recurrent words in the overall textual corpus of the news published on the website were identified. For visualisation purposes, the 100 most frequent words were selected (Figure 17), considering titles, subtitles, and the full content of the news articles. Additionally, prepositions, words with fewer than three characters, and generic terms that did not contribute to analytical comprehension were excluded, such as “feira,” used in the designation of weekdays in portuguese (segunda-feira, terça-feira, etc.), and “rio,” which forms part of the name of several states and cities (Rio Grande do Sul, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Bonito, among others). It was also established that words would be considered only in their exact correspondence, as searching for derived forms could generate distortions due to the presence of specific and technical terminology. The word “mandado,” for example, that this is compliance with a court

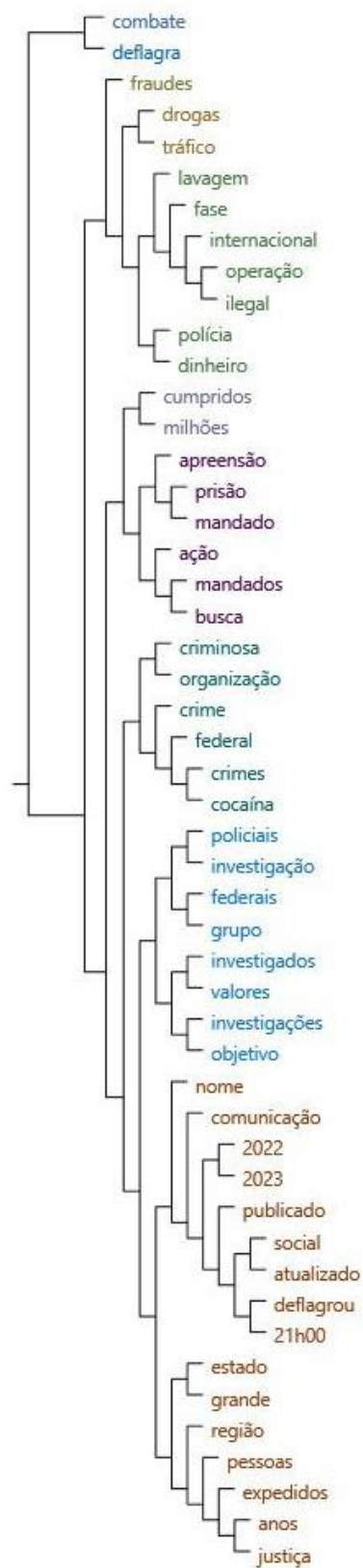
In addition to the name of the institution, “Polícia Federal”, “Operação” is one of the most prominent words both in the overall word cloud and in those specific to titles and subtitles, as will be demonstrated below. While the rest of the word cloud varies depending on the coded segment, the word “operação” maintained its centrality, indicating that its use is one of the main strategies, either by the Federal Police in general, since the publications also represent the actions carried out, or by the Communications Office. The word cloud also highlights the greater number of publications in 2022 compared to 2023, as well as the typical time at which news items are published, at 9 p.m.

In comparison with the content found on digital media (Facebook, Instagram, and X-Twitter), more terms associated with the field of criminal justice were found on the website. Terms related to investigation (in blue) were used more frequently on the site, although terms associated with ostensive policing (in red) remain predominant across all channels.

In the image below (Figure 18), it is possible to identify the proximity between the most frequent words in the text through cluster analysis. The smaller the distance between the brackets, the greater the similarity between the words. The greater the similarity in colours, the greater the similarity between words. The cluster also allows identification of the three main groups of words, linked to more ostensive activities, such as arrest, warrant, and seizure; police judiciary activities, such as investigation and objectives; and institutional reinforcement terms.

Figure 18

Word cluster in the overall news text – 2022/2023

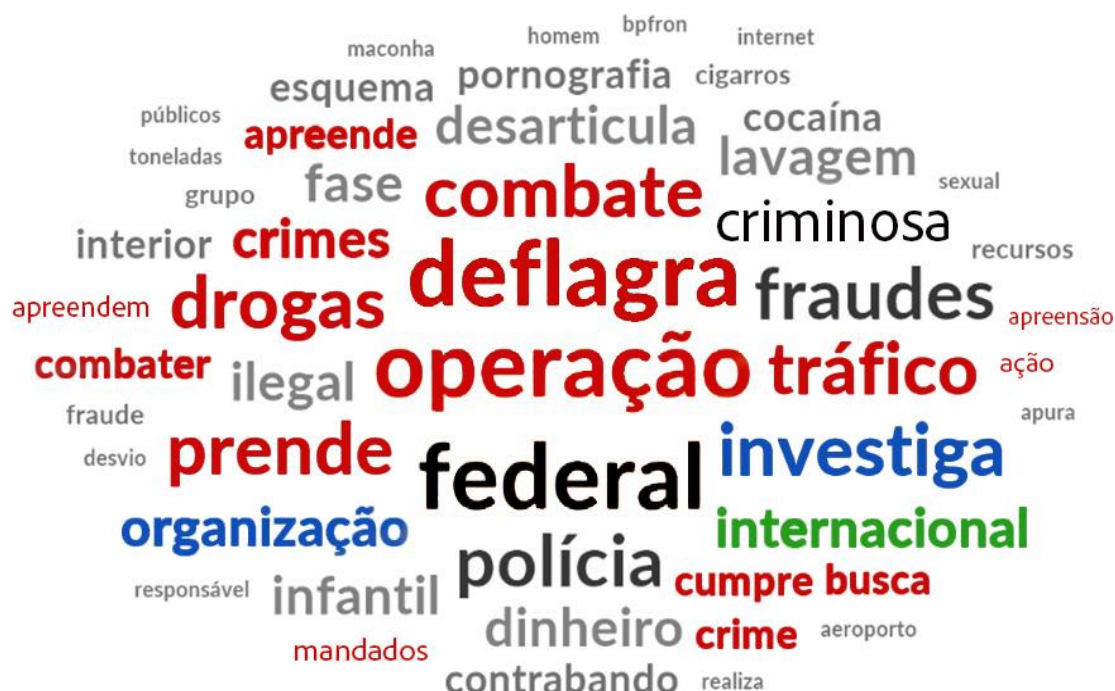


Source: Prepared by the author with the assistance of NVIVO.

Based on the categorizations, the 50 most recurrent words in the news titles and subtitles were also identified (Figure 19), in order to pinpoint elements that may be emphasised in the main and secondary headlines. Van Dick (2001) indicates that the headline in a text, highlighted as the title, is a form of discourse manipulation, which is why this analysis will be conducted for both the titles and subtitles of the news items. The parameters were the same as in the overall study: words were considered in their exact correspondence, derivations were disregarded, and prepositions, words with fewer than three characters, and generic terms were excluded. The list of most frequent words that generated the image below, including the respective English translation, word count, and weighted percentage, is provided in annex B.

Figure 19

Word cloud of the 50 most recurrent words in news titles – 2022/2023



In addition to “Operation,” the terms “warrants” and “search” appear with centrality, along with “arrest,” “executed,” and “seizure,” indicating the emphasis on the enforcement of precautionary measures in the institutional strategy. While the title focuses on the actions of the FP, using action verbs, the subtitle centres on terms that indicate ostensive activity and actions considered more visible. The title indicates a general action, whereas the subtitle specifies how it was carried out in that particular operation. Other frequent terms include arrest, flagrante, executed, warrants, action, and officers, which indicate the ostensive work of the police, compared to terms such as investigation, which also have relevance but to a lesser degree. The grammar used in the titles, and especially in the subtitles of the news items, reflects the FP’s mobilisation toward the field of defence, since the terms employed refer to its ostensive duties.

Although with less centrality, the word “international” appears in all three word clouds, potentially referring both to formal agreements and to the repression of transnational crimes, such as international drug trafficking. However, other elements identified in the literature as distinctive of the field of international security, such as technology, training courses, and cooperation, do not appear. This does not mean that these elements are absent, but that there was no repetition of words sufficient to make them prominent in the word cloud. Notably, terms such as “intelligence,” which were mentioned in the interviews as central to the communication strategy, also do not appear.

In this first dimension, the published content was investigated based on the initial categorisations, as well as the sets of terms most frequently used by the FP in its media and associated with potential fields of action. A predominance of terms associated with the field of defence was observed throughout the content and, particularly, in the news headlines on the website. To a lesser extent, terms associated with the field of criminal justice were also identified, and to an even smaller extent, those linked to the field of transnational policing.

Contextualization and inferences regarding the data presented here will be provided in the section on the third dimension of discourse.

4.2 Second dimension: Discursive Practice

Within this dimension, the conditions of production of discourses, their intertextual chains, and the agents involved are analysed. The Federal Police General Coordination of Social Communication (CGCS), located at the institution's headquarters in Brasília, is the sector responsible for institutional communication, carrying out activities such as publications, press conferences, events, relations with journalists, and internal communication. The coordination is divided into three internal sectors, press office, ceremonial, internal communication and institutional advertising. Each Federal Police superintendence and some regional police stations also maintain communication focal points responsible for producing materials, assisting the local press, and forwarding content to headquarters. As indicated by the interviewees, each of the 27 superintendencies has a communication focal point, composed of one or more personnel assigned to this activity, in addition to other regional police stations and directorates at headquarters, which also submit materials and may designate personnel responsible for communication activities, resulting in approximately 130 communication focal points responsible for sending materials.

In this analytical dimension, two aspects will be initially examined, the production conditions of the sector located in Brasília, and the flow of publications and intertextual chains involving regional police stations and different digital communication channels. With regard to the communication sector at headquarters, it is perceived as having growing importance within the Federal Police, as well as enjoying considerable autonomy in its activities, although limited personnel were indicated as the principal challenge, as will be demonstrated below. With regard to the flow of publications, certain types of content are

prioritised, such as actions and operations, which also carry their own discourses and grammatical structures, although sources indicate that the national agenda is, to a large extent, determined by local units within sectional police stations.

4.2.1 The General Coordination of Social Communication

More recently, in 2021, the Federal Police communication sector underwent changes within the institution's organisational structure, with its hierarchical elevation from the status of Division to Coordination, becoming the General Coordination of Social Communication (CGCS). In practical terms, among other effects, this resulted in an increase in personnel within the sector, although it remains limited considering the scale of federal operations, direct contact with Federal Police leadership, greater formal organisation among internal sectors, and increased physical space allocated to the sector at headquarters in Brasília. These changes also enabled the internal restructuring of the sector into its current format, organising activities across the three previously indicated areas of operation.

*Interviewee 8: Personal opinion, I believe it represents a form of institutional recognition, **a demonstration of the importance that the sector holds within the organizational structure.** Previously a division, I believe with approximately the same number of personnel, but now, with its elevation to a general coordination, a **higher hierarchical level** is established, enabling the provision of **formal organization** for a press service sector, an internal communication sector, and a ceremonial sector.^{xiv}*

*Interviewee 2: **It is much more professional. In the past, when I arrived, we did not even have a division between sectors.** We were a division, which is below coordination, it was the Social Communication division and there were no defined*

*sectors. There was an internal division among colleagues, but there were neither sectors nor social media, which I also do not remember in which year this was implemented, but it has not been that many years and **I believe that we have improved significantly.***^{xv}

Currently, the CGCS is directly linked to the Directorate-General, the highest position within the FP. The change represented an increase in the importance that the sector has recently acquired, both formally and in the perception of those involved, indicating that communication is currently one of the priorities of the FP. It also enabled direct contact with the leadership of the institution.

*Interviewee 6: In 2021 we became a General Coordination, which is directly below the Directorates. **Today social communication actively participates in the weekly meetings of directors, where the strategic decisions of the organization are made.***

Researcher: Was this the main change?

*Interviewee 6: The main change. In terms of structure, **we grew at the organizational level.** We are present in these weekly meetings for all strategic decisions of the organisation. **Communication is heard and social communication currently has full access to the general directorate and to the other directorates.***^{xvi}

Considering the prominence that the FP communication channels have acquired in recent years, with the intense dissemination of news and publications across different communication channels, as observed in the previous section, this perception of relevance was also accompanied internally. The interviewees mentioned the importance of the work of publicising actions and the relevance they have gained in the media in recent years.

*Interviewee 4: Increasingly, greater importance has been given to the sector, to the communication area, which is an area for our institution, thus, very, very decisive since it is **an institution that is practically every day on the national television news,***

practically. Thus, increasingly it is a sector that has been valued and gaining prominence within the institution as a whole.^{xvii}

Interviewee 5: It is an important instrument. Because, if you compare the Federal Police. There, before 2004 2005, it acquired increasingly greater importance, within the national policing context itself. And it was also widely exposed. And we have a very large “boom” and communication is part of this. Without communication, I believe that... in a way, we act as an intermediary between the internal sphere and what is disseminated. And if there were no such communication, not if it did not exist, but if we acted less, I believe that the Federal Police would not have this perception in society. And when reference is made to the Federal Police, I believe that communication is part of it, it is an important part of this.^{xviii}

This importance is perceived not only through external activities, with the broad dissemination of information, but also internally, as essential to the other sectors of the institution. Communication is viewed as a strategic sector within the institution, which has not only acquired importance, but has also contributed to the consolidation of the FP in recent years. The sector is also regarded as an instrument for crisis management and for supporting other sectors in the dissemination of their actions.

Interviewee 3: Look, from what I hear from colleagues, yes, the social communication sector as a whole, in fact, the social communication coordination has increasingly been valued, because, whether one likes it or not, all sectors need us. All actions need to be disseminated in this way. (...). What people know about the Federal Police is through social communication. So I hear this from many colleagues, including those who have been in the institution longer than I have and they comment on it. They say that communication is very important, that it has increasingly stood out and, in the

short time that I have been here, I also perceive this. We receive this feedback from our colleagues and this also works as a way for us to continue delivering quality work, even with limited personnel, even with all the difficulties.^{xix}

Interviewee 8: And within this, one thing that I always like to say, I do not know if it fits here, but communication is the entry point and the exit point for the resolution of all existing crises. And I think in the policing field, especially. So, many times, communication is the first to become aware of several issues that arise due to this proximity with certain journalists. And credibility and good reputation also help to resolve several crises. As an advisory body linked to the cabinet, there is no way around it, everything is processed through it. Thus, there is autonomy in daily work. But the direction of the, the direction.^{xx}

One of the main recurring complaints concerns the limited personnel available in the sector in relation to the volume of work demanded of it, proportionally to the size of the team. When questioned about the challenges in fulfilling the sector's mission, the interviewees indicated the shortage of staff. Despite occupying half of a floor at the headquarters and being responsible for the institution's national communication, the external communication team involved with the institution's media at the headquarters consists of fewer than 10 people⁸⁰, who are responsible for press relations, website publications, intranet, digital media and content production.

On a preliminary basis, the team's activities include responding to journalists' requests, by e-mail and WhatsApp groups; responding to demands from directorates and operational units in the regional offices of the institution; sending published materials again to

⁸⁰ Among the three internal sectors of CGCS, this number only considers the two that are responsible for the media: the press office; and internal communication and institutional advertising. The ceremonial sector, although part of the CGCS, was not included in this research, as it does not work directly with digital media.

the operational units and WhatsApp groups; carrying out the intermediation between operational units and journalists; reviewing and publishing materials on the website and intranet; managing and publishing on digital media (X, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube), including the production of texts and responses to comments on social networks; producing video and image content occasionally when events take place in Brasília; in addition to establishing guidelines and strategies to be employed in other units. Annually, the sector also organises an event with all institutional communicators across the country, aimed at standardising practices and guidelines.

In addition to the external communication team, the Communication Coordination in Brasília also includes the ceremonial sector, which organises institutional events and the participation of the institution in external events. As the ceremonial sector does not deal directly with external social communication, linked to the external channels that constitute the object of this research, interviews were not conducted with the ceremonial team. Regarding the challenges, the sources were almost unanimous in indicating staff shortages for carrying out work at the national level:

*Interviewee 6: I believe that today **our greatest challenge is staffing**. You have met the team as a whole. Even though our professionals are highly qualified, committed, engaged, and truly enjoy, and are passionate about what they do here in social communication, the team is very small. **Currently, we work largely in a firefighting mode**. It is a strategic activity that, at times, ends up being somewhat limited... Not that we do not carry it out. But we could do more, with a larger staff.^{xxi}*

*Interviewee 5: I believe that we have **few personnel for a large volume of work**, our advisory team is very small. Our communication sector is very small, compared to other institutions. And the demands are sometimes very large considering the number*

*of personnel we have. Therefore, **I believe that we accomplish a great deal with limited resources.***^{xxii}

The limited staffing translates into two main consequences: the need to fulfil urgent demands at all times, without sufficient space to effectively establish a previously defined strategy, and the need for the team to adapt to different responsibilities. This is reflected in another paradox, namely the existence and effective implementation of a strategy, as will be presented below. Regarding the first aspect, although the elevation of the sector established formal divisions, in practice, the boundaries between these functional divisions are more tenuous, with a multitasking team. This also implies an accumulation of functions and work overload due to the very nature of the activity. The police work itself to be publicised, by its nature, requires demands outside regular working hours, since actions and operations may occur at any time. In Brazil, most enforcement operations carried out by police forces take place at 6 a.m., such that the communication team must be prepared before this time for the demands that will arise.

*Interviewee 7: It is like this, **we work from Monday to Monday on the website, because an arrest may occur on a Sunday, it may occur during the night. An operation may be launched depending on the circumstances, on a Sunday, I have already participated in an operation as a police officer on a Sunday, I received a call on Saturday night, “Present yourself tomorrow at 05h00, because there is an operation”, alright. Therefore, the frequency follows what the regional units demand from us, so there are matters every day.***^{xxiii}

The interviewees indicated that journalists' and press demands also occur constantly, including outside regular working hours. For these two reasons, both due to police work and the work carried out with communication teams throughout the country, the interviewees indicated that the team organises itself so that there is always someone responsible for

attending to the sector on a 24-hour basis.

*Interviewee 3: Low staffing levels. We are very few. **An advisory office that serves the entire country.** (...). Everything we provide to journalists and all related demands; everyone does a little of everything. **We try to provide service 24 hours depending on what happens, right?** There are people here until 07h00 in the evening, including myself, I stay until seven. After seven, there is the on-call duty, which is one person, a single person in the sector, who becomes responsible for handling all journalists' demands, phone calls, WhatsApp messages, e-mails and statements as well.*

Everything that arrives we publish, in the shortest possible time, with timeliness. In addition, we work from Sunday to Sunday, because the press does not stop.** (...) And we try to keep everything as cleared as possible so as not to leave anyone unattended. **We try as much as possible not to exceed journalists' deadlines either. We do what is possible, right? But this is one of the challenges, low staffing levels. Even so, we constantly try to reorganize the team so that we can always fulfil our mission.^{xxiv}

As a second consequence, related to the adaptation of the team to different assignments, despite the formal divisions established following the sector's institutional elevation, staffing levels remain insufficient to meet the demands of a country of continental proportions, which interviewees indicated often requires them to "put out fires" in their daily routine due to the volume of work, without sufficient time to implement previously developed strategies. This situation also results from the flow of information and publications, as will be demonstrated below, as well as from the institutional choice to disseminate virtually all materials received by the sector regarding institutional activities carried out across its various regional units, as part of a transparency objective concerning its actions. This may imply reviewing, editing and publishing dozens of reports on the website within a single day, in addition to dissemination across other communication channels.

*Interviewee 3: **Here, in fact, everyone does everything.** We have three sectors here in social communication (...) **However, in my press office sector, everyone does everything.** Everyone has the ability to accompany interviews, as well as to follow up on reports or post reports, publish reports, respond to e-mails, forward them to the responsible sector, in short, everyone performs the same tasks according to each sector. In the other sector here it is the same thing, everyone performs the same tasks. However, in relation to the sector. The specific assignment of the sector.*^{xxv}

However, the problem of staff shortages is not perceived solely as an issue of the communication sector, as a response to a possible devaluation of the sector, but rather as a generalised problem of the Federal Police.

*Interviewee 6: The issue of staffing has increased somewhat since 2016. We are still few, **but this is a reality that does not affect only social communication. The police as a whole.** Today we have just over 14,000 personnel. (...) For the entire country, dozens of responsibilities. (...) it is not a problem of social communication, right? It is not a complaint. Thus, management does not disregard staffing in order to provide more personnel for social communication. That is not the case. **It is an institution that truly has few personnel in all areas. It is a general problem.***^{xxvi}

In addition, other personnel-related difficulties affecting those working in communication within regional police units are also observed, such as the intense rotation of personnel in less sought-after regions, with more limited infrastructure or additional challenges, such as border regions.

*Interviewee 7: **But we face a difficulty, especially in the states that we classify as border regions, the Legal Amazon and some border areas in which there is a very large and natural turnover of personnel.** Generally, individuals come from other regions, remain there for a certain period of time and then leave. This also affects*

communication, because communication remains in a constant process of changes in the communication structures at the local units. ^{xxvii}

When examining the interviewees' responses regarding the main challenge faced by the sector, staff shortage was indicated almost unanimously, with only minor variations. In this regard, it is also important to observe the absences, responses that were expected and that could have emerged as relevant elements, such as other possible challenges, but which practically did not appear. Aspects such as lack of budget, shortage of technical resources, limited recognition by leadership, lack of physical workspace, low salaries, and numerous other issues were expected as diversified responses that could have been mentioned by the interviewees, but were not reported. This indicates that, in general terms, the valorisation of the sector is also reflected in working conditions and not only as a discourse of importance. It is understood that, as staff shortage appeared almost unanimously, the remaining issues do not represent significant problems within the sector and, overall, may currently be adequately addressed.

Furthermore, previous studies on the institution (Costa et al., 2016; Rocha, 2004) identified internal disputes between delegates and agents, which was also not observed, at least initially, within the sector. The interviewees did not indicate at any point that relations between professional categories could represent challenges for the sector, although the agenda is carried out jointly by agents and clerks, as well as delegates and administrative staff. At headquarters, the workforce is predominantly composed of agents, clerks and administrative staff, in addition to interns. In the regional units, the interviewees indicated that agents, fingerprint experts and forensic experts work alongside delegates who either act directly or supervise communication activities. At headquarters, agents and administrative staff were interviewed, while in the regional superintendencies, the interviewed participants were delegates who supervise or act as communication focal points. At no moment were frictions,

challenges or difficulties mentioned regarding other professional careers within the institution. This may also occur because the literature on the institution indicates that tensions tend to arise in relation to operational street activities, in which there is an alleged conflict of expertise between “law enforcers” and the practical knowledge of police officers. As communication is not a strictly policing activity, but rather a supporting function within the institution, requiring skills beyond legal knowledge, conflicts may be less pronounced. This does not mean that conflicts are non-existent within the sector, but rather that they did not emerge in the interviews or in informal conversations with the interviewees.

Regarding the evolution of the sector in recent years, although Operation Lava Jato conferred significant media attention upon the institution, both previous studies and the interviewees indicated that this did not constitute, strictly speaking, a turning point for the importance of the sector, but rather that the institution was already undergoing a process of growth prior to the beginning of the operation, including in relation to institutional communication. In addition to the decision of institutional leadership and the Minister of Justice to strengthen the institution in the mid-2000s, other factors may also be identified during the same period. Operations began to be publicly disclosed from 2003 onwards, and from 2005 the institution came to rely on its own administrative staff (Arantes, 2011), which contributed to improved internal structuring beyond investigative activities. At the time the research was conducted, the head of the press office sector belonged to the administrative staff, representing an example of this institutional expansion. However, despite the increase in personnel, staff shortages were already identified as an issue in 2016 (Costa et al., 2016), indicating that this is not an occasional problem.

In this sense, both staff shortages and high turnover in certain locations, associated with the complexity of serving the entire Brazilian territory, constitute challenges for the sector. As a strategy to disseminate information and new general guidelines concerning

institutional communication, the institution promotes an annual meeting of its communication professionals, as well as implements a form of rotation of external personnel within the sector in Brasília, functioning as a type of “internship” at headquarters. This rotation aims both to update regional personnel regarding new communication strategies and to assist with the high workload at headquarters, particularly during periods of increased activity, such as elections, for example.

*Interviewee 7: So we always need to maintain this dialogue with personnel in the regional units, because sometimes a staff member has spent three years there and is perfectly aligned with the guidelines, **but then a new person arrives to replace them in these transfers that occur, and we need to carry out this entire process again. Sometimes, bringing them here to undertake an internship with us and to build this entire process so that they are, ultimately, aligned with us.** (...) But in general, we have one or two colleagues here assisting us whom we recruit from the regional units, who come to perform a dual role. **First, to help us with the demands, which are numerous, and second to undertake an internship, a form of retraining as well, because these standards keep changing, right?** (...) It is a constant process of change, so we need to remain in permanent communication with all of them.^{xxviii}*

*Interviewee 6: They come temporarily, on assignment, from other offices. Yes, generally from other superintendencies or other regional units. **Colleagues who have experience in social communication and are recruited to support a specific demand. For example, during elections, the workload increases. We always recruit colleagues to support the press office sector.** (...). **But, in general, we always have one or two assigned personnel here at the coordination.**^{xxix}*

As indicated, the sector has undergone hierarchical advancement in recent years, a

process of valorisation perceived by the interviewees in several respects, indicating the Federal Police's interest in strengthening the institution's communication activities.

4.2.2 Interferences

Assessing possible interferences in the sector and in the communication agenda constitutes an important aspect for understanding the degree of autonomy of the sector, as well as the extent to which the published content reflects communication strategies or those of other possible internal groups. Considering the flow of information that will be presented below, regional police units send content to the superintendencies, which subsequently forward it to the communication sector at headquarters, which is linked to the General Directorate. Considering that interferences and rules operate in a top-down manner, interferences in the agenda could, as a rule, occur on two levels: from FP leadership over the agendas disseminated by the sector in Brasília, and from the headquarters sector over the regional agendas of the local police units. Leadership could interfere, for example, by censoring certain content, prioritising themes or internal groups, or directing political agendas.

However, regarding possible interferences in the communication sector and in the agendas, at their different levels, the interviewees indicated that such interferences are practically non-existent in daily activities. Provided that the content complies with established regulations and is aligned with the values, vision and mission institutionally defined and upheld by the current management, guidelines that are set out in the agency's public documents, the content will, as a rule, be disseminated⁸¹.

⁸¹ The description of the institutional vision, mission, and values is established in the Federal Police Strategic Plan 2024–2027, a document publicly available on the PF website. Vision: To be a reference in Public Security, preserving rights and strengthening itself as a State institution. Mission: To defend society and the Federal

At the first level, concerning the possible interference of the sector in regional agendas, according to the interviewees and to the operational logic adopted by the sector itself, such interferences occur only to a limited extent. The discourse adopted by FP communication is grounded in transparency and in the dissemination of all institutional actions, with the objective of demonstrating that the institution is not only working continuously, but also operating throughout the entire country. In this sense, the interviews indicated that virtually everything received at headquarters is published, especially on the official website, even when this may represent approximately 20 to 30 news releases per day. Only content considered internal or highly regional would not be published through national channels, such as building pest control activities, new internal regulations, shooting training sessions, or professional development courses for personnel, which were cited as examples by the interviewees. Such content is not excluded from publication, but is instead directed to the intranet, an internal FP communication channel accessible only to institutional staff.

*Interviewee 2: That is how it works, we make this selection. **Generally, we publish everything that is sent to us, everything that is sent, except when it is something (...) very internal. I am trying to give you an example, a communication event in São Paulo, a very internal police event, which we understand does not have relevance for the press, nor interest for the public. We disclose it, send it to the intranet, for them to assess whether it is worth publishing on the intranet. We do not publish on our agency what is not considered news, but this is rare. (...). Someone was arrested, a search warrant was executed, we publish everything.**^{xxx}.*

*Interviewee 7: It works like this, **all activities, every police activity, from the execution of a theoretically simple warrant to the arrest of a person with major***

repercussions, we consider important, we do not regard one as more or less important (...). Thus, for the regional units, everything they do is relevant. Therefore, we adopt this perspective of exercising caution. If we remain here in the central level of Brazil observing only what happens around us, and assume that only what is large or nearby is relevant, we will overlook the very important work carried out in other states. Hence, the guidance is that everything you do should be sent to us. Whether one warrant or twenty were executed, send it to us and we will process it accordingly. Even if it is, in quotation marks, only one warrant, we also understand that it is relevant within the local context and it will be disclosed. If it generates interest beyond the state, beyond the location where the warrant is executed, we provide further treatment here in order to enable an interview at the regional level, demonstrating that the regional units are working, among other aspects.^{xxxvi}

On the second level, concerning possible interference from leadership within the sector, although some interviewees indicated that the sector receives general guidance from management, the interviewees reported a high degree of autonomy in defining agendas. On this point, there is a convergence of factors, there are no interferences precisely because the sector is aligned with management, holding recurring alignment meetings, including as a result of the sector's hierarchical elevation to coordination level. The sector operates as an instrument of management, but there is no censorship or requirement for prior approval of content. Management agendas, or those of the institution's General Directorate, were also mentioned as defining broader strategic orientations, such as greater transparency and the humanisation of policing. This does not effectively constitute interference, but rather alignment with the new values, vision, and mission that were institutionally established.

Interviewee 4: Let us say that interference from managers, practically speaking, does not exist. Communication operates in a more independent manner. Obviously,

aligned with the principles of management. So, as I mentioned earlier, for example, the issue of conveying the image of a more human police institution is a central principle of management, therefore social communication will operate in that manner, following certain managerial guidelines. However, it does not go through everything. It does not suffer interference, nor is it subject to any censorship, so to speak. All material produced with the institution in mind is disseminated without any problem.^{xxxii}

*Interviewee 6: There is a constant exchange of information between social communication and these 14 directorates and the General Directorate, which would be included there as the 15th, but the institution's social communication has autonomy in proposing agendas and in structuring these agendas. **Nothing is released to the press without passing through the approval of social communication, in the sense of conducting a strategic assessment.** Is this the right moment to disclose this? Does this need to be disclosed to the public or not. It would not be appropriate to carry out this dissemination, for example, if it were more political in nature. In such cases, there will be no press coverage, even if there is guidance or interest from a given directorate, for example. Social communication currently has this autonomy to effectively perform an advisory role.*^{xxxiii}

In this sense, the interviewees indicated that, throughout the flow of content submission to the communication sector, there are no significant indications of censorship or of favouritism toward specific agendas or groups. It is evident that, as the communication sector is directly linked to the General Directorate, the very production of content and the guidelines governing such production must be aligned with the institutional interests established in publicly available official document.

4.2.3 The information flow

Regarding the flow of information, it occurs primarily from the operational units, namely the regional delegations and thematic directorates, to the General Coordination of Social Communication (CGCS). In addition to the General Directorate, the Federal Police is composed of fourteen other directorates⁸². The General Coordination of Social Communication (CGCS) is part of the organisational structure of the General Directorate, the highest hierarchical level within the institution.

Due to the flow of information and the limited staff, although the CGCS at headquarters has acquired significant importance within the institution, content production depends to a large extent on the communication focal points located in the regional delegations. There are two main types of publications, both on social media and on the official website: those that may be understood as institutional publications, and those related to Federal Police actions and operations carried out throughout Brazil and at border areas. Institutional publications include awareness campaigns, activities developed by internal sectors, such as participation in events and national and international cooperation initiatives, as well as other publications aimed at institutional reinforcement, such as presentations of FP structures and posts intended to increase engagement. Publications concerning actions and operations, in turn, are sent by the various regional delegations to the coordination unit which, as indicated in the interviews, publishes virtually all materials received at headquarters, with

⁸² The other Boards are: the Executive Board – DIREX; Administrative Police Directorate – DPA; Directorate of Investigation and Combating Organized Crime and Corruption - DICOR; Directorate of Amazon and Environment – DAMAZ; Directorate for Combating Cybercrimes – DCIBER; International Cooperation Directorate – DCI; Police Intelligence Directorate – DIP; Technical-Scientific Directorate – DITEC; People Management Directorate – DGP; Education Board of the National Police Academy - DIREN-ANP; Administration and Logistics Department – DLOG; Directorate of Information and Communication Technology – DTI; Personal Protection Directorate – DPP; Federal Police General Inspectorate – COGER.

only textual adjustments. The CGCS regulates and centralises information dissemination through internal norms; however, the initial selection of content largely remains with the regional units. Although the materials follow guidelines established by headquarters, the assessment of thematic relevance and the decision of whether content will be submitted for publication are primarily defined by the regional delegations. Headquarters performs textual revisions when necessary and applies a final relevance filter in cases involving actions considered excessively regional or internal, as reported by the interviewees.

*Interviewee 4: That will depend on the two lines, the institutional one. I believe that today, regarding the institutional line, we have three posts per week, which are planned content, that are, that are produced, which go through scripting, image capture, editing. **The whole production process. So, today, perhaps it would be three weekly posts, but the actions, mainly in the transparency line, basically everything that happens, everything that arrives, is published.***^{xxxiv}

*Interviewee 5: There have been days when we received 40, 38, I don't know the exact number, but then there are many, if you consider that you have to review the text, check if it can go, and for our sector, 38, 40 are many. Per month, there are... I have roughly some spreadsheets that I keep, **and it is difficult to have fewer than 300 notes published on the website.***^{xxxv}

As soon as the FP carries out an action considered relevant by those involved, the regional police stations send the materials to the communication teams of the superintendencies located in the capitals of each state, which perform an initial filtering and forward them to the CGCS. According to the interviewees, this filter consists only of verifying whether the submitted material complies with the internal communication regulations, such as, for example, not exposing personal data of the investigated individuals or

implying a prior conviction.

From this content, if they concern actions or operations, they are forwarded to the headquarters for publication on the national website and social media; and if they concern community actions (such as campaigns and institutional publications), the superintendencies publish them on their local digital media. Each superintendency, or even regional police stations (such as the Federal Police of Paraná and the Federal Police of Foz do Iguaçu, which belongs to the state of Paraná, for example), may have local communication channels, such as a state- or locality-level FP Instagram profile. These local channels repost national content, as well as content specific to their locality. If the content is considered aimed at the internal audience, whether from regional police stations or directorates in Brasília, it will be published on the intranet, which is the internal website intended for all institution staff, without public access.

Interviewee 7: In this regard, what happens is that the communicators at the local branches, from Roraima as an example, as well as from any other state in Brazil, carry out communication at the local level and, in parallel, they send us this material so that we can analyse it, publish it on the Federal Police website, which we call the FP news agency, and share it with journalists who are on our mailing list. Nowadays, the mailing is not email, it is WhatsApp, which is much more practical. We publish it on the Federal Police national website. Why? Because that local piece may spark interest from journalists anywhere in Brazil and often around the world. Therefore, we need to be aware, publish, and disseminate it.^{xxxvi}

At headquarters, materials originating from the other directorates are produced, in addition to institutional materials. In institutional materials, the CGCS can effectively establish and implement communication strategies, awareness campaigns, and service dissemination. In the other content, it is possible to establish guidelines, highlight actions, and

mediate with journalists on topics that may be considered more important at that moment, but its role is limited to the content sent by the regional branches.

Both the interviewees at the superintendencies and at the CGCS indicated that if the content submitted regarding an action or operation complies with internal regulations, it will very likely be published on the website. Regarding digital media, the interviewees noted that, due to the specific structure of the media and the expected audiences, there is a filter for what will be published. They indicated that practically everything sent to the CGCS is published on the X profile, with text adjustments to make it more concise. Regarding Instagram and Facebook profiles, the filter is stricter, with the interviewees indicating that the crucial factors for publication are having good images and relevant content. This filter does not have objective criteria, but rather reflects what the team perceives at that moment may generate impact, combined with the quality of the materials submitted, such as videos and high-quality images.

*Interviewee 4: Today, **I can say that everything that arrives is published on X. So, I think it is a vehicle very much in support of journalists. It is really a news feed.***

*Everything, everything, everything is there. **And Instagram, due to the characteristics of the platform, we depend heavily on images.** Since we are a national institution with units in all states and several regional offices, we strongly encourage image production, always within the communication guidelines. We encourage image production a lot, **but it becomes a decisive criterion at the moment of publication on a social network, in terms of images, so to speak.***^{xxxvii}

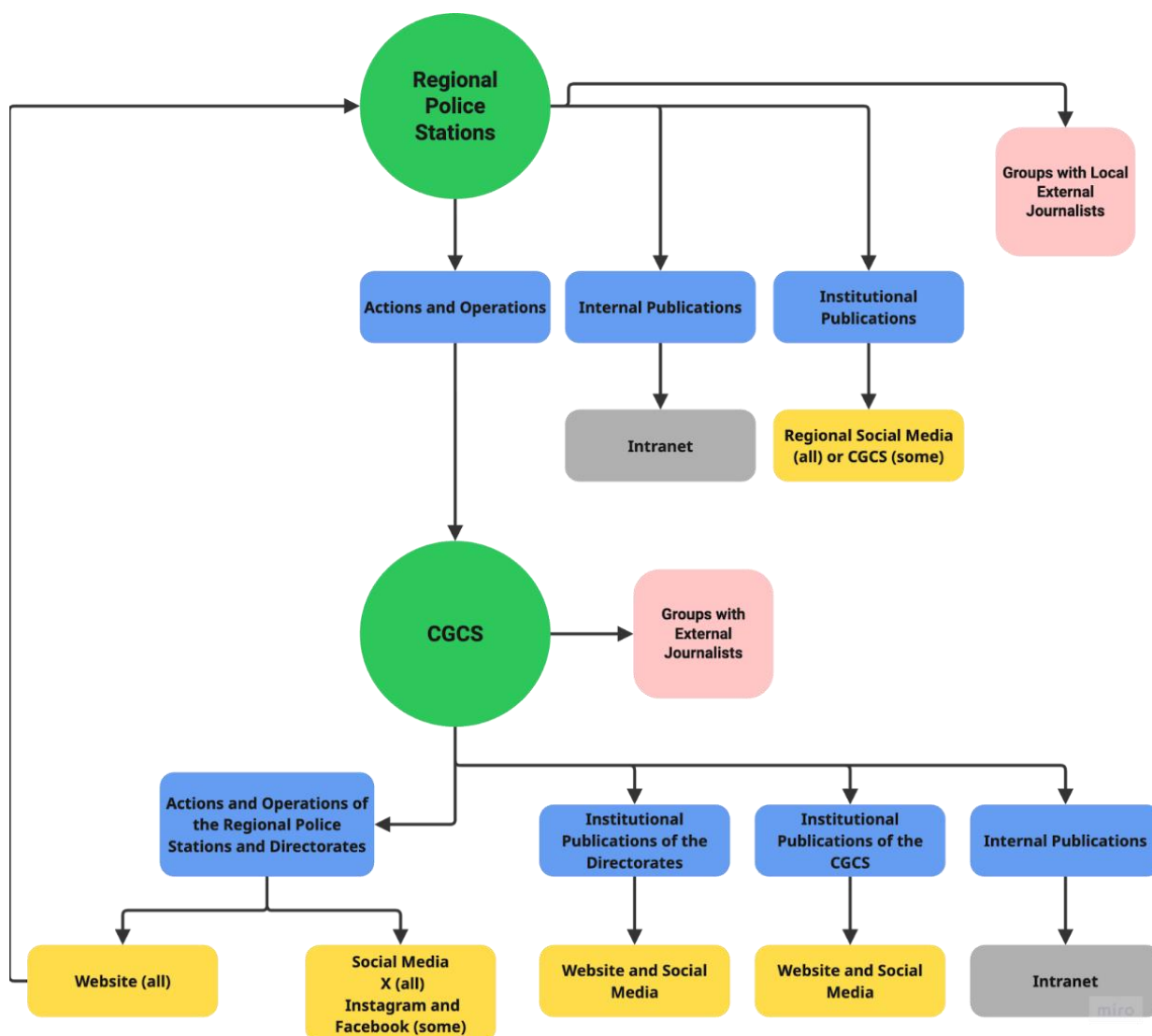
*Interviewee 1: **To go on Instagram, there must be good images, so there must be a nice photo or a well-shot video.** We do the editing here. And it must be an operation that has a significant impact, such as many search warrants, seizures, or arrests, or it*

is something controversial. So, it must have one of these two aspects, or have impact and have good material. (...) Especially because Instagram and Facebook are very visual. (...) Twitter is more focused on day-to-day news. So, for operations, we generally post almost all of them on Twitter. So, it is the day-to-day, in the same way as it is posted on the site. But the site is managed by the press office; all operations that occurred during the day are published there. On Twitter, we post almost all of them. On Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, we have a broader planning of topics we want to address, that we want to communicate to society. It is not only reactive, so we sit with the areas, talk, and plan the script.^{xxxviii}

It follows that practically all actions and operations, considered overt activities of the FP, are sent to the headquarters and published on the website and on X. However, this does not occur with other types of content, which will have their publications distributed across local channels or the intranet. On the website, actions and operations from all over Brazil, in addition to Brasília, are published, while institutional publications are only from Brasília. This partly explains why the grammars associated with overt action predominated in the content analysis of the media. On social media, institutional publications mainly originate from the headquarters, either from the CGCS or from the Directorates. This division also results in differences in the amount of content published, since actions can come from dozens of regional offices, whereas institutional publications come from a few points at headquarters, which must divide their time between producing content and reviewing the dozens of notes sent daily. The flow of publications (Figure 21), from content production to publication on different channels, can be visualized in the image below.

Figure 21

Content and location flow and publishing



Once the content is published on the national website, the link is sent again to the regional offices so that it can be shared in groups with local journalists. The materials published by headquarters are also sent to groups containing communication professionals who are interested. There is no selection of journalists who receive the materials; anyone can contact to join the group that sends some of the news published on the website daily. At the time the interviews were conducted, the headquarters group included approximately 400 communication professionals from external channels.

*Interviewee 7: Nowadays we use messaging apps. **We have a group of communicators that has no restrictions for acceptance.** (...) Everyone who requests to join is reviewed, **but all are added to this group, which currently has around 400 professionals.** We select some of the materials that, according to the agenda of the day, might generate the most interest and send them equally to everyone in the group, which I think is important, to all who are in the group.^{xxxix}*

4.2.4 Intertextuality

Intertextuality is the capacity of texts to be filled with fragments of other texts. A text can carry a past as well as a future, which will be incorporated into other texts within a chain of production and reproduction. It can also encompass dialogues with other texts, concepts, and narratives. A text is never isolated; it is always relational in nature (Fairclough, 2001). Within the FP, there exists an internal intertextual chain, which will be described here, although there may also be external intertextual chains that are beyond the scope of this research. Even though the institution exercises greater control over the internal chain, texts are produced with the external chain in mind as well.

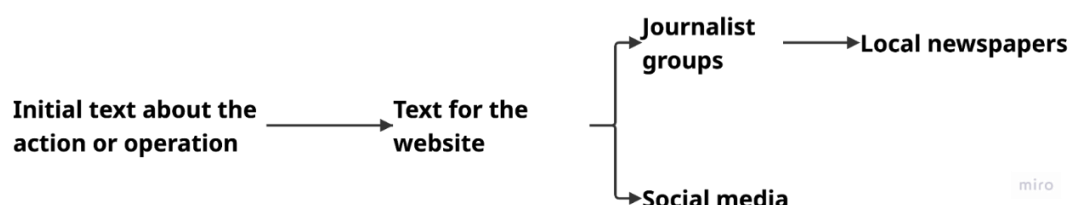
When considering the chain of production and intertextuality, texts also follow different sequences and are intended for dissemination across other channels. There is an internal flow, which shapes formats and the predominance of certain topics, as well as a flow directed toward external groups, where the intertextual chain must be taken into account. As indicated in the interviews, texts are initially produced for publication on the website and then forwarded to the team responsible for other communication channels. Texts regarding actions and operations, sent by regional delegations to the CGCS, undergo adjustments by the team and are published on the website. Subsequently, the link is shared with journalist groups, and the text is also forwarded to the digital media sector. Website content is disseminated to a

network of interested journalists through a WhatsApp group, who can then replicate the information across news outlets, such as other websites, radio, or TV.

The website content is produced to be replicated both by other external communication channels, such as newspapers, and by the FP's own digital media, including Instagram, Facebook, and X (Figure 22). The digital media team makes further adjustments to the text so that it can be published across the other channels, depending on the characteristics of the audience and platform. On social media, publications tend to be shared by civil society, users, and other interested parties. As previously indicated, other institutional information from regional delegations is rarely forwarded and does not form part of this cycle, as it is published on local communication channels. Institutional texts are generally produced by the communication team itself and do not require adjustments.

Figure 22

Text production chain



The chain of intertextuality is an important factor highlighted by the interviewees. The content published on the website is primarily directed at journalists, who will replicate it across different newspapers and external communication channels in Brazil. Regarding digital media, the audience is more diverse, and the text requires additional adjustments to make it appealing.

Interviewee 7: We assume that those who visit the Federal Police website to access news are usually journalists who will replicate it across countless outlets throughout

Brazil and even internationally. So, we are aware that they will take our material; it is open, available, and can be replicated, preferably giving credit. We consider this, that journalists will come here, and occasionally the general public as well, to see what is happening. Therefore, we aim to produce clear, objective language so that they can understand what happened and replicate it in their own outlets.^{xl}

Interviewee 6: Today, the main dissemination channel is the Federal Police website.

Most of our audience on the site is the press, journalists. Ordinary citizens also access our site, but mainly to seek services, such as obtaining a passport, criminal records, or a firearm license, for example. Social media reaches a broader audience, which is not necessarily the press, but the general public. Currently, we use Instagram, Facebook, and X. We are considering entering TikTok to reach a younger audience. Facebook reaches an older age group, while Instagram and X reach somewhat younger audiences. (...) Everything published on the website goes through our social media team for evaluation. Obviously, today we publish between 20 and 40 notes per day, and not all go to social media. The social media team filters the most relevant operations of the day, or those we want to highlight, and these are then published on the networks.^{xli}

Occasionally, other groups may be targeted using specific channels and strategies. For instance, in an initiative to encourage greater female participation, materials were directed to preparatory courses aimed at those seeking to join the institution, in addition to the digital media channels.

Interviewee 6: For this specific campaign, we are using primarily the Federal Police's social media channels and a specific group of media outlets, namely those focused on public service examinations. Today, we will even give an interview to a

*major preparatory course*⁸³ here in Brasília, discussing the Federal Police's innovations regarding female participation within the institution.^{xlii}

The Coordination has control over part of the flow, such as the content that is replicated across other internal media in different formats, while over another part of the flow it does not have absolute control, such as the dissemination of information through external channels. Thus, the content on the website is more formal and technical, aiming to reduce noise during the information flow, whereas on social media the language is more direct and dynamic, characteristic of these channels. The channels are also integrated in the sense that content initially published on the website is shared on social media to be synthesised and adapted, while often posts on social media also link back to the website, especially on X and Facebook.

To maintain better control over the intertextuality chain, the interviewees indicated that in recent years, there has been a standardisation of both institutional image elements and texts and press releases. The standardisation of the image represented a broad effort to consolidate the institutional image, which was also applied to the texts for communication channels and sent to the press.

*Interviewee 8: **There was a concern to unify this image, including the uniform application of vehicle decals, a study, and a mandatory use of the emblem.** So, there was a series of standardisations in terms of image, perhaps not directly led by the communication sector itself, I'm not certain, but I believe it began in the logistics area, **which helped to clearly consolidate the FP image.** Today, you can see the vehicle paint is traditional, and wherever it goes, it becomes a reference. So, considering the last 20 years, this will be relevant. How this unification, this*

⁸³ Entrance examinations for admission to the institution are undertaken by thousands of individuals seeking public office. In 2025, the examination for entry into the Federal Police registered nearly 220,000 candidates. In this context, it is common in Brazil for preparatory courses for the examination to be offered.

massification of the Federal Police image was carried out is noteworthy.^{xliii}

On the website, news items generally follow a predefined content standard, with a title, subtitle, date and time of publication, location of occurrence, a concise text, and some tags indicating the main keywords related to the article. The published content typically provides, beyond the date and location of the operation, the name of the operation, the type of crime investigated, the *modus operandi*, and other relevant information about the case, including the number of seizures and arrests (if any), when and how the investigation began, partnerships with other agencies, as well as images of the operation. Some more complex operations may include additional details in the text. On social media, although the content of the posts is more varied, the dissemination of actions and operations follows the same framework, but with more concise information, such as the operation name, number of seizures, crime investigated, and possible partnerships.

Regarding periodicity, unlike the institution's public documents, which are designed to be applied over four years or more, the sector's texts are produced daily and intended to be read daily, both on the website and on social media, following a dynamic flow. The focus is on news and operations that are happening now or have just occurred, not on events from the previous week. News from past days holds little interest for the audience, especially journalists, which requires the sector to publish as quickly as possible, providing the maximum amount of reliable and secure information. Exceptions occur during periods when certain topics require information about the FP's overall performance on a specific subject or year-end summaries, but the standard practice is rapid news dissemination.

4.2.5 So, is there a strategy?

From the analysis of the information flow, the communicators' choices, and the

volume of information, a central issue for the research emerges: the existence, or not, of a pre-defined strategy. The answer is not straightforward and constitutes another paradox in the data analysis: yes and no.

To a large extent, as presented in the information flow, the day's agendas depend on the submission of information from the field regarding actions and operations, which makes the full implementation of strategies difficult. This is especially true in the press office section, which manages publications on the website, and on X (Twitter), where the interviewees indicated that it functions almost entirely as a news feed; the vast majority of publications depend on the activities of the various FP groups on that day and on the events that occur.

*Interviewee 8: **The day's agenda depends on the day. And I think it is largely determined by the occasional events, our operations that are going to take place. (...)** So, in my experience, **what I see is that the agenda is defined by the day itself, by the events.***^{xliv}

*Interviewee 2: **We receive a lot of demands. We don't have much time to outline an external strategy; we work mostly on demand, because there's an avalanche of things every day. And depending on the topic that arises, we cannot define what will be the issue of the moment. For example, now wildfires are trending, then the elections come up. So it's whatever comes up. The election was already planned, of course. But occasionally we plan the dissemination of a certain topic, yet this is rarer and generally happens on demand.***^{xlv}

However, the choice to publish all content is seen precisely as one of the institution's macro-level strategies, since several interviewees indicated transparency as a central objective of communication. In this regard, demonstrating the institution's transparency, according to

the interviewees, entails presenting all actions of the FP, across its different areas of operation throughout Brazil, as a form of accountability to the public.

*Interviewee 4: Transparency is a major concern, you know? It encompasses all age groups. **It is a constant focus on showing what is being done, how it is being done, and why it is being done.** As I mentioned regarding Twitter, 100% of actions are communicated there, reflecting this concern that we are not favouring anyone, not only highlighting operations that arrest the wealthy or the opposite, but showing everything. So, in this sense, I believe it aligns with transparency (...) **being transparent to everyone.**^{xlvi}*

*Interviewee 8: **A transparent, democratic, and efficient police.** I find myself repeating the word “democratic” a lot. In my experience, **the focus has always been on demonstrating our efficiency, our commitment to fundamental principles of all police work, human rights, and law enforcement. The term “efficiency” is especially present. So, showing our services in an efficient and transparent manner.** (...) Taken together, the responses reveal a clear directive set by the current leadership. **The mission is clear: to act transparently while, of course, enhancing the positive image of the police.**^{xlvi}*

Although the interviewees indicated that differentiating the Federal Police’s (FP) responsibilities from those of other security forces in the country is also an objective—demonstrating these distinctions, as will be shown in a later section—the decision to present all actions seeks to reinforce the institution as essential to national security. At first glance, this appears natural, given that it is one of the constitutionally established police forces. However, since the FP has numerous administrative police duties, which often gain more visibility than investigative actions (such as immigration control, for example), and because

investigative activities are frequently discreet, positioning itself as an essential institution for national security may be a significant element in its communication strategy.

*Interviewee 1: I think there is a mission of transparency with society, to show what is being done, that the police are acting and delivering results to society, which is our main audience, the people we work for, Brazilian society. I believe this is a very important mission, this transparency. Another mission is related to security: showing that we are always committed to the country's safety. What else? Showing the services, demonstrating that the Federal Police is also a citizen-oriented police, providing services to society. I think the mission is to **inform, to be transparent, and to show the work being carried out, showing progress in both investigations and arrests**. In short, it goes along those lines.^{xlvi}*

This strategy of broad dissemination also aims to mitigate potential criticisms of partiality or partisanship within the institution. The intention of being perceived as transparent is also designed to anticipate crises and shield the organisation from possible governmental changes that could intervene in its operations. In recent years, Brazil has been governed by presidents considered left-leaning (Lula) and far-right (Bolsonaro). The National Congress, with its legislative houses, likewise reflects this political polarisation. In this context, the Federal Police occupies a peculiar position, being subordinate to the Ministry of Justice, linked to the executive branch, while also tasked with investigating major figures in politics and the economic sector, which has earned it the label of a “police elite”. To protect itself against potential criticisms suggesting partisanship or bias—since investigations often take years before resulting in arrest or search warrants—the institutional strategy is to publish all actions and operations carried out, regardless of the profile, status, or political affiliation of those under investigation. Should any questioning arise, there will invariably be records on the institutional website showing actions targeting different groups, demonstrating that

operations are carried out without apparent distinctions. This does not necessarily mean that the Federal Police is apolitical or entirely free from interference, but the discourse adopted, combined with the communication strategy, conveys this positioning. The institution's transparency is associated with the concept of democracy, portraying a strong institution that operates within a democratic framework, does not selectively target its subjects, and engages in a wide range of activities. In the long term, this strategy may aim to secure greater autonomy within the scope of the State.

*Interviewee 2: The mission? I think it is... let me think... **the mission is to protect the image of the Federal Police, to disseminate information, to ensure transparency, and also to protect ourselves from false information or anything else. I think that is the most important. Being transparent as well. To publicise everything we do, even if it is something negative. We have to provide a response.***^{xlix}

*Interviewee 2: **I believe what we want is to build the image of a serious, transparent police force. That is what we aim for, to continue doing our work properly. That is what we want to convey: that we have no political bias, that we truly don't, and that we are just carrying out our work seriously.***^l

*Interviewee 6: The mission is entirely strategic within the institution because it is through the communication sector that **we provide transparency regarding the actions of the Federal Police, its operations. We can anticipate crises and work to minimise them.** I think that is it, a mission to bring more transparency to the institution, to its actions, **and to foster a closer connection with society.***^{li}

A study conducted on the digital media of twelve municipal police departments in the United States (Mayes, 2020) found similar results. When attempting to assess whether the

organisational image projected through social media aligned with what departments intended to convey, interviewees indicated that “transparency” and “humanisation of the police” were their primary objectives. Beyond image-building, these concepts were employed to control the message without relying on traditional media, which often conveys negative content about the police. Social media was seen as a tool to address new challenges, such as crisis management. The notion of humanisation was associated with projecting a positive image of police officers, emphasising that they are members of the community, and disseminating non-police content or content showing police engagement with the community. The study also highlighted that content related to arrests was central, aiming to showcase effective policing while serving as a deterrent, thus demonstrating the police’s efficacy (Mayes, 2020).

On the other hand, on other social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook, there is a greater scope for implementing strategies, including schedules, campaigns, and specific objectives. It is noteworthy that, in Brazil, unlike in other countries, in addition to the high overall consumption of digital media, studies indicate that WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook were the three most used platforms by the Brazilian population in 2024, with X ranking only ninth⁸⁴. This suggests that, even though strategic efforts are concentrated on a limited number of channels, these are the most widely used platforms among the population, indicating that the strategies can have a significant impact. Interviewees indicated that, in social media, beyond sharing actions and operations submitted from the field offices, an annual content schedule and planning are established.

*Interviewee 4: **Yes, we follow a schedule.** For institutional communication, **we usually prepare an annual plan.** For example, we are already beginning to plan for next year, continuously adjusting it based on specific demands that arise throughout the year.*

Researcher: And how do you handle activities, according to demand?

⁸⁴ Data from “Digital 2024: Brazil” launched by DataReportal. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-brazil#>

*Interviewee 4: **For actions? According to demand. For operations or other activities, it's all demand-driven. So, if we receive 5 to 6 operations in a day, we assess which ones are most important, which are likely to generate the greatest impact, and prioritise publishing those, distributing the rest throughout the day. But for operations and actions, everything is managed according to demand.***^{lvi}

*Interviewee 8: **Perhaps on quieter days, we can decide, "Oh, we need to publicise this topic." Then it's more about our own initiatives to disseminate FP actions. For example, there's currently a focus on increasing women's participation in the Federal Police. Within that framework, we fit in topics of interest, separate from operations or crisis-response cases.***^{lvii}

Regarding short- and medium-term strategies, a schedule is established that is integrated between publications about operations. Medium-term strategies may involve publications about events planned for the year, such as elections, or activities that require greater attention, such as combating wildfires, protecting the environment, or addressing threats to democracy, examples mentioned by the interviewees. Although the interviewees indicated that, as a rule, there is no hierarchical interference in the editorial agenda, there may be a convergence of interests between what the sector and the leadership consider beneficial for the image of the Federal Police, in line with the organisational identity. Thus, even though the themes of operational publications generally reflect the Federal Police's activities without significant distinctions, in defining institutional strategies and publications it is possible for certain actions to be highlighted depending on what the sector deems important, on the priorities of Federal Police management, or on leadership priorities.

*Interviewee 6: **We have a broad strategy, a communication plan that we renew annually with specific strategies related to that year's actions and events. For***

*example, this year we have the municipal elections, so there is a communication plan focused on the elections. (...) Depending on the events of the year, such as a specific operation, elections, inaugurations, or major events. For instance, last year there was January 8. **We acted with strategies directed at these events.***^{liv}

*Interviewee 6: The content agenda of social communication is extremely dynamic **because our main focus today is our actions and operations.** Generally, we only learn about an operation after it has taken place. Rarely, in highly strategic operations, does social communication have prior knowledge, even to assist in planning—for example, a “lesa-pátria” operation, which identified the individuals who vandalised the National Congress, the Supreme Federal Court, and the Planalto Palace on January 8, 2023. But most operations, I would say 95%, we learn about on the same day, and then we develop our plan in the morning after those actions have come to our attention. **In parallel, we have a weekly plan that is updated with other strategic agendas of the institution.** For example, this week we launched a recruitment notice for positions abroad. This is included in the weekly publication plan. **Campaigns to increase female participation in the organisation are also included in the weekly plan.***^{lv}

*Interviewee 1: **We have monthly publication schedules and editorial lines. There are themes, commemorative dates, and events that we cover.** Operations occur daily, and we cannot plan for them—they arrive every day, and we receive a lot of operational material from the field, from the states. We have a group that collects this external material. **Regarding planning, we do a monthly plan where we list the topics we want to address that month.** For example, “This month, let’s focus on environmental*

issues,” or “Let’s cover environmental crimes and crimes against fauna.” (...). We have programming. We have editorial lines, for example, the FP services. We schedule topics, for instance, last month we covered passports, next month we will cover criminal record registration, and the following month, firearm licenses, and so on. We rotate topics according to a set schedule.^{lvi}

4.3 Third dimension: Social Practice

In this dimension, the context, dynamics, and power relations that permeate the discourses are analysed. This dimension also presents responses to the initially established research questions, particularly regarding the relationships with the organisational fields in which the Federal Police operates. First, the general strategies indicated by the interviewees, along with their effects and contexts, will be presented. Subsequently, the other aspects highlighted by the theory will be addressed, in addition to the positioning within the three fields.

Among the main long-term strategies generally established by the sector and particularly applied to content on the digital media channels mentioned by the interviewees are the humanisation of the police and greater engagement with society; the promotion of increased female participation; and the transparency of actions. Regarding transparency, as previously noted, much of the strategy involves publishing all Federal Police actions and operations through its institutional channels, which also results in a flow that prioritises content linked to overt policing. As for the other points, the humanisation of the police and the recruitment of more women to join the institution appeared together on several occasions when respondents were asked about the general strategy of the communication sector at the time of the research. The strategy of police humanisation can be identified in affirmative and affective publications, as indicated in the first dimension of analysis.

Interviewee 1: Yes, there is a strategy, even under this new administration, to humanise the police.(...) One of the objectives is to attract more women to the police, demonstrating that police work can indeed be performed by women. There are protective measures in place for women within the force, including provisions during maternity and at the time of entry exams, among others. For instance, a lactating officer can perform two hours of remote work and will not be assigned to operations or missions during that period. This is a protective measure, and we aim to highlight it in the coming months. Essentially, the goal is to bring the public closer and foster greater engagement with society, portraying a younger police force and promoting female participation. (...) Thus, it largely depends, but these general strategies serve as guidelines: to increase female representation and to work toward humanising the institution^{lvii}.

Interviewee 4: Yes, normally each administration has its own communication strategy. So, we adapt to the values and principles that each administration follows during its tenure. For example, not exactly under this current administration, but in previous administrations, we have been working extensively on portraying a more humanised police, showing the person, a real human being, behind the uniform. Thus, we always follow management guidelines, as well as specific campaigns. Whenever there is a particular demand or a specific moment, we adjust the planning to meet that immediate need.

Researcher: (...) Could you give me an example of a specific strategy?

Interviewee 4: Specific? For instance, we have been focusing on attracting a female audience. This has been a key area of work in recent months. We also aim to show that the police is a female-friendly workplace, a comfortable environment for female

*officers, which the public often does not imagine. Many people still perceive the police as a predominantly male environment. From the application process to all stages of the recruitment exam, the pool tends to be predominantly male. **This is an example of a strategy we are currently emphasising: attracting more female participants.***^{lviii}

Some interviewees also indicated that the objective of “democratising” the police is pursued, understood as a broad policy encompassing other perspectives: humanisation, attracting diverse audiences, and increasing transparency. When asked, these ideas often appeared interconnected, although they were reiterated by different interviewees, also suggesting alignment with institutional guidelines.

Fairclough (2001) identifies three main changes in discourse orders worldwide: democratisation, commodification, and technologization of discourse. These changes are a central aspect of discourse analysis and are not always transparent to the participants involved. The first, democratisation, refers to the “removal of inequalities and asymmetries in the rights, obligations, and discursive and linguistic prestige of groups of people” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 248). This process occurs primarily through informality, as in formal contexts, the markers are more explicit. Consequently, there is a shift from narratives in the private sphere to the public sphere. In the author’s words, the media is becoming more conversational. These changes, however, have occurred unevenly across the world and are often superficial. One aspect of the phenomenon is the “elimination of explicit markers of hierarchy and power asymmetry in types of institutional discourse in which power relations are unequal” (Fairclough, 2001, p. 2). This does not necessarily represent a genuine democratisation of social relations, as control mechanisms may continue in a covert and implicit manner.

This movement can be observed in part of the discourse analysed, such as in engagement publications. Although informal language is typical of social media, when considering one of the country’s main police institutions, institutions traditionally marked by

hierarchy, bureaucracy and power, the use of elements of approachability may generate a false perception of democratisation of relationships. It is as if the institution were speaking directly to each of the followers, while the power differences between this institution and each of the users of social media, who follow the posts in their home or work, still remain unequal.

The movement indicated by Fairclough (2001) can be associated with what the interviewees understand as two strategies defined by the department: the democratisation of discourse, which also involves the use of de-bureaucratized language; and the humanisation of the police. These two aspects can be seen especially on Instagram, because, as stated, it is one of the channels where the strategies can be best employed.

*Interviewee 1: **Epecially because we have to use a language that is much clearer, faster, easier, more accessible, you know? And to speak in technical, legal terms, the quality of evidence, and so on. I think people... but I think there is a concern. I think even with the, this issue of January 8, we showed a lot of the FP's actions alongside the Justice bodies and everything else. I think it's more along this path. Really trying to simplify.***^{lix}

The debureaucratization aligns with a movement in the Brazilian public sector toward simplifying language to expand access. In 2025, the Simple Language Law⁸⁵, was enacted, requiring public administration to use plain language in order to reduce inequalities in access to information, increase transparency, and facilitate communication between citizens and the government. Among its guidelines are the use of short sentences, easily understandable words, and a preference for sentences in the active voice. This guideline also addresses one of the four guiding objectives established in the Organisational Transformation Plan – PF80, which sets transparency as a goal in Objective 2 – “Serve society with excellence and transparency”.

⁸⁵ https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/ato2023-2026/2025/lei/115263.htm

Debureaucratization differs from the use of affective language, which is also mobilised in the communication of the Federal Police and could be associated with the humanisation strategy indicated by the interviewees. Regarding the use of affective language, Fairclough (2001) indicates that politeness refers to the set of strategies that discourse producers use to shape individuals' intentions, either toward a friendlier tone, appealing to the desire to feel loved, or to avoid expressions associated with negative feelings of control. This phenomenon was also observed by Han (2017) from another perspective, noting the absence of negativity in new relationships and the predominance of language that mobilises affection. According to Han (2017), the absence of criticism and negativity results in what he calls the "society of fatigue," the title of his work, characterised by the constant self-exploitation of the individual. The humanisation of the police, or affective language, can be observed especially on digital media, Instagram and Facebook, through affirmative or institutional posts.

Instagram. April 6, 2022. Text: Starting the day with the best friends!!!

Instagram. June 18, 2022. Text: Have a great weekend, everyone! 🧠👊💪

Instagram. June 24, 2022. Text: Friday is coming to an end, with this 📺 of the PF 🇧🇷. Have a great weekend, everyone!!

Instagram. December 5, 2022. Text: 🧐🔍♂️ Follow #TheFederals on another mission! In today's episode, you'll get to know a bit about the fascinating world of intelligence and police investigation 🧐♀️ 📺 Monday (12/5), at 10 PM on TV Brasil. @tvbrasil^{lx}

As Fairclough (2001) points out, the movement toward the democratisation of discourse results in a reduction of markers of hierarchical differences and power asymmetries in communication, even though these differences remain present in social relations. The strategy leads the receiver to believe that they are on equal footing, that the language used on

social media is the same as in a face-to-face conversation, as well as that they would also have access to the institution through informal means, which does not reflect reality. Even though the institution respects transparency principles, the channels for accessing information are formal and bureaucratic, as is the case with other state agencies, and the institution can determine the level of difficulty in providing or not providing such information within a certain degree of discretion, respecting legal requirements. An example of this is the request for interviews in this research, in which some interviewees chose not to provide information, even when contacted through the institution's formal channels.

The second change identified by Fairclough (2001, p. 255), commodification, represents the “process by which social domains and institutions, whose purpose is not to produce goods in the narrow economic sense of items for sale, nevertheless come to be organised and defined in terms of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods.” It consists of the transfer of market-oriented narratives to other public and social sectors. This occurs both through the use of terms proper to the private sector, such as industry, clients, and consumers; and through the use of advertising genres, with types of texts employing the same resources as advertising texts (Fairclough, 2001). Production as a commodity can be observed in the content flow, in which news is produced on a large scale, distributed, and redistributed among journalists and the general public. Although marketing language was not observed in the FP's discourse, one of the examples mentioned by the author, the form of content production is market-oriented, in which police officers need to “produce” news about operations constantly, as a way to remain “in the market,” to maintain visibility. This visibility may aim to generate greater engagement for their publications and agendas, for example. A federative entity that does not carry out operations and does not produce news to be consumed may be seen as unproductive, even though its core activities are being fulfilled.

The discourse involves the processing of information in short-term memory.

According to Van Dick, “this process is strategic in the sense of being online, being purposefully directed, operating at multiple levels of the discourse structure, and being hypothetical: assumptions and quick, efficient shortcuts are made instead of complete analyses” (Van Dick, 2010, p. 241). One form of what Van Dick (2010) calls manipulation is highlighting part of the text’s lead in a prominent position, such as at the top, in large fonts, in a way that attracts the reader’s attention, as in advertising slogans. In the news on the FP’s website, the same strategy can be observed: there is a main lead, a secondary lead, the date it was published and/or updated, the location where the news occurs, a reference image, and the news text, along with phone and e-mail contact information. The title normally mentions the FP’s action in combating a specific crime, when there are major seizures, and the location where the action took place, for example:

Title: Federal Police investigates suspect for sharing child pornography images in Joinville/SC

Subtitle: FP seizes electronic materials containing stored images.

Published on 01/31/2022 21:00 Updated on 02/03/2023 14:43

Title: FP launches operation against drug trafficking in Ponta Porã/MS

Subtitle: Operation Carga Oculta investigates a logistical scheme for smuggling large quantities of drugs to other countries.

Published on 01/31/2022 21:00 Updated on 02/03/2023 14:42

Source: Federal Police website. Accessed on 02/10/2025.^{lxi}

The interviews indicated that, in addition to the relevance of the content, the quality of the photo sent or produced by the sector appears to be a determining factor in the flow of publication on digital media, especially on Instagram and Facebook. In a dynamic of volatility

and agility of digital media, the interviews point out that the quality of images is decisive.⁸⁶ It is not enough to report on their activities; it is necessary to capture the reader's attention in the rapid scrolling of the feed. Attracting the public's attention to institutional work is one of the challenges of the communications office, which is reflected in the strategies employed.

Images visually represent the lifestyle that receivers can perceive, instinctively and automatically, either referring to the aspiration to become that police officer in the image (targeted at exam candidates⁸⁷), or to what they understand as the ideal of police or security force (with uniforms and weapons), or through technological fetishism or display of power (through cars and airplanes, for example). The use of images in this process is also highlighted by Fairclough (2001), indicating that "contemporary commodity advertising typically consists of a mixture of language and visual images, and the prevailing trend is for images to become more prominent." (Fairclough, 2001, p. 259).

What advertisers obtain from visual images is their capacity to evoke a lifestyle simulation, a capacity that is generally more powerful and immediate than that of language. If a visual image works, it can instantly create a world that potential consumers, producers, and products can jointly occupy, even before readers can read (or viewers hear) the language of the advertisement (Fairclough, 2001, p. 259).⁸⁸

The technologization of discourse, indicated as the third movement, is related to the

⁸⁶ However, the interviewees were unable to objectively identify what makes these images good, beyond the technical quality of the photo.

⁸⁷ In Brazil, the groups of people who study with the goal of passing public service examinations are popularly referred to as "concurseiros." There are dozens of preparatory courses that offer training for this purpose, some of which are specifically aimed at police careers, targeting those who wish to join the ranks of one of the country's public security forces.

⁸⁸ Translated from the original in Portuguese: "O que os publicitários obtêm das imagens visuais é sua capacidade de evocar na simulação de estilo de vida, capacidade que é geralmente mais poderosa e imediata que a da língua. Se uma imagem visual funciona, pode criar instantaneamente um mundo que consumidores potenciais, produtores e produtos podem conjuntamente ocupar, antes que os leitores possam ler (ou os telespectadores ouvir) a linguagem da publicidade". (Fairclough, 2001, p. 259).

previous two, involving the operationalisation of technologies or discursive techniques as resources to be used for different strategic objectives (Fairclough, 2001). This movement can be observed in the FP's media, where different audiences are defined according to the use of different tools and channels, along with the establishment of different strategies. Not only are actions communicated, but the way they are communicated is also based on different techniques. The rise of the sector, the segmentation of activities, and the massive volume of publications also integrate this movement. This is not necessarily considered negative, but rather a movement that must be observed, as it increasingly affects state institutions and cannot be regarded as neutral. The movement is intentional, just as the platforms are not neutral virtual spaces but bearers of interests. Analysing the movement of increasing technologization is part of the construction of discourse.

4.3.1 Investigative police

To address the research questions, based on the indicated literature, the concepts of identity, field, and capital will be mobilised to understand the positioning and discourse present in the FP's communication channels. The constitutive effects of discourse, according to Fairclough (2001), have three dimensions: the construction of social identities and "positions" of subjects; the construction of social relations among people; and the construction of systems of knowledge and belief."

Based on the literature on the FP up to this point, it was expected during data collection that efforts would be mobilised toward reinforcement within the criminal justice field. This expectation arose because studies indicated that "quality of evidence" had been the institutional fit found for strengthening the FP within state arrangements (Arantes, 2011), and that anti-corruption operations had gained prominence in the country. However, identifying

the positioning within the criminal justice field proved more difficult than in the other two fields for two main reasons. First, because the FP's constitutional mandate is that of the Union's judicial police, which is precisely what distinguishes it from other police forces in Brazil, configuring its primary activity. Respondents considered the question redundant, so their answers tended to refer more to constitutional attributions than to positioning within the field, whether in dispute or in cooperation with other actors. The respondents indicated two functions that make up their activities: as judicial police, which includes, among others, activities of other fields such as ostensive policing and international cooperation; and as administrative police, which encompasses oversight and service-providing functions, such as issuing passports. Among the four main guiding objectives outlined in the strategic planning document (Organisational Transformation Project), this division and perspective are also present, with the first referring to Judicial Police activities and the second to Administrative Police, in addition to the other two objectives addressing governance and organisational structure.

Only when asked about elements that differentiate the institution from other police forces did the respondents indicate an emphasis on elements linked to the criminal justice field, such as investigation, intelligence, and quality of evidence; as well as the provision of services to the community.

*Interviewee 3: So, we are the Federal Police. It has a difference, including in this image issue, right? The FP, unlike the Federal Highway Police, because the Federal Highway Police is essentially an ostensive police. **The FP, on the other hand, is a Judicial Police. Our role is more internal, later moving to the ostensive phase, which is different from other police forces.** So, this is already one of our main differentiators and is one of the main points where we cannot equate ourselves or establish homogeneity with other security forces (...) The Federal Police is not just about*

weapons. The Federal Police is a universe of services, assistance, rescues, victims, sexual abuse, child abuse, migrants, anyway, there is a lot of human work and we try to convey that as well. Not just weaponry, not just operations. Of course, this ends up being our flagship, but there is a lot of human work, a lot of really cool things for people to know about. And we try to focus on that as well and we end up differentiating ourselves from other forces, not positively or negatively speaking, it's just a matter of being different.^{lxii}

Interviewee 1: We always aim to show this diversity of operations and the diversity of assignments we have. And this aspect of being a more investigative, more technical police? I think we show that a lot. This area of cybercrime, this work in that field, I think we are always trying to differentiate ourselves and show that we are a more technical police (...) With that, with intelligence, with expertise, with equipment, with technology, that kind of thing.^{lxiii}

The second reason is that the investigation has an abstract character, making it very difficult to represent in images that are easily recognisable. The elements associated with investigation involve expertise and technology, which are subtle, subjective elements, not easily conveyed through images. In this sense, in communication, investigative work ends up being linked to overt procedures, as a way to emphasise the investigation that preceded that act. The disclosure of actions within the scope of criminal justice was indicated as a priority, mainly due to constitutional duties, but as a result, overt elements are disclosed, which will be further addressed in the following section.

Interviewee 6: It is actually a challenge we face; one of the main goals of our social communication is to ensure that the Federal Police is increasingly perceived as a judicial and investigative police, somewhat distancing itself from the image of an

overt police—guns, badges, patrol vehicles. Of course, this aspect of the Federal Police's activities exists, and it is what society actually sees, which is evidenced during the launch of our operations. But we also work to make the investigative, technical, and scientific work of the Federal Police clear and transparent, which differentiates it from military police, for example, from the overt policing of the PRF. Another priority of social communication is to also show the work of integration among police forces. Today, we have FICCO, the Integrated Command and Control Force, an integrated force against organised crime, which exists in all states, comprising various police bodies. In combating organised crime, the Federal Police, Military Police, Civil Police, sometimes the PRF, and state penitentiary departments also participate in FICCO. Thus, although the Federal Police wants to convey the image of a judicial, technical, and scientific police, it is also important for us to show the work done in partnership with other police institutions. This highlights that the FP also operates in an overt, operational manner, even though it is not our main focus.^{lxiv}

Thus, while the interviewees indicated that they seek to reinforce their role as investigative police, which would relate to the criminal justice field, the data collected from social media presented few indications of this mobilisation in the published content. Mentions of cooperation or competition with other prominent actors in the criminal justice field, such as the Federal Public Ministry, were also absent. Although Operation Lava Jato received significant media attention, the interviews indicated that current cooperation with the agency is similar to other internal collaborations, without major emphasis. Contrary to the initial hypothesis that this would be the Federal Police's main field of activity, the social media data showed secondary relevance, while the interviews highlighted elements of sharing within the field, focusing on investigation, intelligence, and technology. The caution in explicitly

mentioning other actors in the criminal justice field, or elements referencing Operation Lava Jato, may result precisely from the significant attention that the operation received some time ago, positioning the Federal Police currently in a movement to demonstrate that the institution's work extends beyond the task force. Additionally, there is a concern not to repeat past mistakes, as will be explained in a later section, where the operation's scandals may also be included.

Thus, there is an intention to reinforce the position in the criminal justice field, which is reflected in the interviews and, to a lesser extent, in the data. However, few elements of identity construction with other actors in the field were observed. Moreover, the concepts could also be mobilised as forms of capital, through the use of elements associated with investigation, for example, which was likewise not observed in the collected data.

4.3.2 International: field or capital?

Regarding the international aspect, there is an indication of reinforcement in the field of international policing, especially in the interviews, as well as in the prominence of publications on international cooperation, which maintained relevance within the category of institutional posts on X (Twitter). Beyond positioning in the field, the international dimension can also be mobilised as a form of capital in internal disputes, signalling that the FP maintains international relations and partnerships as a means to enhance its symbolic power in internal competitions, vis-à-vis other state bodies, such as other police forces or judiciary organs. However, there are a few elements indicating identity construction between the FP and other more internationalised police forces within the field. There is more capital and field, but little identity.

Similarly to what occurred in communication, the FP's internationalisation sector has also risen within the institution's structure, with the recent creation of the Directorate of

International Cooperation⁸⁹. Since the interviews were conducted with the communication sector (and not with the international cooperation sector), the respondents indicated that the creation of the Directorate led to an intensification of the dissemination of internationalisation actions. There is evidence that this intensification may reflect an increase in the FP's effective activity on the international stage; however, within the scope of this study, it is not possible to determine whether the communication sector acts beyond or merely mirrors the FP's actual operations, only reflecting them or as a strategy to highlight certain international cooperation initiatives. On digital media, as identified in the first dimension of discourse analysis, international cooperation gained prominence, especially on X (Twitter).

Positioning in the field of international policing can occur through cooperation between police forces and international organisations, particularly Interpol. The data indicate that even before Urquiza's appointment, the FP was already publicising its actions linked to the organisation, such as the search for wanted individuals.

Twitter (X). December 16, 2023. Text: FP reinforces commitment in the fight against environmental crimes at a meeting of @INTERPOL_HQ. Last week, the Federal Police participated in the 34th Working Group Meeting on Wildlife Crimes, **held at Interpol headquarters in Lyon**. The FP Director of Amazon and Environmental Affairs, Humberto Freire, presented the PF80 project and the AMAS Plan, and detailed the projects being implemented by the Federal Police to combat environmental crimes, **highlighting the establishment of the International Police Cooperation Center in the Amazon (CCPI AMAZÔNIA)**.  Learn more: <https://t.co/BmSGqQ9emn>

Twitter (X). November 28, 2023. Text: **FP participates in the opening of the**

⁸⁹ In the PF organization chart, as per the annex, the Directorates are hierarchically above the Coordinations. Thus, the International Cooperation Directorate has greater importance within the Institutions than the Social Communication coordination, which also had an increase in structure

Interpol General Assembly. On Tuesday, 11/28, the 91st General Assembly of @INTERPOL_HQ began in Vienna. The Director-General of the Federal Police, Andrei Rodrigues, leads the Brazilian delegation. Also present is the FP Director of International Cooperation, Valdecy Urquiza, who currently serves as INTERPOL Vice President for the Americas. Urquiza is a candidate for the position of INTERPOL Secretary-General. The General Assembly is the annual meeting of INTERPOL's 195 member countries, where key decisions are made affecting the direction of the largest non-governmental global organization, necessary resources for international cooperation, methods of work, finances, and activity programs.

Instagram. June 9, 2023. Text: SINGAPORE – @interpol_hq holds this week the 18th Conference of Heads of NCBs. 🚓 The National Central Bureaus (NCBs) are **INTERPOL's focal points** in all activities carried out in member countries. ✅ The INTERPOL Vice President for the Americas, FP Director of International Cooperation, Valdecy Urquiza, participates in the event, reaffirming the **importance of international cooperation in combating crime and the prominent role Brazil plays in the International Criminal Police Organization – INTERPOL.** ^{lxv}

The references to Interpol are also frequent in publications about arrests of individuals on Interpol's Red Notice list. Mentions of the organisation appear both regarding participation in events and in the routine activities of the FP, demonstrating that its policing work has international relevance.

Twitter (X). November 10, 2022. Text: The Federal Police, through its **Interpol** Representation in Pernambuco, arrested on Wednesday, 11/9, a man of Portuguese nationality. Learn more: <https://t.co/MWHr3E8JNN>

<https://t.co/FRMFxhdhPw>

Twitter (X). May 17, 2022. Text: The Federal Police arrested on Monday (5/16) a fugitive wanted by the authorities of Paraguay for the crimes of extortion by kidnapping and triple homicide, listed on **Interpol's Red Notice**.

<https://t.co/8AicAVoKnO>^{lxvi}

In addition to Interpol, actions with other police cooperation organisations such as Ameripol (Community of Police of the Americas) and Europol (European Union Agency for Police Cooperation) are disclosed, always with emphasis on international cooperation and on the position and performance of the Federal Police in these organisations. Participation in events, treaty signings, and partnerships are also disclosed. The publications indicate the institution's commitment to demonstrating that it participates in the international police community, with indications of positioning in this field. Although they do not indicate disputes with other institutions, they indicate cooperation with other important international organisations in the field, with sharing of capitals. International cooperation appears as an important aspect, also demonstrating prominent positions of members, such as vice-presidencies and directorates in the organisations.

*Twitter (X). November 9, 2023. Text: The signing of the **Ameripol** Treaty in Brasília demonstrates the priority attributed by the Brazilian government both to strengthening international cooperation against crime and to promoting integration with countries in the region.  Learn more: <https://t.co/JTn2gv1Hdd>*

*Twitter (X). April 19, 2023. Text: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION | The Federal Police joined this week the “No More Ransom” program, an initiative of @EC3**Europol** that aims to help victims of digital extortion crimes. Learn more: <https://t.co/Ym5ELAaQFh>*

<https://t.co/NwtjZF90P5>

.Twitter (X). August 4, 2023. Text: *On Monday (8/7), the Meeting of Senior Police Officers on Crimes in the Amazon will take place in Belém/PA, with the presence of authorities from Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, France (French Guiana), Guyana, Peru, Suriname, and Venezuela, as well as representatives from @AmeripolOrg and @INTERPOL_HQ. The event, organised by the Federal Police, aims to discuss transnational organised crime in the Amazon context, as well as international cooperation strategies to combat these crimes.*

Twitter (X). June 13, 2023. Text: *The Director-General of the FP, Andrei Augusto Passos Rodrigues, spoke at the event today. Andrei is Executive Secretary of AMERIPOL and, together with the Federal Police Director of International Cooperation, Valdecy Urquiza, was awarded the Order of the Police Community of the Americas.*

Twitter (X). April 8, 2022. Text: *FP and @AmeripolOrg sign agreement for the implementation of an International Center to Combat Human Trafficking. Learn more: <https://t.co/XkUE1bPOtw>*

<https://t.co/hUaoTLcljk>

Instagram. June 9, 2023. Text: *SINGAPORE – @interpol_hq holds this week the 18th Conference of Heads of NCBs. 🚓 The National Central Bureaus (NCBs) are INTERPOL's focal points in all activities carried out in member countries. ✓ The Vice President of INTERPOL for the Americas, Director of International Cooperation of the FP, Valdecy Urquiza, participates in the event, reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in combating crime and the prominent role that Brazil plays in the International Criminal Police Organisation – INTERPOL.*^{lxvii}

In the news articles that compose the database of this research, the term Interpol was

mentioned on 61 occasions in the collected data, while Ameripol appeared in 19 occurrences, and the term “international cooperation” appeared on 42 occasions. The prominent presence on social media aligns with what the interviewees indicated regarding the importance that the topic has recently acquired, showing convergence in the communication guidelines on the subject. The DCI (Directorate of International Cooperation), like other directorates, has a communication focal point for the production and submission of content to the Communication Coordination, intensifying the flow of information.

*Interviewee 6: At the beginning of 2023, one of the directorates created by the new administration was the Directorate of International Cooperation. **With the creation of this directorate, I believe the role of the social communication sector in disseminating international cooperation actions became more important and stronger, both between the Federal Police and foreign law enforcement agencies, and in local cooperation among the various police forces.** The Federal Police’s social communication sector has direct contact with the DCI, and this Directorate of International Cooperation has a communication focal point within it, even to further highlight this importance, this... I wouldn’t call it a new directive, it is something that has been happening for a long time. But, in the same way that the Communication Coordination has gained relevance in recent years, the international cooperation aspect of the Federal Police has also grown in terms of organizational structure, personnel, and budget. (...) **And this importance has led the social communication sector to also intensify the dissemination of these actions in partnership with international agencies.** We have several technical cooperation agreements signed between the Federal Police and other countries in combating international organized crime.^{lxviii}*

Regarding internationalisation, two aspects were particularly mentioned in the

interviews: the Federal Police's position in the international arena, including the impact of its actions, and the increased importance of internationalisation within the organisation; and the provision of good support to requests from the foreign press. Regarding the Federal Police's position, international cooperation was emphasised, especially its role within INTERPOL⁹⁰

Interviewee 7: And this is because, as I said, the work of the Federal Police has a significant impact, generating substantial international interest in these areas, for example, the ones I mentioned. I don't know if you are aware, but in Brazil, INTERPOL is the Federal Police. There is no separate INTERPOL police; INTERPOL functions like the UN, it is a coalition of police forces from around the world. The Federal Police acts as the interlocutor, representing INTERPOL in Brazil. So, a lot of the Federal Police's activities, especially those related to international cooperation, Brazil cooperating with other countries, other countries requesting cooperation from Brazil, Brazil requesting cooperation from other countries, are carried out through INTERPOL, which is here within the Federal Police. Therefore, there is indeed substantial international interest.^{lxix}

Interviewee 1: Actually, the new administration created the Directorate of International Cooperation and they have requested a lot from us. So, to showcase this aspect of international cooperation and the proximity that the Federal Police has with international police forces. Thus, we always publicize. Whenever there is an international event that the FP participates, we publicize, the Ameripol, INTERPOL, whenever it involves these organizations, we publicize extensively. Operations involving police forces from other countries, operations at the borders, for example, in Foz do Iguaçu, which has the triple border. So, we have publicized a lot, really a lot.

⁹⁰ Brazil has been a member of Interpol since 1986 and in November 2024, Brazilian Valdecy Urquiza took over as Secretary General of the organization.

*And now, in fact, the FP delegate, **Dr. Urquiza, he comes, he was elected Secretary General of INTERPOL. He will be the new Secretary of INTERPOL.*** ^{lxx}

*Interviewee 4: There is this institutional role, of all the international cooperation carried out today, which is the role of the Federal Police. And yes, as I mentioned before, there is the concern to show the true role of the Federal Police, **including this issue of international cooperation, we seek, yes, to show, so to speak, in Brazil that this is the role of the FP, and also whenever there is an opportunity, we try to place this content outside of Brazil, to the world.*** ^{lxxi}

The interviews also indicate that, despite the mention of Interpol and the creation of the DCI being recent, the institution was already in a process of strengthening international cooperation relations, that the demand was already growing, but that it may intensify even further in the future.

Researcher: Do you think this demand will increase?

*Interviewee 1: **I think it will remain, because it has increased.** It increased quite a lot. With the creation of the new Directorate of International Cooperation, but I think now the trend is to maintain. I don't know if it will increase even more. I don't know. Let's see the next chapters.*

Interviewee 2: We have a cooperation sector here, we have the division of...

*Directorate of International Cooperation. And when there is any action with international police, we also publicise it. Generally the note comes from this directorate, even our, **one of our delegates now will be, I forgot his position, will be the chief there at Interpol. Director of something? Secretary-General I think of Interpol, so, this cooperation should even increase.*** ^{lxxii}

By highlighting Brazil's position in these organisations on internal media, the Federal

Police can also mobilise its position as a form of capital within national state fields, indicating that, among the police forces, it is the one that best maintains relations, as a way to acquire prestige and expand its symbolic power internally.

In the institution's public documents, international cooperation is also mentioned, in addition to the use of technologies, which may also indicate an aspiration for positioning in this field. The Organisational Transformation Project PF80 is a document that integrates the 2024-2027 strategic planning, establishing the institution's vision, mission, and values for the period. As stated in the document's subtitle, it aims to establish "some starting points for the reinvention of the Federal Police." Among the 12 operational programs established in the document, one is "7-Federal Police Without Borders: Rethink and Reposition International Cooperation Strategies." In addition, in one of the four main objectives in the document, one of the metrics established to achieve the objectives is "efficiency in international cooperation".

Regarding the proper handling of demands from outside Brazil, the interviewees emphasised demonstrating that the institution is prepared to meet external requests, as well as that many of the issues disclosed have international repercussions. On the media, although in significantly smaller numbers, some publications are in English and Spanish, highlighting the interest in addressing the demands and foreign audiences.

Interviewee 7: The main news agencies in the leading media outlets, also international ones. And I'm talking about Associated Press, France Press, Reuters, the BBC today has branches in Brazil that are staffed, I've already noticed, we've already noticed, by foreign journalists who are also Brazilian. But we receive the demand, and they, despite being Brazilian professionals, speak predominantly to foreign audiences. So yes, we do receive requests from outlets located here, but we also receive many requests from outlets that don't even have correspondents here, that have never been

to Brazil. We receive requests and respond. Just to give you an example, I always joke with the staff here. When, unfortunately, the episode involving journalist Dom Phillips and the indigenous advocate Bruno Pereira occurred, I arrived at work, and the first call I answered on the landline was a voice from Australia, and we were having a lot of difficulty there, the accent, etc., I managed to say to her, "Send me an email and I'll explain what is happening." So we constantly receive calls, emails from journalists, emails in foreign languages that need translation, we receive many requests directly from professionals outside the country. Because many issues have worldwide repercussions, right? Environmental issues, the Amazon, this case I specifically mentioned regarding the brutal death of a foreign journalist, human trafficking, people taken from South America and brought to Europe, Asia. So these are issues with global repercussions, and people come knocking at our door here all the time, yes, daily, to request information directly from foreign outlets. We don't even know or recognise them; we get to know that outlet on the spot, it's a Russian agency called Sputnik that is always requesting from us, and they don't have a headquarters in Brazil.^{lxxiii}

Interviewee 6: And the communication team is always attentive to carrying out these disclosures. Today, a large part of the journalists who follow the work of the Federal Police are journalists from foreign agencies, and the treatment is the same, very similar to what we have with the national press.^{lxxiv}

In the media, mentions of different police forces and organisations were observed. References to other police forces (such as the Paraguayan National Anti-Drug Secretariat – Senad Paraguay, the DEA, and others) occurred especially in posts about joint operations, while references to international organisations emphasised participation in events and

positions of prominence. However, during the interviews, aside from Interpol and Ameripol, when emphasising cooperation and the FP's position in the international arena, few mentions were made of similarities with other police forces worldwide, such as the CIA or FBI. If there is any intention of identity, it did not appear evident among the interviewees, indicating that the mentions of other police forces found in the media (beyond the dissemination of joint work) serve to reinforce positioning in the field or mobilise capital within internal fields, rather than establishing identity. As an illustration of how capital accumulated in one field may translate into gains in others, the training programmes offered by the Federal Police may be considered. Strengthening its position within a transnational field enhances its status to provide training within domestic state fields. Conversely, a strong position as a relevant actor in the repression of international drug trafficking, even at the domestic level, increases its standing to deliver training within the international field.

The position in the field of transnational policing is characterised by the sharing of missions, values, practices, functions, and knowledge. In previous studies, Villela observed the FP as a member of an international community with bonds of loyalty and trust with other international police agencies, such as the DEA and the FBI (Villela, 2021, 2024). In the present study, the sharing of agendas was observed according to the priority of repression of three types of crimes with transnational potential: environmental crimes, cybercrimes, and money laundering. In the analysis of digital media content, repression of environmental crimes and those involving money laundering (such as corruption and drug trafficking) stood out. Virtual crimes can be categorised into different types, such as fraud and sexual crimes, since what characterises them is the medium of execution rather than the specific penal classification. In one of the objectives of the Organisational Transformation Plan – PF 80, the priority of action against these three types of criminality was established.:

Objective: Tackle crime efficiently

Justification: In an increasingly fast-paced and interconnected world, it is important that the Federal Police act more quickly and effectively. It is essential that our investigation processes are faster, while at the same time increasing their resolution. Special emphasis must be placed on environmental crimes, in relation to which we must ensure that the organisation is acting accurately in combating the climate crisis, cybercrimes, whose biggest challenge is identifying the perpetrator, and money laundering, since this is the ultimate purpose of the vast majority of crimes investigated within the scope of the Federal Police⁹¹.

Environmental crimes are part of a global agenda, increasingly marked by the scarcity of natural resources, in which Brazil stands out especially due to the location of the Amazon. The agenda takes place in the context of COP 30 in Brazil (United Nations Climate Change Conference 2025⁹²), involving global leadership, with intense discussions on sustainable practices and greater control, in addition to substantial investments negotiated in preservation and environmental crime enforcement projects, such as deforestation and illegal mining. The repression of money laundering, besides increasing revenue and demonstrating self-sufficiency within the state, aims to dismantle the main pillar of organised crime, public corruption, and international trafficking, which is seen as one of the principal crime problems in Brazil today, also affecting transnational borders. The repression of cybercrimes occurs in a context of increasing cybercrime and the concept of cybersecurity, which transcends national

⁹¹ Translated from the original in Portuguese: "Objetivo: Enfrentar a criminalidade com eficiência

Justificativa: Em um mundo cada vez mais acelerado e interconectado é importante que a Polícia Federal atue com mais rapidez e eficácia. É imprescindível que nossos processos de investigação sejam mais céleres, ao mesmo tempo em que aumentamos a resolutividade dos mesmos. Especial ênfase deve ser dada aos crimes ambientais, em relação aos quais devemos assegurar que a organização está atuando com acurácia no combate à crise climática, aos crimes cibernéticos, cujo maior desafio é a identificação da autoria, e à lavagem de dinheiro, uma vez que esta é a finalidade máxima da grande maioria dos crimes investigados no âmbito da Polícia Federal"

⁹² <https://cop30.br/en>

borders and requires advanced technology. Positioning itself as a reference police institution in combating cybercrimes also implies positioning itself as a technological police institution, prepared for highly complex crimes and for the future.

4.3.3 Ostensivity: what police forces in Brazil have in common

A polícia apresenta suas armas

Escudos transparentes, cassetetes

Capacetes reluzentes e a determinação

De manter tudo em seu lugar

(Os Paralamas do Sucesso) ⁹³

The analysis of digital media content highlighted the presence of overt policing elements prominently among the most frequently used terms, such as operation, warrants, arrest, and seizure. The most frequently used terms also reflect the content of the images, with overt symbols denoting actions and operations, such as badges, weapons, seizures, uniforms, and control symbols. As indicated in the second dimension of discourse analysis, this may result from the internal information flow itself, which prioritises the dissemination of actions and operations. Even so, the prominence of symbolic elements of overt policing is significant and should be considered in discourse analysis.

Although for a police institution the use of these terms may initially seem predictable, the core activity of a federal judicial police is investigation, according to its constitutional mandates. The FP's constitutional responsibilities have a dual character: it exclusively exercises the role of judicial police of the Union; as well as overt policing activities (such as

⁹³ This is an excerpt from a Brazilian song, which can be translated as: "The police present their weapons, transparent shields, batons, shiny helmets and determination to keep everything in its place".

border policing) in concurrence with other police forces. Considering its exclusive mandate, overt activities, although important, should remain secondary. This observation is not new: in a study of the institution, Rocha (2004) already noted an inversion of priorities shortly after the new configuration of its constitutional responsibilities following 1988, with an emphasis on operational groups.

Moreover, the FP has internal specialised units focused on overt operations. These tactical groups, such as the Tactical Operations Command (COT), Rapid Intervention Groups (GPI), the NEPOM (Special Maritime Police Unit), and the Operational Aviation Coordination (CAO), are specialized units for critical or targeted actions, predominantly overt, aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of investigations and the enforcement of judicial decisions, such as search and seizure warrants and arrests.

*Interviewee 8: The Federal Police is very large in terms of its responsibilities. And at the federal level, we end up having a mixture of Civil Police, Military Police, Municipal Guard, and so on. So, within this scope, I think we end up having to address everything. **We have our operational component proper, the Tactical Operations Command, the Operational Aviation Command, where emphasis is always placed on the overt nature of operations, on technical quality, on the quality of resources, weapons, armament, investment, and so on. So, in this regard, communication is similar to the operational component of civil and military police.***^{lxxv}

A large part of the Federal Police's communication on digital media uses symbolic security elements, such as those linked to control. The interviewees acknowledge the visual impact of overt elements. Despite this, although overt elements appeared prominently in the data, the interviewees did not indicate them as a priority for dissemination, but rather as an almost natural outcome of publicising their actions.

*Interviewee 8: From what I recall from the monitoring I do, **you see the same amount***

of dissemination of operations, investigative police actions, preventive repression.

Regarding overt policing, the actions of the overt police. Of course, overt operations sell really well. Everyone finds it impressive, the black (uniform colour), weapons and equipment. But I think it is done equally.^{lxxvi}

*Interviewee 7: This perception is very individual and personal and is external, and it goes like this from the person, “oh, you mentioned symbols, right, FP uniform, the badge, the emblem, better said.” Ahh I think there the construction is personal. When I was a reader and not a police officer, well, I saw news involving the FP and “oh, let me check here, because look at the FP emblem, look at the shirt, let me see what this is about.” I naturally had a greater interest. **But it is due to something that I think was constructed from the information received by the receiver. Not that the police work to create this. It is natural, in my view it is natural.***^{lxxvii}

The data corroborate what Loader (1997) indicated in his study in England, showing that the police occupy “structures of feeling” for the population, and that policing should be understood as a cultural category, which holds symbolic power, mobilised especially through the use of symbols, beyond its routine activities, or even the effectiveness of these activities. They also help to understand how police forces construct symbols regarding their performance, as indicated by Loader (1997). Although the interviewees indicate that the use of symbols is “natural,” this dynamic consists of a construction of meanings that occurs constantly, stemming from the intensive use of these symbols associated with policing.

There is a paradox of differentiation: on one hand, communication seeks to distinguish itself from other police forces, presenting itself as technical and technological police in investigation; while on the other hand, it tends to show what the public wants to see, or what

generates the most engagement on social media, in a context of datafication⁹⁴ of information and reactions (Buzato, 2017). Here, two questions arise: why is the public interested in these elements, or even whether the platforms highlight certain content and elements to their users, generating more engagement. In a context in which platforms are not neutral, as well as the possibility of algorithmic manipulation, it is not possible to understand solely from the collected data the role of the platforms in promoting or not elements of control, which would require a more in-depth study with a different scope. Regarding possible interests, some possibilities in Brazil can be considered.

From a first perspective, differences in perceptions regarding what is considered non-ostensive or minimally ostensive may occur depending on cultural differences. Compared to European societies, for example, the Brazilian population may be considered more tolerant of the idea of control, the limits of police action, or even violence⁹⁵. These differences were addressed in a previous section and are significant both in terms of users' perceptions of the media and their expectations regarding a digital platform of a security force in the country. Perhaps a police officer who is not adorned with symbolic elements, such as a uniform and badge, in Brazil would not be immediately recognised as a security agent, causing some confusion.

The presence of ostensive elements may also refer to a dictatorial legacy in Brazil, which associates the maintenance of order with control and repression as an intrinsic part of state power relations. Brazil was subjected to various forms of surveillance and monitoring

⁹⁴ Datafication can be understood as the transformation of actions, behaviors and aspects of everyday life into trackable and quantifiable digital data.

⁹⁵ During a class as a visiting student at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in 2023, the professor presented an image of a police officer wearing glasses alongside a sniffer dog. The image seemed friendly and acceptable to me for a police institution, whereas the other students were outraged that the campus police would present a sniffer dog at an educational institution so "ostentatiously." They were correct, but the incident highlighted cultural differences and variations in perceptions of policing, as well as differing levels of tolerance toward control elements across countries.

throughout its history, practices that were formally institutionalised, especially against political opposition groups during the dictatorships (Melgaço, 2025). Part of today's adult population, such as our Brazilian parents and grandparents, grew up and were socialised during more than 20 years of military dictatorship (from 1964 to 1985), which occupied spaces such as schools, culture, and the press. The regime relied on strong institutional propaganda, encouraging the population to report dissident groups and conveying the image that this format represented order and security, when in fact it involved fear and control. One example is that during this period, philosophy education was replaced by the subject "moral and civic education," which aimed to foster "a type of patriotism and civic-mindedness guiding individual and group behaviours desirable to the rulers, so as not to disrupt the authoritarian objectives of the military government" (Correia, 2007, p. 490). Education policy aligned with the National Security doctrine, dominated by control, which prevailed at the time and also occupied other spaces such as education and the media. Universities were also subject to intense repression, with agents infiltrating classrooms, faculty and students exiled or suddenly disappeared and killed, creating a constant atmosphere of control and fear (Chauí, 2022). The symbolic effect of control in institutions and across multiple state spheres left marks on how the population understands the effectiveness of security institutions. These effects may even determine symbolic references still massively present, in movements that regress or recur depending on political power relations.

Some of these surveillance structures and practices inherited from the dictatorship also persist during less authoritarian periods in Brazil (Melgaço, 2025). The dictatorial past in Brazil leaves remnants of power structures that endure over time, being reformulated and updated. During the Bolsonaro government (2019–2022), there was a renewed impetus for state surveillance, including monitoring of opposition groups (Melgaço, 2025). Another example is the conservative right-wing movements in the country that advocate for military

intervention in democracy, as a symbol of order. This is not to say, nor to imply, that the Federal Police follow any of these movements through the use of symbols. Such a statement would be incorrect. However, these symbols hold power in Brazil, and the discourse that accompanies them is often naturalised.

In the field of defence, there is a strong presence of militaristic elements; however, the use of elements that refer to this field by the Federal Police may not indicate an intention to reinforce this field specifically. Historically, Brazil has also maintained the roots of the control system with military elements. Modern police forces worldwide have preserved characteristics of professionalism grounded in control pillars of military origin, which is no exception in Brazil (Batitucci, 2011). This is a paradigm perpetuated in police culture and, indeed, in police training (Avanzi, 2025). The difference between the militarisation of police in Brazil compared to others in the world lies in the extensive periods of dictatorship that Brazil experienced, and what this represents for the population's perception of how a police force should act.

This research suggests that, contrary to what Medeiros (2003) argued, that Brazil had not yet consolidated a police field, this field has been strengthened in the country, with both disputes and cooperation among the different police forces, using capitals beyond identity. The police field, although maintaining strong aspects of identity with militarism, does not encompass defence institutions as part of it. The use of symbolic elements of militarism as reference within the field may result both from Brazil's authoritarian past, which associates control institutions with elements of ostentation, and from its composition. The military police, one of the field's members, constitute the largest police force in terms of personnel in the country, as well as the most visible to the population, since they carry out ostensive patrolling, which certainly influences society's perception of other police forces. It is not uncommon for people to be unable to distinguish among the different police forces and to

directly associate them with the military police in Brazil. In the data collected from the Federal Police's digital media, there is an identity that approximates a military identity due to its ostensive character. Yet beyond that, there are also indications of the characterisation of a field, with cooperation and disputes that use militarised elements to identify and mark the features of this field.

Security institutions in Brazil, including police forces and municipal guards, may share the same resources, values, practices, and knowledge, as well as value the same capitals. Medeiros (2003) indicated that the existence of a police field in Brazil should prominently include some of the activities that constitute the essence of policing, which, according to the author, had not yet occurred. Another perspective, proposed here, would be a police field in Brazil that shares as characteristics the elements of modern policing, as indicated by Bayley (2001), such as public character, professionalism, and specialization, in addition to other elements in his theory, including bureaucratization, centralization, technology, legality and public accountability, community relations, and permanence as an institution.

The communication of the Federal Police, a "police elite" as its staff identify themselves, indicates activities very similar to those of other police institutions. The strong presence of operations, with ostensive elements, may suggest that the police share more in common than they actually reinforce their differences in constitutional duties. These elements may indicate that, in addition to shared characteristics, there may also be disputes and cooperation, common rules, use of capitals, and conditions typical of an autonomous field. The data point to a phenomenon still little explored in public security: the explosion of operations that has affected police forces and municipal guards, especially because they provide numbers and materiality to police activity. It is not possible to determine whether the Federal Police initiated this movement or, in a process of institutional mimicry, reproduced a practice that showed results, but the data indicate that it has made this its *modus operandi* and

main element of prominence in communication

There are still few studies on the significant increase in police operations by different institutions, especially regarding their media effects. The report by Hirata, Grillo, and Dirk (2020), in partnership with the Instituto Fogo Cruzado, sought to measure the impact of operations in Rio de Janeiro from 2007 to 2019 and their relationship with crime rates. The authors found, in that period, that the operations were not effective in reducing crime, but they did not evaluate other aspects, such as the symbolic effect of these operations. The execution of operations is not recent; the number of Federal Police operations began to grow as early as 2003, but they eventually gained greater prominence, almost resembling what is understood as police effectiveness. The significant increase in Federal Police operations in recent years is indicative of this. It is not that crime has not increased at a similar rate, but the mode of repression of crime and its association with the exploitation of other symbolic elements favourable to the police image has taken on different proportions.

The operation is a visible action that has already secured its place in the popular imagination. The scene is familiar to most Brazilians: officers knock on a target's door at 6 a.m., and by 7 a.m., the news is already in the main newspapers, with details about measurable items, such as possible arrests, the number of seizures, an important notebook, thousands of dollars, or kilograms of drugs, for example. The effectiveness of the operation seems to reside in the numbers of that day, regardless of the invisible investigation behind it. Alongside this, other significant symbolic elements, such as a helicopter or a dog searching for drugs, come into play. Not that this is purely for show; there is extensive police preparation for serving warrants and justification for all the elements. But the performance goes beyond strict execution. It should also not be inferred that the officers are there solely to perform; the crime must indeed be combated as effectively as possible, yet the orchestration is designed by those in administration who understand the importance of these elements. There

is a tacit contest over which institution conducts more operations, or which agency possesses greater capacity to coordinate with other bodies, for instance, as elements that mark the field and the disputes among actors. In a previous study on the Federal Police, Rocha (2004, p. 122) had already indicated that these operations constitute the “visible tip of a contest for control over the internal intelligence environment”.

There is a *de facto* dispute over the control of security operations in Brazil, even under a democratic regime, and the topic under debate is the degree of professional autonomy that an agency or body can have. The practice of monitoring the authorities themselves was common in the SNI, the problem now is: under whose orders are the operations carried out and what will be the fate of this product of control? (Rocha, 2004, p. 122)⁹⁶

In a society that values traditional and symbolic elements of policing, the media mobilise what can be considered tangible. This can also be understood as a form of accountability to society for police activity, allowing the public to perceive concrete actions within a judiciary police that, for many reasons, has characteristics of distancing from the population. The mobilisation of these elements signals that the Federal Police “is working” on behalf of society and reinforces itself as an essential institution for public safety in the country, one of the main objectives established in the PF80 Organisational Transformation Plan. This is not to suggest that the content is intentional, or that words and expressions are meticulously employed. Intentionality is not always present; sometimes there are merely processes, flows, and routines. Nevertheless, the results indicate discourses, movements, and positions that cannot be ignored.

⁹⁶ Translated from the original in Portuguese: “há uma disputa de fato então pelo controle das operações de segurança no Brasil, mesmo sob regime democrático, e o tema em debate é o grau de autonomia profissional que uma agência ou órgão pode ter. A prática de vigiar as próprias autoridades era corrente no SNI, o problema agora é: sob ordens de quem se fazem as operações e qual será o destino deste produto de controle?” (Rocha, 2004, p. 122).

4.3.4 Learning from past mistakes

It was expected from the data that Operation Lava Jato⁹⁷ would represent a turning point, which could have redirected communication strategies within the sector, especially due to its significant media prominence and the need to adapt both structure and discourse. Although the interviewees indicated that the joint operation did not bring major changes, as well as that the process of change occurred continuously and had begun even before the operation, as also noted in the literature on the agency, the discourse suggests that in part there was indeed a redirection, but not exactly in the manner outlined by the hypothesis.

*Interviewee 7: Thus, the reality indicates that that specific operation was treated in that way, had such and such repercussions, and we need to, “look, a new element appeared in communication, let’s pay attention to it.” **But there was no operation, neither Lava Jato nor other major operations in the history of the Federal Police, that was, so to speak, a turning point in communication.** But I would say there are lessons learned, as each operation brings new elements, new needs, and we keep learning. **Opa, they already gave us guidance on how we should work, so we’ll stay attentive for the next one so we can already adapt. But one that is a turning point or not, I did not perceive. It is a set of changes.***^{lxxviii}

*Interviewee 8: And Lava Jato was a communication milestone, without a doubt. But along with it, several other operations occurred there, both related, with related themes, and completely different. And whether we like it or not, this path of Brazil or of the police as a state institution cannot be said to be short. **So, a lot is learned along***

⁹⁷ Conforme anexo com as perguntas que guiaram as entrevistas, havia questões específicas sobre a Operação, de forma que os entrevistados responderam de acordo com as suas percepções. As informações sobre a Operação foram, assim, instigadas, não tendo surgido espontaneamente.

*the way, much is learned along the way, in terms of the caution regarding evidence, how, as I said, this term slipped from me until now, the handling of evidence, evolved a lot. But much also due to technological advancements. We have experienced a very large transition in this century, over these 20 years, which would be, suddenly, the scope, as evidence back then was mostly obtained through audio, telephone interceptions, or, in the old-school police approach, through observation and seizure on site. And today, with all this evolution in communications, means, money transfers, how to hide, launder, or move in the world of crime, I think this evolution came again in a contemporary way. At the same time, Lava Jato, yes, and undoubtedly. As it was something very intense, very large, much was developed at that time. But I think it would have been developed in any operation, on any topic that occurred, with that depth, with that level of investment. **It was a large investment, both in the operation and in the police. I think one thing may have led to another. The investment came before it. So this investment and this autonomy led to the path that brought us here and then collapsed. But anyway.***^{lxxix}

Although they indicate the absence of a definitive turning point, there is a general narrative of “course correction,” of learning from past mistakes, adopting a grammar of technicality as a correction of these supposed errors. These errors may refer both to those committed by the institution itself (such as during Lava Jato, for example) and to the mistakes of other police forces in Brazil, which, together with the sensationalist media, can turn operations into media spectacles, even if this represents a form of premature condemnation of the investigated individuals.

*Interviewee 10: **The fact is that the Federal Police and the communication sector of the Federal Police have made many mistakes over the many years of operation. And since we are smart, we learn from our mistakes. So, we have been making***

*communication increasingly technical, increasingly professional, so the people in the communication sector are generally trained in this area as well, and there are rules to be followed, there is centralisation to check whether these regulations are being obeyed or not. **For what purpose? So that we do not fall into the same mistakes of the past, so we will not disclose confidential information, we will not expose people, but we will disclose the facts, (...) The communication of the Federal Police today is at a high level because we have already hit many obstacles and learned from mistakes, and we have this perspective of understanding it as a form of accountability to society.***^{lxxx}

Interviewee 8: I arrived here right in the middle of it. Communication today is done differently than at the time of Lava Jato (...). It was very common to hold national press conferences.

Researcher: Today they are no longer held? So much?

*Interviewee 8: Today the guideline is not to hold them. If I'm not mistaken, it's not that they are prohibited, but it is not, as a guideline, as a must-do. At the time they were held. From my perspective, **I see many advantages, but one cannot fail to mention the downsides, like possible leaks and slip-ups in those conferences.***^{lxxxi}

*Interviewee 5: But after the Abuses of Authority Law, I think we became a pioneering police force in this regard, regarding the Abuses of Authority Law, and this has spread among police forces across Brazil, aiming to avoid showing the detainee, avoiding those interviews, those recordings, when the detainee arrives at the police station. In theory, the person has the presumption of innocence. You don't know whether they will be convicted. And I don't know if you remember, **about ten or twelve years ago, it***

was still that thing with the local newspapers showing the detainee, showing the person arrested, showing victims as well. I believe that the Federal Police has evolved along this line, avoiding as much as possible exposing any person. Even our officers, if you look at the photos on the agency, are shown from the back to avoid personalising the Federal Police.^{lxxxii}

At this point, there is a concern to demonstrate that the Federal Police has evolved and strictly follows the law in its communication strategies, without disclosing characteristics of those under investigation, or providing the press with advance information about operations, which frequently occurred during the peak period of Operation Lava Jato. The Abuses of Authority Law (Law 13,869/2019), explicitly mentioned in the interviews, was enacted in 2019 and imposed limits on the actions of public agents. One of the crimes established is in Article 13, which criminalises “compelling a prisoner or detainee, through violence, serious threat, or reduction of their capacity to resist, to: I – display themselves or have their body or part of it displayed to public curiosity; II – be subjected to a humiliating situation or to coercion not authorized by law.” Although they were not specifically questioned about abuses, the narrative regarding compliance with this legislation arose repeatedly, indicating that it represents a constant concern.

Interviewee 2: We never disclose, absolutely never disclose, prisoners or targets of operations, nor any part of the body. The press really likes those photos, “a guy arrested at the airport with drugs attached to his body.” That kind of body photo... No, we don’t publish that on our site, it will never be posted. (...) We take care, also because everyone is innocent until proven otherwise. We are careful not to disclose names. People insist a lot when someone is arrested, “so-and-so was arrested.” We don’t disclose names, nor targets; we are not the ones who convict, right? We are in the middle of the process, so we don’t. “Ah, we want access to the inquiry,” no, we

don't give access to the inquiry, we don't disclose names. We take all this care in our notes. We always write "will respond for such-and-such crime," no, we write "may respond." Nowadays, we don't even include the sentence. In the past, we would write "with a sentence of 10 to 20 years." We recently discussed and decided not to include it anymore, because it is not our determination; it depends on the judge, on the judiciary. So we decided to remove it, and that's it. We take care.^{lxxxiii}

Interviewee 6: I think it's a challenge. We need to pay increasingly close attention to how our actions are publicised. The Federal Police's social communication policy, you will receive our IN, has been very strict since 2008. We are very careful with exposures, with exposure. You will notice that in our official releases we never mention names and try not to expose our targets. This is regardless of whether it is a well-known politician, an ordinary citizen, or a person from a lower class who would not attract much media interest.^{lxxxiv}

Interviewee 1: And we have a series of rules for external communication, which is basically what I was telling you. So, being careful with the issue of the target's residence, not exposing the target, not exposing, not taking seized material and reporting the FP's name with drugs, for example, with weapons, with ammunition. What else... not showing details of weaponry. There are a series of small rules that are described in normative instructions that they need to follow. There is one item, our visual identity manual, which they also need to follow. They have to be well aligned with us at all times. And it's difficult.^{lxxxv}

There is also an aspect of properly addressing press requests, as a reflection of the ideal of transparency in its actions. This was also mentioned alongside the "errors of the past,"

which the FP's communication aims to prevent from happening again, or from being perceived as a police force carrying outdated labels.

Interviewee 3: In the past, the Federal Police was called a “black box,” that nobody knew anything about, nobody commented on anything, and in fact, this has changed precisely to be able to serve the press and also society in general. So we strive not to leave the journalist without a response, but at the same time we do not overcommit, giving what we can make an effort to provide to the journalist, without compromising our core duties, which are operations and investigations. This is one of our strategies... lxxxvi

The technical discourse emerges as a response to a latent problem, not explicitly mentioned in the interviews, but whose absence allows for important inferences. Just as the interviewees indicated that the Lava Jato operation did not represent a turning point for change, there is also little mobilisation of the topic in social media content (such as references to the operation's history), indicating that the institution is moving toward a new positioning. The attempt to reinforce its position acquired during Lava Jato could have represented a strengthening of its standing in the field where it achieved the greatest prominence, together with the MPF, the criminal justice field. The data indicate a different movement, which, although it gained prominence, shows that the positioning is not static, seeking instead to assert its importance across other agendas and fields of action, consequently.

4.3.5 Police for the future

When Bayley (1996) wrote his book *Police for the Future* approximately three decades ago, he already emphasised in the core of his work the need for police forces to update themselves in response to new social demands. Certainly, the contexts have changed since

then, in addition to the numerous cultural differences already discussed here between policing characteristics in Europe and the United States compared to Brazil. According to the author (Bayley, 1996), police performance can be evaluated in three terms: effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity. Moreover, the police of the future should focus on strategies aimed at crime prevention, with models emphasising community policing and public accountability, for example.

This need for constant improvement was highlighted in the interviews. Especially for the communication sector, in which formats and discursive grammars are constantly updated, the updating and adaptation of the police image to new standards emerged as one of the main challenges. Changes can occur in two ways: technical changes and social changes. The discourse revealed the need for adaptation both to new technological demands, whether in policing or communication techniques, and to social changes, for the inclusion of new groups and paradigms. Fieldwork and data analysis indicated that the future of the Federal Police is seen as oriented toward society, inclusion, and effective management of internal processes.

*Interviewee 1: Ah, I think that with these **objectives, with these goals of attracting more women, gender diversity, and diversity in the public**, in everything, I think it reflects a vision. **This part about technology too, about being a police force that has technology, with the forensic side and various equipment, I think it shows a bit of this police of the future**, right? I think so.^{lxxxvii}*

Regarding technical changes, the interviewees referred to the need for technological adaptation aimed at new audiences, especially young people, which also encompasses changes in language, agendas, values, and platforms.

Researcher: And what are the main challenges in carrying out this mission, in your view?

*Interviewee 4: I think today **it is about being attentive to the changes in the world**,*

technological changes, technological and social evolution. So, being always attentive to new values, to new societal patterns, and adapting. Not being an institution, not being a model of a perfect institution for a generation that has already passed, that is stagnant, stuck in time. We realize that social values change a lot. So, what the police showed 20 years ago, what was accepted 20 years ago, is not what is demanded by society today.^{lxxxviii}

Interviewee 7: We are always in constant adaptation. Why? Because today's audience is different from tomorrow's audience. So we also need to stay aware.

What works today for communication, maybe in a year, things are moving so fast that it won't work anymore. We have to, like, shorten the texts. Look, no matter how relevant it is, it's no longer effective to publish very long texts that people won't read; we need to increasingly adapt the text, the information, to a shorter format to meet the audience's needs. So, in this sense, yes, we are always alert and attentive.

Communication today, we have an idea of how it is, but it is very different from what it was ten, twenty years ago. And it will certainly be different from what it will be five or ten years from now. We have to be attentive to changes in language, changes in behaviour, and try to adapt.^{lxxxix}

Interviewee 7: And also what we do is, "look, if my 15-year-old niece is interested in a FP news story, she's not going to go to the FP website; maybe she'll check the FP Instagram. So think in this sense, to see the reality. We have a heterogeneous audience, so we have to consider that. Well, we need to publish operation X, but if we only publish it on the website, we might not reach everyone. That's where social media comes in, which always works in parallel with us. In this sense, it's also about trying

to understand the characteristics of the current audience, what predominates.^{xc}

This change cannot be merely superficial, but must effectively address the new social demands advocated by the young population. In this respect, campaigns considered as specific strategies come into play, aimed at inclusion and encouraging the participation of more women, the humanisation of the police, and the diversity of audiences. Interviewees also mentioned campaigns focused on mental health, both for the population and for police officers, which a few years ago would have been considered an almost forbidden topic within police institutions.⁹⁸.

*Interviewee 6: **The creation of policies in this regard, which encourage women, for example.** Today, women no longer go on duty rotations, women who have just given birth or are breastfeeding. If I'm not mistaken, during the first two years, they no longer participate in operational duty or on-call shifts. Women who are breastfeeding are entitled to two hours of remote work per day. These are innovative policies. I don't know how it is in the Civil Police, **but it is something unprecedented, unprecedented, within a police force.**^{xci}*

The encouragement of women's participation, as mentioned by different interviewees, aligns with one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: the promotion of gender equality, positioning the strategy as part of a global agenda. The Federal Police also aims to be seen as an example to be followed by other police forces, leading initiatives in which these changes play a prominent role.

*Interviewee 5: That's where I'm talking, **perhaps about innovation, that we start, but then everyone starts doing it, because, you see, I think the police is a very legalistic institution, always looking at the legal aspect.** And then? For example, the law on abuse of authority takes some time until you get people used to not showing faces, not*

⁹⁸ Until recently, the issue of mental health in the police was seen as a weakness, a stigma, even though many police officers suffer from mental health problems, including high rates of suicide among these groups.

showing parts of the body. And then we started doing this here. I believe that other police forces are also beginning or have already begun, and are perhaps even more advanced in this regard, in not doing this, respecting human dignity.^{xcii}

Interviewee 5: We have to do things first, you see? It's not necessarily that we are innovating. We are just doing what needs to be done. The law states in that article that you cannot show a person's body parts. If you can't, you can't; it's in the law. So you have to comply with what is there, and perhaps it takes a little time as well. The agency also renews itself, and new people arrive, because many of the older personnel are used to working in a certain way, and when things change, it takes a while to adapt.^{xciii}

Change is a central aspect in the discourse analysis, and the response to changes also emerged as a prominent element. More than a discourse of updating, the interviews indicated a concern with adapting to new social demands, responding not only to technological updates in communication channels but also to perceptions of what a police force for the future should be. One of the four main objectives set forth in the Organisational Transformation Plan, PF80, is to “Train the police of the future, modern and innovative.” This grammar is present both in the discourse of the interviewees and in the institution's key documents for the coming years. It is beyond the scope of this work to determine whether this discourse effectively represents organisational culture or merely the institutional image constructed for external audiences. Nevertheless, the discourse conveys that the “elite police” is the police of the future, attentive to social changes and new demands, differentiating itself from traditional criticisms of other Brazilian police forces and seen as a model to be followed.

5 CONCLUSION

Police institutions in Brazil and worldwide have increasingly occupied digital media spaces as a means of assuming control over the narrative surrounding their activities, without the mediation of traditional intermediaries (Meyes, 2020). These new communication channels enable police institutions to exercise control over the message they intend to convey, whether by emphasising that institutional agents are continuously at work or by promoting other messages aligned with their institutional interests. Digital media, in turn, do not merely constitute new spaces of interaction, but also impose new strategies and dynamics that are intrinsic to the relations established within them.

The literature indicates that police institutions, although linked to state authority, are imbued with structures of feeling, also representing symbols and meanings that extend beyond the activities they perform (Loader, 2007; Loader & Mulcahy, 2012). Symbolic power grants police institutions an active voice in matters relating to security and surveillance. This symbolic power attributed to police institutions is not static and must be continuously reinforced, also constituting an object of dispute among state institutions (Bourdieu, 2004, 2007; Powell & DiMaggio, 1999). However, relatively few studies examine how police institutions construct these symbols, particularly in light of new social dynamics and emerging communication channels, such as digital media.

The Brazilian Federal Police also constitutes an interesting case study, even from an international perspective. This is largely because Brazil has multiple policing bodies, which, as a rule, tend to receive relatively low levels of public approval, with recurring allegations of corruption and arbitrariness, particularly in the Military Police. The Federal Police, however, even within this adverse context, has managed over the past 20 years to construct a contrasting image, that of an elite force, enjoying comparatively high levels of public trust.

The Federal Police in Brazil represents one of the police institutions with the greatest media prominence in the country, in addition to generally receiving positive evaluations from the population in comparison with other security forces. This institutional image of the Federal Police is not the same as it was two decades ago, when the country was still navigating its recent process of redemocratisation. Today, the organisation positions itself as a model to be followed by other police forces seeking to attain similar status. This outcome stems from a deliberate and strategic process, involving sustained institutional efforts to build this image, along with the associated myths and symbols, which may be regarded as largely successful.

Furthermore, beyond its continental scale, Brazil is characterised by high levels of digital media consumption among the population, which have become one of the principal communication channels used by state institutions in the country. Studies also indicate that Brazil has not consolidated a strictly autonomous policing field, such that police institutions operate across other fields that permeate their activities, such as the defence field and the criminal justice field (Medeiros, 2004). Research has also identified indications of the Federal Police's activity within a transnational policing field (Villela, 2021, 2024), which is why this field was also examined in the present study.

Studies on the use of digital media by police institutions have largely focused on media as tools for policing, such as social control and the acquisition of information, including their use by individual police officers. Relatively little attention has been paid to the use of media as an instrument for symbolic reinforcement and image-building. Moreover, although the literature highlights the importance of the symbolic dimension of policing and of institutional myths, there remain few studies that examine how these symbols are constructed, transformed or reinforced by police forces, a gap to which this research seeks to contribute.

This study sought to understand the strategy employed by the Brazilian Federal Police in its digital media for the construction of its institutional image. Furthermore, it investigated

whether this strategy was employed with the aim of reinforcing the institution's symbolic power in order to strengthen its position across the different organisational fields that permeate its activities. To this end, the study undertook a critical discourse analysis based on the three-dimensional analytical framework proposed by Fairclough (2001), a precursor of the theory. With regard to the dataset, all publications made by the institution on its official profiles during the years 2022 and 2023 were analysed, together with all news items featured on the institutional website during the same period, as well as interviews conducted with members of the Federal Police occupying central positions in institutional communication. The dimensions of text, text as discursive practice, and text as social practice were analysed in accordance with the criteria indicated by Fairclough (2001). Critical discourse analysis does not follow a rigid procedural model, functioning rather as a guiding framework. Just as discourse is never neutral, its analysis is likewise always oriented. The study does not seek to generalise the findings, as any discourse analyst would recognise that such generalisation is not possible. Nevertheless, the application of the three-dimensional framework provides analytical direction for understanding the aspects that surround discourse beyond the text itself.

The results encompass several distinct aspects. The first finding is that the Federal Police makes extensive use of its digital media, maintaining a high frequency of publications, both in the form of news items on its website and posts across the digital platforms analysed in this research. During the period examined, the Federal Police published an average of 3.7 posts per day on X (Twitter), nearly two news items per day featured on the institutional website, in addition to almost daily publications on Facebook and Instagram, averages that include weekends and public holidays. The Federal Police not only makes use of digital platforms but does so extensively, communicating continuously through these channels. The average level of interaction also indicates that this strategy has generated substantial visibility,

although this does not constitute the object of the present study. Publications receive thousands of likes and comments, indicating public engagement with the content. This activity is consistent with patterns and habits of digital consumption in Brazil⁹⁹, which are high in comparison with other countries, yet remain particularly significant when considering an institutional police profile. The sector has also undergone hierarchical advancement within the institution, indicating the importance attributed to communication in institutional management and reflecting an organisation that actively safeguards its public image. These data suggest that image construction by the Federal Police is intentional and strategically oriented, currently constituting a prominent area within the institution.

This activity of the Federal Police forms part of a broader movement of increased mobilisation of digital channels for narrative control by police institutions in Brazil and worldwide. At present, it is not possible to determine whether this movement in Brazil was led by the Federal Police, but it has resulted in the proliferation of online profiles for police institutions in the country in recent years, both by the institutions themselves and by specialised groups within each institution. In Brazil, in addition to the Federal Police, state Civil and Military Police forces have increased their online presence, and many internal tactical units maintain their own profiles on digital platforms, although national studies on these profiles remain scarce. Whereas police institutions previously depended on journalists to mediate the narrative about their activities through traditional channels, digital media have made it possible to increase control over what is transmitted, when, and how. This greater online mobilisation does not entail solely positive aspects for the police; digital media also enable public interaction, whether positive or negative, almost in real time. Reactions are now managed by institutional actors and therefore require specific strategies for these channels. It is no longer sufficient to perform a good job; it is necessary to communicate effectively, with

⁹⁹ Information from Data Reportal indicates that Brazilians spend an average of 3 hours and 32 minutes per day on social media. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-brazil>

an appropriate strategy for new media, so that this work is recognised. This implies the need for narrative control, information chain management, or intertextuality (Fairclough, 2001), as well as control over negative reactions, including an increase in neutral or positive publications, thereby reducing the potential for criticism.

Regarding the effects of the institution's extensive use of digital media, Van Dick (2010) argues that power in discourse is not inherently negative; it can be employed for neutral or positive purposes. Examples include educational content for children on media platforms, age restrictions for certain content, and wider dissemination of information. Power is inherent to social structures and often serves to organise, establish order, and prevent atrocities. However, the abuse of power and its illegitimate use, which generate social inequality and harm society, are detrimental, referred to by the author as domination (Van Dick, 2010). It is important to understand how power is distributed and how it instrumentalises means to create and amplify inequalities. In the case of the Federal Police, on one hand, police communication can be used to obscure institutional inequalities and to foster symbolic elements of power reminiscent of dictatorial structures. On the other hand, communication can also be employed to guide the population regarding procedures, provide accountability to the community, publicise the work of teams in nationally less-known locations, thereby reducing inequalities and promoting diversity, in a manner that is almost educational.

These effects, whether positive or negative, of communicative power can also be either intentional or unintentional. As extensively indicated throughout the text, the results obtained do not demonstrate the intentions of the communication office or the institution's leadership, a layer that must be examined more carefully and with caution. The findings often indicate how communication is carried out and transmitted, which may also result from institutional arrangements, workflows, and limitations. Police communication across different

media platforms may also, whether intentionally or not, help reduce resistance. This occurs not only through positive-oriented publications, but also because the possibility of direct interaction creates among followers the perception that the channel is a legitimate space for contestation. In this context, posting a comment may absorb feelings of indignation and the sense of needing to act-responses that might previously have been directed toward other spaces, such as formal complaint channels or protests. For Han (2011), the phenomenon he describes as *transparency* tends to exclude revolution and to absorb other, potentially more effective, forms of contestation, such as public demonstrations.

Regarding the research questions, the initial aim was to understand whether a defined, coordinated strategy is applied by the communication team. The data revealed a paradox. There exists a strategy primarily concerning the format and flow of publications, which effectively defines the daily agenda, but leaves little room for implementing content-driven campaigns. Interviews indicated that there is a guideline for standardising publications, while simultaneously encouraging the dissemination of all actions occurring across the country that may be considered relevant. The teams of police officers in the dozens of precincts throughout Brazil are responsible for sending information and determining its relevance, which results in the agenda being predominantly defined by them. Particularly on the institutional website, this has led to most content reproducing the actions and operations conducted, with a focus on repression and symbols of police that convey an ostensive image. On X (Twitter), for example, approximately 92% of publications concern actions and operations. Even within these publications, however, there is a filtering process by the Press Office, which controls discourse and format, indicating that, even without full control over content, a strategy concerning form and discourse is applied.

Despite the high proportion of publications concerning actions and operations, parallel campaigns are defined by the team and implemented across digital media, particularly on

Instagram. While the website is directed at journalists and functions as a catalogue of the Federal Police's activities on a given day, the other channels allow greater scope for campaign implementation, especially on Instagram. On this platform, although the majority of publications also concern actions and operations (61%), it was possible to identify the application of guidelines and campaigns, such as affirmative posts addressing Human Rights and the Environment, for example.

Regarding campaign definitions, a temporal gap must be accounted for in the data. The data collected from digital media refer to the period of 2022 and 2023, whereas the interviews conducted in 2024 reflected current and future guidelines. Despite the short temporal gap, the strategies indicated by interviewees may or may not be represented in the collected data, as one reflects the past and the other is oriented toward the future. Nonetheless, the strategy of greater humanisation of the police, which is reflected, for example, in the use of less formal grammar (such as affective-oriented publications) indicated in the interviews, was observable in the publications from the period, suggesting it is a permanent strategy that has been applied over the years and continues to be projected for the future. Another guideline, aimed at attracting more women to the institution, had not yet been implemented at the time of data collection but was identified by multiple interviewees as a future directive. The guideline of increased transparency and standardisation of information is observable across the dataset, both in the collected publications and the interviews. In a country of continental dimensions, for a federal police institution that, even while present in all state capitals, may face challenges in integrated communication at the local policing level, social media and other digital channels can serve as effective tools for such integrated communication, enhancing the transparency of its actions across all locations.

Concerning publications on actions or operations, there is, at least initially according to the interviews, no priority given to the dissemination of specific investigations, such as

those targeting certain crimes. The flow indicates that the priorities for publishing operations and actions reflect the activities of the Federal Police or, at least, those submitted daily by the many regional precincts. The focus of this research is to identify discourse rather than the operational priorities of the Federal Police; if the priorities of investigations differ from actual operational activity, this lies outside the scope of the present study. Were the data to indicate a prioritisation of certain investigations in contrast with actual police activity, it would be possible to examine the extent to which this contributes to image construction. However, the interviews did not reveal such discrepancies at this stage. This is not to suggest that no prioritisation exists, as the discretionary nature of police activity is well-documented in the specialised literature. Nonetheless, such prioritisation was not evident among the interviewees regarding communication. The discourse employed in the dissemination of these activities, however, can be controlled. Even if communication only publishes the content provided, the discourse used for its dissemination can be shaped, with the predominance of terms, symbols, and formats indicating the choices made by the communication team.

Regarding the second research question, where applicable, the aim was to investigate in what sense this communication strategy occurs within the Federal Police. Organisational field theory was employed to understand the meaning of these changes and the strategies applied, with particular focus on the discourse related to the three main fields in which the Federal Police operates: the criminal justice field, the defence field, and the international policing field. In this respect, it is important to emphasise that the Federal Police's communication strategies are employed to reinforce the institution by projecting an image of active engagement within these fields, rather than as a strategy directed primarily at other actors within them. It is not a strategy of direct contestation; digital media and platforms do not constitute autonomous fields in which these disputes could occur, but rather serve as showcases where the strengths, capitals, relations, and disputes present in other fields are

displayed. In the three analysed fields, strategies are not aimed at other actors; rather, the institution presents itself as strong within each field, employing its characteristic elements with the purpose of operating within these fields offline, to varying degrees. Communication functions as a mirror of what is intended to be highlighted. Beyond journalists, direct strategies are targeted at a general and not specifically defined audience. Subsequently, the Federal Police may benefit from this image construction in its actions within these fields. Beyond the symbolic reinforcement in the three fields of power in which the institution operates, understanding the relationships among the elements identified in the empirical work required an expansion of the concepts, based on Bourdieu's theoretical framework, to comprehend not only the fields themselves but also how capitals and identity are mobilised by the Federal Police in its media.

In relation to the criminal justice field, one of the expectations of this research was that there would be intense mobilisation of capitals specific to the field of criminal justice, primarily driven by the media prominence that anti-corruption operations have gained in recent years in the country. The successful process of institutional autonomy construction by another central actor in the field, the Federal Public Ministry, could also encourage the Federal Police to seek similar autonomy through the same channels, in a process of institutional mimetism. However, although the interviews indicated interactions within the field, including the dissemination of joint actions with other actors in the criminal justice system, this engagement was not evident in the collected data. Beyond substantial publications in partnership with other state institutions from different fields (particularly in police operations), few mobilisations of grammar and symbols directly related to the criminal justice field were observed in the digital media data. The importance of other actors in the criminal justice field, as well as references to investigations and the reinforcement of evidentiary quality (which would be characteristic elements of the field), were emphasised in

the interviews, but these elements appeared only secondarily in digital media. This is not to suggest that activity within this field is unimportant for communication, but rather that it is not as prominent as the indications found regarding the other fields.

In the field of international policing, the symbolic elements identified in the data and interviews can be understood both as the mobilisation of capital within domestic fields and as the reinforcement of positioning within the international field itself. Although little identity was observed, particularly in relation to other investigative police institutions considered international actors in the field (such as the FBI, for example), the interviews indicated that the Press Office is interested in reinforcing the Federal Police as a relevant and integral institution within the international policing field. This position has gained increasing prominence through the Federal Police's active participation in Interpol and, notably, with the recent appointment of a Federal Police Delegate as Secretary-General of Interpol in November 2024. Beyond Interpol, various other police cooperation entities appear in the data, such as Ameripol, as well as partnerships with specialised groups and security agencies from other countries. Although the dissemination of technology is one of the characteristic elements of the international policing field, these technologies were not prominently featured in the analysed data. However, the Federal Police's activity, whether in the transnational policing field or as capital mobilised in other state fields, was primarily reflected through these cooperation and participation in international events, in which the institution is presented as a key actor. The presence of public police in a transnational policing field has also been little addressed in the literature to date, meaning that this study contributes to understanding one aspect of these relations that are formed beyond domestic fields.

Referring to the defence field, the analysed data indicated a substantial presence of symbolic elements related to the ostensive aspect of policing. The interviews suggested that this occurs primarily due to the flow of information, which prioritises the dissemination of

actions and operations, activities that are, by nature, ostensive in Brazil. Nevertheless, the prominence of these elements remains significant, as it indicates, among other conclusions, that regional precincts symbolically associate the Federal Police's activities with these elements. What is understood as police work, as communicated through the Federal Police's digital media, is primarily ostensive in nature, as reflected in the data, even though it is conveyed through the channels of a predominantly investigative police force. In addition to its exclusive competence as the Union's judicial police, in its investigative role, the Federal Police also holds non-exclusive competencies in ostensive policing, such as border policing and drug enforcement. The data may indicate a predominance of these ostensive policing competencies within the Federal Police, particularly associated with specialised repression units, even though these competencies overlap with those of other police forces in Brazil. As noted, the strong presence of these militarised elements may also evoke Brazil's dictatorial past, which remains far from fully overcome, as recent studies suggest, linking, even in an authoritarian manner, control to a notion of order.

However, although the data indicated a substantial presence of symbols associated with the defence field, the interviews provided no evidence of dispute or cooperation with the main actors in this field in Brazil, such as the Army. Mentions of the Army were entirely absent in the interviews, unlike other central actors in different fields, such as the FBI and the Federal Prosecution Service, which were cited. Even though elements of militarism, such as uniforms and weapons, were prominently used, indicating a strong identification with actors in the defence field, the interviews suggested that these relationships of dispute and cooperation do not occur within this field. Instead, such relationships primarily take place with other police forces in Brazil and internationally, whether federal or state. In Brazil, there is a shared identity with other police forces grounded in the symbols of the defence field, particularly with militarised institutions, although there is little direct interaction with the

main actors of the defence field itself.

One of the main shared identities of the Federal Police, however, is that of an “elite police force”, as noted in previous studies on the institution. This elite status is not understood solely in terms of greater resources or a more qualified team, although earlier research has highlighted these elements, as well as high salaries and the political and economic significance of the targets under investigation, which undoubtedly contribute to this designation. The identity of an “elite police force” was indicated by interviewees (although not necessarily using this exact terminology, but through the associated elements), particularly because the institution is consistently future-oriented, serving as an example to be followed by other institutions, a mirror, so to speak. While part of the communication maintains ostensive elements, primarily because they attract public engagement on digital platforms, the objective of the communication sector is to present the Federal Police as a forward-looking, non-partisan institution, oriented toward issues considered international in scope.

The mistakes of the past, frequently mentioned in the interviews, have led to a concern for maintaining operations within legality and bureaucracy, avoiding criticism and, consequently, political interventions. The idea of an elite police force, as indicated in the interviews, is of a police institution that not only would operate with integrity (represented primarily through standardisation and procedures), but would also serve as an example for other institutions in the country, respecting Human Rights, acting against environmental crimes and cybercrimes, and promoting greater gender equity within its police force. There is a pursuit not only of prominence, but of maintaining the social recognition of its importance and prestige acquired in recent years, as an institution essential to Brazilian democracy.

It is also important to point out the limitations of this research. As with any discourse analysis, the study reflects the researcher’s selection of data and what is considered relevant. The study also focuses on only one of the many police institutions in Brazil, each of which

has different characteristics that prevent broad generalisation, although this institution is currently considered the most media-prominent police force in the country, which is the reason for its selection as the object of study. The period under analysis also represents a historical snapshot, with a particular political context in the country that is subject to constant change. The period of data collection in Brazil coincides with a government transition, from the Bolsonaro administration (2019–2022), which was investigated for attempts to interfere with the Federal Police, to the third term of the Lula administration (2023–2026), historically marked by significant investments in the Federal Police. As the Federal Police is hierarchically subordinated to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (its current configuration), linked to the Federal Executive, it continues to seek greater autonomy but remains influenced by changes in government and leadership, which must be taken into account. There are also constant changes in crime profiles in the country, which lead to shifts in the focus of police activities over time. Repression of cybercrime and environmental crimes appear as indicators of future operational priorities, while drug enforcement continues to represent the majority of the Federal Police's publicly disseminated activities.

All of these conditions imply that the study does not support broad generalisations. Precisely for this reason, the aim was to understand the strategies employed beyond the classification of crimes or operations, seeking to comprehend the discourse that reflects the choices and disputes in which the institution is embedded at that moment. Although temporally bound, these discourses indicate historical disputes and tensions that reflect Brazil itself and how its population continues to perceive its control institutions.

The study also sought to understand the meaning of these changes within the possibilities of the temporal scope analysed. Although the study focused on the media most consumed by the Brazilian population during this period (X, Facebook and Instagram), the results are not limited to these platforms. Other media could have been highlighted, with

different structural characteristics. Not that the platforms do not shape communication, which they certainly do, or that these platforms are neutral. Rather, the aim was to understand the overall strategy, even given the limitations of the platforms, and what is intended to be conveyed through that particular communication format.

The data collection period also entails limitations in this study. Although the digital media data were scraped during a period of governmental transition in Brazil, they represent a specific snapshot in time and do not allow for broad generalisations. Accordingly, the aim is not to determine how the communication strategy has been developed in recent years, nor to explain historically what has led the Federal Police's communication to be perceived as successful, as suggested by public opinion research on the institution. Although the historical process of image construction has not been addressed, this study provides important insights into how this strategically oriented process is currently being developed. Rather, the objective is to understand its current strategy and identify indicators of its positioning within organisational fields as an oriented strategy.

The conduct of the interviews also entails certain limitations, as they reflect the perspectives of those currently involved in institutional communication, a group that may change over time depending on shifts within the sector or in its leadership. The interviewees noted that management "imprints its own character" on the institution, which may vary from one period to another. They also indicated that the sector undergoes periodic changes in its composition, particularly through the arrival of staff from other units or the recruitment of new civil servants through public service entrance examinations. Furthermore, as highlighted by the interviewees, the sector is currently undergoing expansion in line with its growing importance within the institution, which may likewise lead to further changes.

Institutional communication across the official central channels is managed by the group that provided the interviews; as such, even though the number of interviews is not

extensive, it is sufficient to understand the national strategy in use. However, it is also important to note that they are likely to be the most highly trained team within the Federal Police in providing socially acceptable responses, particularly to researchers, and this should be taken into account.

Regional police stations and specialised units also constitute a relevant aspect that has not been addressed here, leaving scope for extending the findings presented. Part of the results pointed to demands arising from regional police stations. Likewise, as with the digital media of police officers, an area that has attracted recent scholarly attention, the digital channels of specialised units and regional stations may reveal distinct dynamics of communication, strategy, and symbol construction. There is also a considerable difference between organisational identity and professional identity. The data reflect the organisational identity, but it is not possible to determine whether they also represent the professional identity. They capture the institution's overall strategy, but may not reflect the values of frontline officers, which are difficult to change.

In addition, the study seeks to identify how symbols are constructed and conveyed through digital media; however, it is not possible to ascertain how they are received by the public. The ways in which audiences respond, including likes and comments, represent a promising avenue for future research. The effective operationalisation of the concepts outlined by the communications office in day-to-day police work, namely whether they are in fact being implemented, also constitutes an important aspect which, due to limitations, was not addressed in this study but could form part of a broader research agenda.

Nevertheless, the data provide a snapshot of the strategies currently in use and offer a solid overview of how the institution mobilises communication in pursuit of its organisational objectives. Communication is not merely circumstantial, but rather a consciously deployed instrument for enhancing its symbolic power.

The empirical findings also allow for the outlining of a future research agenda. Firstly, the security field can assume different configurations depending on the country, and its actors may mobilise different capitals and strategies according to the field's configurations. This behaviour of actors within the field as a means of better securing their interests remains little studied from a criminological perspective, although it significantly influences the configurations of the security field and the implementation of security policies in each country. The data indicate that institutions may employ different strategies depending on their interests, strategies that go beyond the dissemination of their duties and activities.

In Brazil, contrary to what the literature had previously suggested regarding the absence of a policing field in the country (Medeiros, 2004), the data indicate that relations of dispute and cooperation occur between police forces, with the deployment of specific capitals, logics, and knowledge characteristic of an autonomous field. The format of operations in Brazil, for example, has been disseminated across practically all police forces and has its own logic, symbols, expected outcomes, and knowledge shared among the police. The formation of a policing field in the country would draw on elements from other fields, such as legal language and symbolic elements of defence, but it is constituted with its own dynamics, rules, and capitals. The construction of a proper policing field in Brazil may have been propelled by the creation and strengthening of the SUSP (Unified Public Security System) in recent years, which significantly increased integration and cooperation among police forces in the country. However, understanding the consolidation of the policing field in Brazil requires in-depth studies on the matter, which are beyond the scope of this work. What remains here are only indications that this field not only exists, but is also in intense activity by its actors.

The use of digital media by security agents and police forces worldwide has also intensified in recent years. However, there are still few studies on the mobilisation of these new communication channels for the construction of new symbols associated with policing.

This study sought to evaluate how one of the main police institutions in Brazil not only communicates its achievements, but also constructs symbols that are transmitted in accordance with the new dynamics introduced by social media, with the aim not only of controlling the message, but of increasing its symbolic power. This study contributes to a better understanding of the strategies adopted by police institutions for their positioning through the media, as well as guiding future research on the communication strategies of other control institutions, in Brazil and internationally.

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ATTACHMENT

Appendix A – List of 100 most used words in publications on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter (X) - 2022 and 2023

Word in Portuguese	Word in English	Count	Weighted percentage (%)
federal	federal	2278	1,64
https	https	2233	1,61
operação	operation	2137	1,54
polícia	police	2125	1,53
possui	has	1594	1,15
aplica	applies	1552	1,12
texto	text	1362	0,98
mandados	warrants	1231	0,89
apreensão	seizure	1115	0,80
imagem	image	1068	0,77
busca	search	990	0,71
#policiafederal	#policiafederal	867	0,62
policiais	police	788	0,57
deflagrou	launched	698	0,50
saiba	learn	674	0,49
crimes	crimes	664	0,48
drogas	drugs	651	0,47
criminosa	criminal	638	0,46
ação	action	634	0,46

prisão	arrest	611	0,44
tráfico	trafficking	578	0,42
federais	federal	546	0,39
organização	organization	505	0,36
combate	fight	476	0,34
□saiba	□learn	452	0,33
cumpridos	fulfilled	451	0,32
#pfemação	#pfemação	415	0,30
objetivo	objective	414	0,30
deflagra	launches	410	0,30
ilegal	illegal	410	0,30
#operaçãopf	#operaçãopf	395	0,28
combater	fight	383	0,28
internacional	international	377	0,27
#pf	#pf	375	0,27
peessoas	people	364	0,26
hoje	today	360	0,26
segurança	security	359	0,26
grupo	group	322	0,23
milhões	millions	316	0,23
brasil	brazil	303	0,22
lavagem	laundering	295	0,21
investigações	investigations	288	0,21
nacional	national	284	0,20

investigação	investigation	283	0,20
apoio	support	282	0,20
crime	crime	278	0,20
desarticular	dismantle	278	0,20
dinheiro	money the	277	0,20
#pfnasruas	#pfnasruas	258	0,19
dia	day	255	0,18
cocaína	cocaine	254	0,18
armas	weapons	247	0,18
meio	middle	244	0,18
região	region	244	0,18
maconha	marijuana	228	0,16
estados	states	223	0,16
preventiva	preventive	221	0,16
estado	state	219	0,16
fase	phase	218	0,16
grande	large	213	0,15
pública	public	211	0,15
policial	police	210	0,15
fraudes	frauds	199	0,14
quinta	thursday	193	0,14
terça	tuesday	193	0,14
atuação	action	191	0,14
ações	actions	190	0,14

flagrante	flagrant	190	0,14
investigados	investigated	189	0,14
cumprem	comply	188	0,14
mil	thousand	188	0,14
operações	operations	184	0,13
droga	drug	183	0,13
criminoso	criminal	181	0,13
esquema	scheme	180	0,13
manhã	morning	180	0,13
conjunta	joint	178	0,13
responsável	responsible	177	0,13
trabalho	work	174	0,13
hashtags	hashtags	171	0,12
anos	years	166	0,12
ouro	gold	166	0,12
quarta	wednesday	164	0,12
conjunto	joint	161	0,12
bens	goods	160	0,12
força	force	160	0,12
toneladas	tons	158	0,11
valores	public	154	0,11
públicos	values	150	0,11
prática	practice	149	0,11
justiça	justice	148	0,11

cooperação	cooperation	147	0,11
segunda	monday	146	0,11
cumprimento	compliance	144	0,10
recursos	resources	142	0,10
nova	new	141	0,10
reprimir	repress	139	0,10
paraguai	paraguay	137	0,10
2022	2022	135	0,10
garimpo	mining	135	0,10

Appendix B – List of the 50 most frequently used words in featured news articles in the general text for the years 2022 and 2023

Word in Portuguese	Word in English	Count	Weighted percentage (%)
federal	federal	7932	2,04
polícia	police	6470	1,66
operação	operation	4804	1,23
mandados	warrants	2772	0,71
2022	2022	2750	0,71
social	social	2430	0,62
apreensão	seizure	2378	0,61
busca	search	2276	0,59
publicado	published	2218	0,57
comunicação	communication	2196	0,56
crimes	crimes	2166	0,56
criminosa	criminal	2010	0,52
policiais	police	1848	0,48
prisão	arrest	1828	0,47
organização	organization	1542	0,40
investigados	investigated	1514	0,39
federais	federal	1436	0,37
atualizado	updated	1428	0,37
anos	years	1418	0,36
investigações	investigations	1378	0,35
drogas	drugs	1376	0,35

tráfico	trafficking	1370	0,35
deflagrou	launched	1348	0,35
investigação	investigation	1274	0,33
2023	2023	1270	0,33
ação	action	1264	0,32
crime	crime	1112	0,29
grupo	group	1066	0,27
objetivo	objective	976	0,25
justiça	justice	950	0,24
21h00	9:00 p.m.	938	0,24
pessoas	people	934	0,24
internacional	international	926	0,24
dinheiro	money	918	0,24
cumpridos	fulfilled	852	0,22
combate	combat	850	0,22
estado	state	846	0,22
lavagem	illegal	840	0,22
ilegal	laundering	834	0,21
grande	large	792	0,20
região	region	786	0,20
valores	amounts	772	0,20
expedidos	issued	768	0,20
milhões	millions	766	0,20
nome	name	762	0,20

empresas	companies	700	0,18
deflagra	launches	692	0,18
cidade	city	684	0,18
hoje	today	684	0,18
meio	middle	666	0,17

Appendix C – List of the 50 most frequently used words in news headlines in 2022 and 2023

Word in Portuguese	Word in English	Count	Weighted percentage (%)
operação	operation	445	4,69
deflagra	launches	291	3,07
federal	federal	269	2,83
combate	fight	239	2,52
polícia	police	236	2,49
investiga	investigates	135	1,42
drogas	drugs	126	1,33
tráfico	trafficking	126	1,33
prende	arrests	95	1,00
fraudes	frauds	89	0,94
crimes	crimes	88	0,93
criminosa	criminal	81	0,85
desarticula	dismantles	77	0,81
internacional	international	73	0,77
ilegal	illegal	71	0,75
organização	organization	64	0,67
fase	phase	56	0,59
lavagem	money	50	0,53
dinheiro	laundering	48	0,51
infantil	child	48	0,51
cumpr	complies	47	0,50

apreende	seizes	46	0,48
pornografia	pornography	45	0,47
combater	fight	43	0,45
cocaína	cocaine	42	0,44
contrabando	smuggling	42	0,44
esquema	scheme	42	0,44
interior	interior	42	0,44
crime	crime	41	0,43
cigarros	cigarettes	39	0,41
fraude	fraud	37	0,39
apreendem	seizes	33	0,35
ação	action	32	0,34
grupo	group	32	0,34
mandados	warrants	31	0,33
recursos	resources	30	0,32
desvio	misappropriation	27	0,28
homem	man	27	0,28
maconha	marijuana	27	0,28
aeroporto	airport	26	0,27
apreensão	seizure	26	0,27
responsável	responsible	25	0,26
sexual	sexual	24	0,25
realiza	carries	23	0,24
toneladas	tons	23	0,24

apura	investigates	22	0,23
bpfron	bpfron	22	0,23
internet	internet	22	0,23
públicos	public	22	0,23
busca	search	21	0,22

Appendix D – List of the 50 most frequently used words in news headlines highlighted in the subtitle text in the years 2022 and 2023

Word in Portuguese	Word in English	Count	Weighted percentage (%)
operação	operation	241	2,12
mandados	warrants	204	1,79
busca	search	169	1,48
apreensão	seizure	141	1,24
ação	action	119	1,05
prisão	arrest	117	1,03
cumpridos	fulfilled	79	0,69
federal	federal	78	0,69
milhões	millions	77	0,68
policiais	police	72	0,63
grupo	group	69	0,61
federais	federal	68	0,60
criminosa	criminal	59	0,52
preso	arrested	58	0,51
flagrante	flagrant	57	0,50
cumpre	fulfills	55	0,48
polícia	police	55	0,48
organização	organization	52	0,46
mandado	warrant	50	0,44
drogas	drugs	47	0,41
investigação	investigation	47	0,41

estados	states	46	0,40
investigações	investigations	43	0,38
crimes	crimes	42	0,37
criminoso	criminal	39	0,34
esquema	scheme	38	0,33
investiga	investigates	38	0,33
droga	drug	37	0,33
tráfico	trafficking	37	0,33
três	three	36	0,32
ilegal	illegal	35	0,31
internacional	international	33	0,29
investigados	investigated	33	0,29
mil	thousand	33	0,29
judiciais	judicial	31	0,27
prejuízo	damage	31	0,27
cidade	city	30	0,26
investigado	investigated	30	0,26
cocaína	cocaine	29	0,25
apreendidos	seized	28	0,25
aproximadamente	approximately	28	0,25
pessoas	people	28	0,25
quatro	four	28	0,25
suspeito	suspect	28	0,25
fase	phase	27	0,24

grande	large	27	0,24
região	region	27	0,24
deflagra	flares	26	0,23
fraudes	frauds	26	0,23
objetivo	objective	26	0,23

Appendix E – List of the 50 most frequently used words in the 2022-2023 Strategic

Planning documents

Word in Portuguese	Word in English	Count	Weighted percentage (%)
estratégica	strategic	45	1,37
ação	action	43	1,31
gestão	management	39	1,19
aprimorar	improve	34	1,04
ações	actions	34	1,04
mecanismos	mechanisms	26	0,79
polícia	police	25	0,76
análise	analysis	24	0,73
servidores	servers	19	0,58
inteligência	intelligence	17	0,52
procedimentos	procedures	16	0,49
sistematizar	systematize	16	0,49
criminal	criminal	15	0,46
desenvolvimento	development	15	0,46
identificação	identification	14	0,43
judiciária	judicial	14	0,43
policia	police	14	0,43
projeto	project	14	0,43
criminalidade	criminality	13	0,40
promover	promote	13	0,40

atividades	activities	12	0,37
emprego	employment	12	0,37
processos	processes	12	0,37
serviços	services	12	0,37
dados	data	11	0,34
investigação	investigation	11	0,34
investigações	investigations	11	0,34
metodologias	methodologies	11	0,34
prevenção	prevention	11	0,34
repressão	repression	11	0,34
2022	2022	10	0,30
apoio	support	10	0,30
criminais	criminal	10	0,30
meios	means	10	0,30
segurança	security	10	0,30
servidor	server	10	0,30
193	193	9	0,27
administrativa	administrative	9	0,27
boletim	bulletin	9	0,27
continuação	continuation	9	0,27
criminosas	criminal	9	0,27
desenvolver	develop	9	0,27
eficiência	efficiency	9	0,27
fomentar	foster	9	0,27

informações	information	9	0,27
meio	means	9	0,27
mjsp	mjsp	9	0,27
objetivo	objective	9	0,27
potencializar	enhance	9	0,27
proativas	proactive	9	0,27

Appendix F – List of the 50 most frequently used words in the 2024-2027 Strategic

Planning documents

Word in Portuguese	Word in English	Count	Weighted percentage (%)
gestão	management	203	0,75
servidores	servers	195	0,72
estratégico	strategic	148	0,55
polícia	police	103	0,38
planejamento	planning	99	0,37
capacitação	training	92	0,34
federal	federal	91	0,34
mais	more	91	0,34
dpf	dpf	80	0,30
plano	plan	80	0,30
dados	data	79	0,29
cultura	culture	73	0,27
okrs	okrs	71	0,26
estratégicos	strategic	69	0,26
objetivos	objectives	67	0,25
2024	2024	66	0,24
oficina	workshop	64	0,24
estratégia	strategy	63	0,23
serviços	services	63	0,23
instituição	institution	61	0,23

criação	creation	60	0,22
valores	values	58	0,21
estratégica	strategic	57	0,21
okr	okr	57	0,21
organizacional	organizational	57	0,21
unidades	units	56	0,21
2027	2027	54	0,20
falta	lack	54	0,20
sociedade	society	54	0,20
objetivo	objective	52	0,19
recursos	resources	52	0,19
resultados	results	52	0,19
problemas	problems	50	0,18
geral	general	49	0,18
elaboração	elaboration	48	0,18
processo	process	48	0,18
processos	processes	48	0,18
peessoas	people	46	0,17
visão	vision	46	0,17
criar	create	45	0,17
estrutura	structure	45	0,17
pf80	pf80	45	0,17
forma	form	42	0,16
governança	governance	42	0,16

área	area	42	0,16
aumentar	increase	41	0,15
liderança	leadership	38	0,14
proposta	proposal	38	0,14
realização	realization	38	0,14
conhecimento	knowledge	37	0,14

Anexx A – Guiding Interview Questions – Model 1

Após me apresentar, apresentar os principais objetivos da pesquisa e assinatura do termo de consentimento, em um local que seja confortável para o entrevistado, a pesquisa será conduzida a partir das seguintes questões como tópicos guia:

Apresentação do Entrevistado

1. Data da entrevista:
2. Início da entrevista:
3. Término da entrevista:
4. Nome do entrevistado:
5. Cargo:
6. Atribuições no setor:
7. Há quanto tempo trabalha na PF?
8. Já trabalhou em outra instituição policial antes?
9. Há quanto tempo trabalha no setor de comunicação na PF?
10. O que te fez ir para este setor específico?

Características gerais do setor

1. Como é estruturado o setor de comunicação da PF?
2. Quantas pessoas compõem a equipe que gerencia os canais de comunicação oficiais da Polícia Federal?
 - a. Quantos são agentes e quantos são delegados?

3. Os profissionais que cuidam dos diferentes canais de comunicação (como redes sociais, site e You Tube) são os mesmos ou há divisões de atribuições por canal? Por exemplo, duas pessoas que cuidam do You Tube, outras duas que cuidam do site etc.
4. Há uma estratégia (geral e específica) de comunicação?
 - a. Se sim, como ela é estruturada?
5. Como você enxerga a missão do setor de comunicação da PF?
 - a. Quais os principais desafios para executá-la?
6. A PF tem a peculiaridade com relação às outras polícias com relação aos seus alvos com alto poder político e econômico. Como você avalia essa peculiaridade para o setor de comunicação? Como um desafio ou vantagem?
7. Na sua visão, a comunicação da PF está sendo utilizada como instrumento para construção da imagem institucional para o futuro?
 - a) Se sim, como isso vem sendo feito?
8. Você observou mudanças na importância do setor nos últimos anos? Em um aspecto geral, e darei dois marcos temporais como guia: 5 anos e 10 anos.
9. Na sua percepção, a Operação Lava Jato alterou a forma como a comunicação da PF passou a ser tratada?
 - a) Se sim, como?
10. Como você considera a influência dos gestores da instituição na assessoria de comunicação? As diretrizes são gerais ou há influência direta nas pautas do dia?

Canais de comunicação

1. Quais são os principais canais de comunicação oficiais utilizados pela Polícia Federal?

2. Ha diferenças no formato de comunicação por canais? Por exemplo, o Twitter pode ter uma comunicação voltada para os públicos mais jovens, enquanto as notícias no site podem ser voltadas para a sociedade civil e um público mais velho.
3. Existem diferenças de públicos esperados entre os diferentes canais de comunicação externa? Por exemplo, outros profissionais de segurança, sociedade civil, comunidade internacionais, outros órgãos e funcionários estatais., concurseiros etc.

Definição de conteúdo

1. Pode me falar um pouco sobre o fluxo diário de divulgações? Como ocorre desde o momento em que uma informação chega até o momento em que ela é publicada nos diferentes canais?
2. Como é determinada a pauta de conteúdo do dia? Com que frequência são realizadas publicações nos diferentes canais? Há um cronograma pré-definido ou depende das demandas das delegacias regionais?
3. Há integração com os demais setores internos da PF?
 - a) Se sim, como ela ocorre?
 - a) Como é o fluxo de informações dos setores internos?
4. As informações passam por validação de outros setores antes de serem divulgadas ou o setor tem autonomia?
5. Quando chega uma informação para a equipe, como é decidido se ela será divulgada ou não?
6. Há diretrizes internas de prioridades temáticas de divulgação? Por exemplo, há diretrizes para a maior divulgação de grandes operações, ou combate a determinados crimes?

Campos organizacionais

a) Campo do judiciário

1. Na sua percepção a Operação Lava Jato alterou a forma como a qualidade da prova passou a ser divulgada?
2. A comunicação da PF busca explorar o papel da instituição como essencial no sistema judiciário? Por exemplo, são priorizadas a divulgação de mais ações de inteligência na investigação ou de repressão?
3. Houve mudanças nesta percepção nos últimos anos?

b) Campo de segurança pública

1. O Brasil possui diferentes tipos de polícia. A comunicação da PF busca se diferenciar das demais destacando suas atribuições específicas ou busca um posicionamento de integração e homogeneidade entre as polícias, destacando elementos comuns de ostensividade, como armas e distintivos?
 - a. Como isto é feito?
 - b. Em todos os canais de comunicação ou canais específicos?
 - c. Poderia me dar alguns exemplos?

c) Campo internacional

1. Há diretrizes voltadas à comunidade internacional? Como por exemplo, reforço da PF como uma instituição forte e relevante dentre outras instituições internacionais de policiamento?
2. Como isso é feito atualmente?
3. Poderia me dar alguns exemplos?

Anexx B – Guiding Interview Questions – Model 2

Após me apresentar, apresentar os principais objetivos da pesquisa e assinatura do termo de consentimento, em um local que seja confortável para o entrevistado, a pesquisa será conduzida a partir das seguintes questões como tópicos guia:

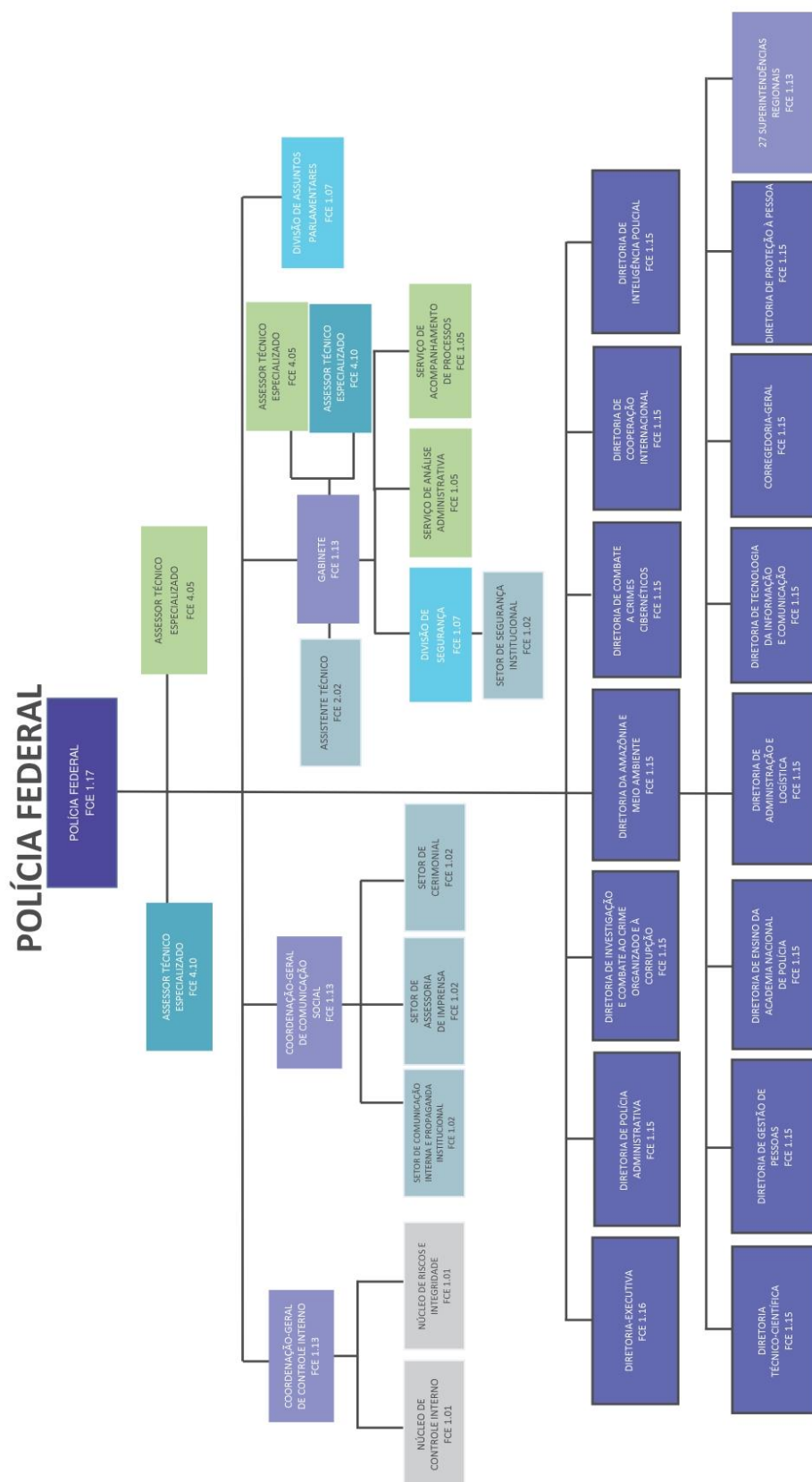
Apresentação do Entrevistado

1. Data da entrevista:
2. Início da entrevista:
3. Término da entrevista:
4. Nome do entrevistado:
5. Cargo:
6. Unidade de lotação:
7. Há quanto tempo trabalha na PF?

Sobre a comunicação:

1. Quantas pessoas trabalham na delegacia? Quantos delegados, agentes e administrativos?
2. Há um profissional designado e responsável pela comunicação ou diversas pessoas podem exercer a função?
3. A comunicação social é sempre enviada à sede ou há canais de comunicação regionais, como perfis regionais da delegacia nas mídias sociais, grupos com redes de jornalistas na cidade etc?
4. As informações são encaminhadas em que formato? Textos, fotos, vídeos etc.

5. Com que frequência são enviadas informações para a sede para publicações nos diferentes canais de comunicação?
6. Com que frequência são divulgadas as informações nos canais de comunicação regionais?
7. Como funciona a dinâmica de divulgação na delegacia? Por exemplo, desde o momento em que uma ação ocorre até ser divulgada.
8. Como são definidas as informações que serão encaminhadas à sede? Existe algum critério?
9. Existe uma estratégia ampla de comunicação? Se sim, como ela é aplicada?
10. Há prioridade sobre os tipos de investigações e ações que serão divulgadas? Como por exemplo, número mínimo de apreensões, número de alvos, importância dos alvos etc.
11. Há algum filtro preliminar sobre o que deverá ser divulgado?
12. Já foi encaminhada alguma informação à sede que não foi divulgada nos canais centrais da PF? Qual foi a justificativa?
13. Além das ações e operações, são enviadas e divulgadas outras informações institucionais? Como participação de agentes em eventos, cooperações etc.
14. Há uma estrutura previa de informações que devem ser enviadas?
15. Como são divulgadas as ações em conjunto com outras instituições, há necessidade de aprovação prévia das instituições participantes (como o MP, por exemplo)?



Decreto nº 11.348, de 1º de janeiro de 2023

ⁱ Pesquisadora: Há uma estratégia geral e específica de comunicação delimitada? Entrevistado 2: Nós seguimos a nossa instrução normativa. A gente tem uma instrução normativa e a gente segue as regras que tem lá. É mais ou menos isso.

ⁱⁱ Entrevistado 1: os nossos membros, eles não gostam de aparecer muito, até perigoso né, pra galera aparecer e mostrar o rosto. Então, desde sempre, toda a comunicação da Polícia Federal feita para o público externo é sempre do policial de costas. Então ninguém, não pode mostrar rosto. É até um tabu aqui dentro. Então não podia de jeito nenhum mostrar o rosto do policial, porque ia trazer um perigo para ele e para a instituição. (...) Então, por tudo isso, a gente não mostra rosto, tem muito cuidado com o que vai ser divulgado, tem muito cuidado com o que vai ser divulgado, por exemplo, com alvo, casa de alvo, armamento. Então a gente tem bastante cuidado com esse tipo de coisa.

ⁱⁱⁱ Entrevistado 2: A gente nunca divulga nem, jamais divulga presos ou alvos das operações, nem parte de corpo. Imprensa gosta muito daquelas fotos “a um cara que foi preso no aeroporto com droga presa ao corpo”. Aquela foto de corpo. Não, a gente não divulga por aqui no site, jamais vai ser publicado.

^{iv} Entrevistado 3: O que acontece é que a gente tem um cuidado a mais (...) Mas por conta da lei de abuso de autoridade, a gente tem todo o cuidado em revelar nomes, publicar fotos e mais. Enfim, a gente tem uma sensibilidade nisso porque muitas vezes são figuras de conhecimento público e a gente tenta sempre fazer o máximo para não ir de encontro a alguma lei, inclusive a lei de abuso de autoridade, justamente para preservar a imagem dessa pessoa, independente do que ela fez. A gente tenta manter a nossa diretriz e tenta manter a nossa dinâmica, independente de quem for. (...) Se o jornalista publica alguma coisa dessa esfera, é mérito jornalístico que ele conseguiu. Ele apurou isso. Mas isso nunca vai sair da assessoria de comunicação aqui da PF.

^v Entrevistado 6: Hoje, os principais canais de divulgação são o site da Polícia Federal, que a maior parte do nosso público ali no site, a imprensa, são os jornalistas. O cidadão comum, ele acessa muito nosso site também, mas ele está mais em busca de serviços, como tirar passaporte, antecedentes criminais, porte de arma de fogo, por exemplo. As redes sociais já alcançam um público maior, que é o público que não necessariamente a imprensa, mas o público fim, o cidadão de forma geral. Hoje nós temos Instagram, Facebook e o X.

^{vi} Entrevistado 4: Eu acho que hoje posso dizer que da linha institucional, a gente tem três postagens por semana, que são conteúdos que são planejados, que são feitos, que vai passar por roteiro, por captação de imagem, por edição. Toda aquela produção. Então, assim, hoje talvez entraria três postagens semanais, mas já as ações, principalmente, na linha de transparência, basicamente é publicado o que acontece, o que chega.

^{vii} Instagram. 13 de abril de 2022. Texto: Polícia Federal deflagrou nesta quarta-feira (13/4) a Operação Sem Volta para Casa, que visa combater o crime de redução a condição análoga à de escravo. A investigação apura se um grupo de trabalhadores, composto inclusive por crianças e idosos, estaria sendo submetidos a trabalhos degradantes, sem condições de higiene, sem direitos trabalhistas garantidos e sem alojamento adequado, bem como restrição da liberdade por dívidas e vigilância constante. Se confirmada a hipótese criminal, os investigados poderão cumprir pena que poderá ultrapassar os 12 anos, considerando a presença de crianças e adolescentes entre as vítimas.

^{viii} Post 1: Uma equipe de policiais federais brasileiros integrará o Centro de Cooperação Policial Internacional (CCPI) na Copa do Mundo 2022, no Catar. Saiba mais: <https://t.co/zxvPPEtPqH>
<https://t.co/hveQNOG3Jb>

Post 2: O CCPI foi criado para garantir a segurança do evento por meio de uma atuação colaborativa entre os representantes policiais dos 32 países participantes da Copa e de organismos internacionais, como a @INTERPOL_HQ e a @EUROPOL, sob a liderança da Polícia Nacional do Catar. <https://t.co/3n4D3uxWas>

Post 3: O Brasil foi convidado pelo Comitê de Segurança e Operações do Qatar a compor o CCPI, com o envio de uma experiente equipe de policiais federais. Os policiais atuarão no centro de comando e controle e, também, no contato direto com os torcedores brasileiros.

@SeCommittee2022 <https://t.co/gzJy1gOsoQ>

Publicado em 17 de novembro de 2022, no Twitter/X

^{ix} Conteúdos publicados:

Post: Bom final de semana a todos! 🧠👊🍷

Publicado no dia 18 de junho de 2022, no Instagram

Post:  A semana começou e nós também!

Publicado no dia 14 de agosto de 2023, no Instagram.

^x Entrevistado 7: Hoje eu diria que os principais desafios têm muito a ver com a própria realidade, das pessoas, dos cidadãos, novamente citando, porque hoje em dia as pessoas estão cada vez com menos tempo para se dedicar a se informar, estudar. Tudo é muito corrido, há um bombardeio constante de informações. O grande desafio é achar uma linguagem, seja textual ou visual, que atraia essa pessoa que está cada vez com menos tempo para se dedicar à leitura, ao estudo. Esse é um desafio permanente. É um desafio de encaixar um bom trabalho policial, num formato, numa receita tal que seja atrativa para o leitor que desperte para aquela pessoa que está sendo bombardeada por centenas de informações, opa, essa informação no meiozinho aqui de 100, da Polícia Federal é relevante, deixa eu clicar aqui para ver do que se trata. Então é isso, é buscar fazer textos atrativos, trazer imagens atrativas para que despertem, pensando no nosso público, diante das inúmeras informações que as pessoas têm contato diariamente. Acho que esse é o grande desafio.

^{xi} Instagram. Abril 13, 2022. Post text: Polícia Federal deflagrou nesta quarta-feira (13/4) a Operação Sem Volta para Casa, que visa combater o crime de redução a condição análoga à de escravo. A investigação apura se um grupo de trabalhadores, composto inclusive por crianças e idosos, estaria sendo submetidos a trabalhos degradantes, sem condições de higiene, sem direitos trabalhistas garantidos e sem alojamento adequado, bem como restrição da liberdade por dívidas e vigilância constante. Se confirmada a hipótese criminal, os investigados poderão cumprir pena que poderá ultrapassar os 12 anos, considerando a presença de crianças e adolescentes entre as vítimas.

^{xii} Entrevistado 7: Por mais que possa parecer pequena uma determinada ação na ponta, ela tem uma importância naquele local que só quem trabalha na ponta vai entender. Então a gente trata com todo o cuidado aqui também para a publicação. (...) Eu sempre digo a resposta que a gente dá não é para jornalista, não é para a chefia nem nada, a resposta que a gente dá é para a sociedade. E aí entra o jornalista para fazer essa interface entre a PF e a sociedade. Então, a ponta tem essa necessidade de mostrar que está trabalhando, porque as pessoas... eu já trabalhei em estados mais remotos e sei, as pessoas que estão longe tem uma visão de que aquele local está escondido e o pessoal acha que ninguém trabalha por lá. Não é a ponta trabalha muito, faz muita coisa. E aí eles fazem um levantamento daquilo que eles acham que é relevante ou não publicar, eles publicam em âmbito local e mandam pra gente também.

^{xiii} Entrevistado 5: Chega de tudo pra gente. Desde o crime ambiental até o tráfico de drogas. Então é importante que a gente poste, porque...todas as ações da PF para que seja mostrado o trabalho também. E valorize também quem está na ponta, porque as pessoas na ponta elas fazem o trabalho mesmo de Polícia Judiciária ali de estar né. E é importante que isso seja divulgado. Até assim, fugindo um pouco, mas pelo sentimento de pertencimento, de saber que se você está atuando isso, o que você fez ali está sendo mostrado. Acredito que isso dá um sentimento de pertencimento também para as pessoas, para os colaboradores.

^{xiv} Entrevistado 8: Opinião pessoal, acho que é uma valorização humana, uma demonstração de importância que o setor tem dentro da estrutura. Antes uma divisão, eu acho que sempre com o mesmo número de servidores aproximadamente, mas agora ascendendo a coordenação geral, se coloca um grau de hierarquia maior e conseguindo dar a organização formal para um setor de atendimento a imprensa e um setor de comunicação interna e um setor de cerimonial

^{xv} Entrevistado 2: Tá bem mais profissional. Antigamente, quando eu vim, a gente não tinha nem a divisão entre setores. A gente era uma divisão, que é abaixo de coordenação, era a divisão de Comunicação Social e não tinham setores definidos. Tinha uma divisão interna entre os colegas, mas não havia nem setores e não tinha redes sociais, que também não lembro em que ano que isso foi implantado, mas não tem tantos anos assim e acho que a gente melhorou muito

^{xvi} Entrevistado 6: Em 2021 nós viramos Coordenação Geral, que está logo abaixo das Diretorias. Hoje a comunicação social, ela participa ativamente das reuniões semanais de diretores, onde são tomadas as decisões estratégicas do órgão.

Pesquisadora: Essa foi a principal mudança?

Entrevistado 6: A principal mudança. Questão de estrutura, crescemos no nível organizacional. Estamos presentes nessas reuniões semanais em todas as decisões estratégicas do órgão. A comunicação é ouvida e a comunicação social tem total acesso hoje à direção geral e às demais diretorias.

^{xvii} Entrevistado 4: Cada vez mais tem dado importância para o setor, para a área de comunicação, que é uma área para a nossa instituição, assim, bem, bem decisiva que é uma instituição que praticamente está todo dia no Jornal Nacional, praticamente. Então assim, cada vez mais é um setor que vem sendo valorizado e ganhando destaque dentro de toda a instituição.

^{xviii} Entrevistado 5: É um importante instrumento. Porque, se você comparar a Polícia Federal. Ali, antes de 2004 2005, ela teve uma importância cada vez maior, dentro do contexto mesmo nacional de polícia. E ela foi mostrada também muito. E a gente tem um “boom” muito grande e a comunicação faz parte disso. Sem a comunicação, acredito que... num termo, assim, a gente faz um meio de campo entre o interno e o que é divulgado. E se não tiver essa comunicação, não se não tivesse, mas se a gente atuasse menos, acredito que a PF não teria essa visão na sociedade. E quando fala-se em Polícia Federal, acredito que a comunicação faz parte, é uma parte importante disso

^{xix} Entrevistado 3: Olha, pelo que eu ouço falar dos colegas, sim, o setor de comunicação social como um todo, na verdade, a coordenação de comunicação social cada vez mais está sendo valorizada, porque, querendo ou não, todos os setores precisam da gente. Todas as ações precisam ser divulgadas assim. (...). O que as pessoas sabem da Polícia Federal é através da comunicação social. Então eu ouço assim, de muitos colegas, inclusive, que estão na casa com mais tempo do que eu e eles comentam. Eles falam que a comunicação é muito importante, que ela tem se destacado cada vez mais e pelo pouco tempo que eu estou aqui, eu percebo isso também. A gente recebe esse feedback dos nossos colegas e isso também é como uma forma da gente continuar com trabalho de qualidade, mesmo tendo pouco efetivo, mesmo com todas as os percalços

^{xx} Entrevistado 8: E dentro disso, uma coisa que eu gosto sempre de falar não sei se entra aqui, mas a comunicação é a porta de entrada e a porta de saída de resolução de todas as crises que existem. E acho que no ramo policial, principalmente. Então muita das vezes a comunicação é a primeira a saber de várias coisas que estão chegando por conta dessa proximidade com alguns jornalistas. E o crédito e o bom crédito que se tem ajuda também a resolver várias crises. Sendo um órgão de assessoria ali do gabinete, não tem como, tudo é despachado por ele. Assim, goza-se de autonomia no trabalho diário. Mas, a direção da a sua, a direção

^{xxi} Entrevistado 6: Acredito que hoje nosso maior desafio é efetivo. Você conheceu a equipe como um todo. Por mais que os nossos profissionais sejam altamente qualificados, empenhados, engajados, realmente gostem, amem o que fazem aqui na comunicação social, o time é muito pequeno. Hoje a gente trabalha muito com apagar incêndio. É um trabalho estratégico que, por vezes acaba ficando um pouco... Não que a gente não faça. Mas a gente poderia fazer mais, com maior efetivo

^{xxii} Entrevistado 5: Eu acho que a gente tem pouca gente pra muito trabalho, nossa assessoria é muito pequena. No nosso setor de comunicação é muito pequeno, comparado a outros órgãos. E as demandas às vezes são muito grandes para o tanto de gente que a gente tem. Então, acho que a gente faz muito com pouco.

^{xxiii} Entrevistado 7: É assim, a gente trabalha de segunda a segunda no site, assim, porque uma prisão pode acontecer num domingo, pode acontecer de madrugada. Pode ser deflagrada uma operação a depender das circunstâncias, num domingo, eu já participei de operação como policial num domingo, recebi a ligação no sábado à noite, “Oh, apresente-se amanhã às 05h00, porque tem operação”, beleza. Então a frequência vai de acordo com o que as pontas nos demandam, então, assunto tem todo dia.

^{xxiv} Entrevistado 3: Baixo efetivo. Somos pouquíssimos. Uma assessoria que atende o Brasil todo. (...). Tudo que a gente presta para os jornalistas e tudo mais, todo mundo faz um pouquinho de tudo. A gente tenta atender 24 horas o que é que acontece, né? Tem pessoas aqui até 07h00 da noite, inclusive eu fico até as sete. A partir das sete, tem o sobreaviso, que é uma pessoa, única pessoa do setor, que fica responsável por atender todas as demandas dos jornalistas, ligações, mensagens no WhatsApp, e-mails e notas também. Tudo que chega a gente publica, no melhor tempo possível, com tempestividade. Além disso, trabalhamos de domingo a domingo, que a imprensa não para. (...) E a gente tenta deixar isso zerado o máximo possível para não deixar ninguém. A gente tenta o máximo possível não extrapolar o deadline também de jornalista. A gente faz aquilo que pode, né? Mas esse é um dos desafios, o baixo efetivo. E mesmo assim a gente tenta reformular sempre a equipe para a gente poder sempre cumprir a nossa missão.

^{xxv} Entrevistado 3: Aqui na verdade, todo mundo faz de tudo. Nós temos três setores aqui na comunicação social (...) Só que no meu setor de assessoria de imprensa, todo mundo faz tudo. Todo mundo tem aptidão para acompanhar entrevista, tanto para acompanhar também notas ou postar notas, publicar notas, responder e-mails, enviar para o setor responsável, enfim, enfim, todo mundo faz a mesma coisa de acordo com cada setor. Aqui no outro setor é a mesma coisa, todo mundo faz a mesma coisa. Só que em relação ao setor. A atribuição específica do setor.

^{xxvi} Entrevistado 6: A questão de efetivo aumentou um pouco de 2016 para cá. Somos poucos ainda, mas é uma realidade que não é só da comunicação social. A polícia de forma geral. Hoje nós temos pouco mais de 14.000 servidores. (...) Para o Brasil inteiro, dezenas de atribuições. (...) não é

um problema da comunicação social, certo? Não é uma reclamação. Assim, a gestão não olha para o efetivo, para poder proporcionar mais servidores para comunicação social. Não é isso. Um órgão que realmente tem pouco servidores em todas as áreas. É um problema geral.

^{xxvii} Entrevistado 7: Mas a gente tem uma dificuldade, especialmente nos estados que a gente chama de fronteiriços, a Amazônia Legal e algumas fronteiras em que há um fluxo muito grande, natural de servidores. Geralmente as pessoas são de outras regiões, ficam ali um determinado tempo e saem. Isso atinge também a comunicação, porque a comunicação está num processo constante de alterações na comunicação das pontas.

^{xxviii} Entrevistado 7: Então a gente tem que sempre estar com esse diálogo com o pessoal da ponta, porque às vezes um servidor passou três anos lá, está perfeitamente alinhado com as regras, mas aparece um novo para substituí-lo assim, nessas remoções que ocorrem, aí a gente tem que fazer todo esse processo de novo. Às vezes, trazê-los para cá para passar a fazer um estágio conosco e fazer toda essa construção para que ele, enfim, esteja alinhado conosco. (...) Mas em geral, nós temos um colega ou dois aqui ajudando que a gente recruta das pontas, que vem para fazer um duplo trabalho. Primeiro, nos ajudar com as demandas que são muitas, e segundo para fazer um estágio, uma reciclagem também, porque essas normas vão mudando, né? (...) É uma constante mudança, então a gente tem que estar em comunicação permanentemente com todos eles.

^{xxix} Entrevistado 6: Eles vêm temporariamente, de missão, de outras sedes. Isso, geralmente outras superintendências ou outras delegacias. Colegas que têm experiência em comunicação social e são recrutados para apoiar em alguma demanda específica. Por exemplo, agora nas eleições, a demanda de trabalho aumenta. Nós sempre recrutamos colegas para apoiarem no setor de assessoria de imprensa. (...). Mas, em geral, nós temos sempre um ou dois missionários aqui na coordenação.

^{xxx} Entrevistado 2: É isso, a gente faz essa seleção. Geralmente a gente publica tudo que mandam, tudo o que mandam, a não ser quando é uma coisa (...) muito interna. Estou tentando te dar um exemplo, um evento da comunicação de São Paulo, um evento muito interno da polícia, que a gente vê que não tem interesse para a imprensa, não tem interesse para o público. A gente divulga, manda para a intranet, para eles avaliarem se vale a pena ser publicado na intranet. A gente não publica na nossa agência o que não é notícia, mas é raro. (...). Alguém foi preso, mandado de busca, a gente publica tudo.

^{xxxi} Entrevistado 7: É assim, todos os trabalhos a gente, todo trabalho policial, desde o cumprimento de um mandado em simples, teoricamente simples, até a prisão de alguma pessoa com grande repercussão, a gente acha que é importante, não acha nem mais nem menos importante (...). Então assim, para a ponta, tudo o que eles fazem é relevante. Então a gente tem essa visão de ter um cuidado. Olha, se a gente ficar aqui no centro do Brasil olhando só o que acontece à volta, e acham que só o que é que é relevante é o que é grande é o que está à volta, a gente vai esquecer do trabalho muito importante que é feito em outros estados. Então, a orientação é tudo que vocês fizerem, mandem pra gente. Cumpriu um mandado ou 20, manda pra gente e a gente vai dar um trato ali. Mesmo que seja, entre aspas, um só mandado, a gente entende também que é sim relevante no contexto local e vai divulgar. Se despertar o interesse para além do Estado, para além desse lugar onde está sendo cumprido o mandado, a gente dá em tratamento aqui para tentar viabilizar uma entrevista na ponta, para mostrar que a ponta está trabalhando, enfim.

^{xxxi} Entrevistado 4: Digamos que a interferência dos gestores, assim, praticamente não existe. A comunicação trabalha de uma forma mais independente, assim. Óbvio que alinhado aos princípios da gestão. Então, como eu mencionei ali antes, por exemplo, a questão de passar uma imagem de uma polícia mais humana, é um princípio vital da gestão, então a comunicação social vai trabalhar daquele modo, com algumas diretrizes da gestão. Mas não é, não passa por tudo. Não sofre interferência, não passa por censura nenhum, digamos. Todo o material que é produzido pensando na instituição é divulgando sem nenhum problema.

^{xxxi} Entrevistado 6: Existe uma troca constante de informações entre a comunicação social e essas 14 diretorias e a direção geral, que entraria ali como a 15.^a, mas a comunicação social do órgão, ela tem liberdade na proposição de pautas e na formatação dessas pautas. Não sai nada para a imprensa sem que passe pelo aval da comunicação social, no sentido de fazer uma análise estratégica. É a hora certa de divulgar isso aqui? Isso aqui precisa ser divulgado para o público ou não. Não caberia fazer essa divulgação e mais divulgação, por exemplo, mais política. Então, isso aqui não vai ter imprensa, por mais que tenha essa orientação, esse desejo de alguma diretoria, por exemplo. A comunicação social hoje tem essa liberdade de realmente assessorar.

^{xxxi} Entrevistado 4: Isso vai depender das duas linhas, da institucional. Eu acho que hoje posso dizer que da linha institucional, a gente tem três postagens por semana, que são conteúdos que são

planejados, que são, que são feitos, que vai passar por roteiro, por captação de imagem, por edição. Toda aquela produção. Então, assim, hoje talvez entraria três postagens semanais, mas já as ações, principalmente, na linha de transparência, basicamente é publicado o que acontece, o que chega.

^{xxxv} Entrevistado 5: Já chegou o dia de a gente receber 40, 38, não sei o número exato, mas aí são, são muitas, se você for colocar ali que você vai fazer a revisão do texto, ver se aquilo pode ir, e aí para o nosso setor 38, 40 são muitos. Por mês tem um... Eu tenho mais ou menos umas planilhas que eu faço e, é difícil ter menos de 300 notas publicadas no site.

^{xxxvi} Entrevistado 7: Nesse sentido, o que acontece, os comunicadores das pontas, de Roraima, como exemplo, como de qualquer outro estado do Brasil, eles fazem comunicação em âmbito local e, paralelamente, eles enviam pra gente esse material pra gente fazer uma análise, publicar no site da Polícia Federal, que a gente chama de agência de notícias da PF, divulgar com jornalistas que estão no nosso mailing. Hoje em dia o mailing não é e-mail, é WhatsApp, que é muito mais prático. Publicar no site de alcance nacional da Polícia Federal. Por quê? Porque é aquela matéria local, ela pode despertar interesse do jornalista em qualquer lugar do Brasil e muitas vezes no mundo. Então a gente tem que estar ciente, publicar, divulgar.

^{xxxvii} Entrevistado 4: Hoje, posso dizer que é tudo que chega é publicado no Twitter. Então eu acho que ele é um veículo muito de apoio ao jornalista. Então, assim, é um feed de notícia mesmo. Então, tudo, tudo, tudo, tudo está ali. E o Instagram, por característica da ferramenta, a gente depende muito de imagem. Então, por ser uma instituição nacional, a gente ter unidades em todos os estados e várias delegacias que a gente incentiva muito a produção de imagem, sempre dentro das diretrizes de comunicação. Mas a gente incentiva muito a produção de imagem, mas fica que, é um critério decisivo na hora de publicação, numa rede social, de imagem, digamos assim.

^{xxxviii} Entrevistado 1: Pra ir pro Instagram tem que ter imagens boas, então tem que ter uma foto bacana ou um vídeo bem assim, uma captação de imagem bem feita. A gente faz a edição por aqui. E tem que ser uma operação que tenha uma repercussão legal, que são muitos mandados de busca, apreensão de prisão, ou é algo polêmico. Então tem que ter uma dessas duas coisas, ou ter repercussão e ter um material bacana. (...). Até porque o Instagram e Facebook eles são muito visuais. (...) O Twitter, ele é mais focado em notícias do dia a dia. Então as operações, geralmente a gente coloca quase todas as operações lá no Twitter. Então é o dia a dia, da mesma forma coloca no site. Mas quem faz essa parte do site assessoria, mas coloca também, no site são todas as operações que saíram no dia, são colocadas lá. No Twitter a gente coloca quase todas. E no Instagram, no Facebook e no YouTube, a gente tem um planejamento maior de temas que a gente quer abordar, que quer falar com a sociedade. Não é só reativo, digamos. E aí a gente senta com as áreas, conversa, monta roteiro.

^{xxxix} Entrevistado 7: Hoje a gente usa aplicativos, aplicativos de mensagens. Nós temos um grupo de comunicadores que não tem qualquer distinção para ser aceito nele. (...) Todos, se pedirem, a gente faz uma análise de quem é que está pedindo para receber, mas todos são adicionados nesse grupo, que hoje está em torno de 400 profissionais. A gente seleciona algumas das matérias que possam, de acordo com a ordem do dia, possa despertar mais interesse e dispara igualmente para todos os que estão, acho importante, para todos que estão nesse grupo.

^{xl} Entrevistado 7: A gente imagina que quem vai entrar no site da Polícia Federal pra pegar alguma notícia geralmente é jornalista que vai replicar nos incontáveis veículos Brasil afora e até externamente. Então a gente tem essa consciência que eles vão pegar o nosso material, é aberto, está ali, pode ser replicado, dando crédito preferencialmente, pode ser replicado. Então a gente pensa isso, os jornalistas vão vir aqui, eventualmente a sociedade também vai, pra o que está acontecendo. Mas a gente pensa nisso, nos jornalistas que vão entrar e fazer uma linguagem clara, objetiva, para eles poderem entender o que aconteceu e replicarem nos seus veículos.

^{xli} Entrevistado 6: Hoje, principais canais de divulgação é o site da Polícia Federal. Que o público. A maior parte do nosso público ali no site, a imprensa, são os jornalistas. O cidadão comum. Ele acessa muito nosso site também, mas ele está mais em busca de serviços, como tirar passaporte, antecedentes criminais, porte de arma de fogo, por exemplo. As redes sociais já alcançam um público maior, que é o público, que não necessariamente a imprensa, mas o público fim, o cidadão de forma geral. Hoje nós temos Instagram, Facebook e o X. Estamos estudando entrar no TikTok exatamente para alcançar esse público mais jovem. O Facebook, que é um público de faixa etária mais alta, e o Instagram, o X Instagram um pouco mais, um pouco mais jovens. (...) Tudo que é publicado no site vai para a avaliação da nossa equipe de redes sociais. Obviamente, hoje nós publicamos entre 20 e 40 notas por dia, nem tudo vai para as redes sociais. A equipe de redes faz ali um filtro das operações mais relevantes do dia, ou daquelas que a gente quer impulsionar. E isso vai para as redes.

^{xlii} Entrevistado 6: Para essa campanha específica a gente está utilizando mais as redes sociais da Polícia Federal e veículos específicos, um grupo específico de veículos de imprensa, que é o caso dos veículos voltados para concurso público. Hoje mesmo a gente vai conceder uma entrevista para um grande cursinho oaquí de Brasília falando sobre as inovações da Polícia Federal na questão da participação feminina dentro da instituição.

^{xliii} Entrevistado 8: Onde teve uma preocupação de unificar essa imagem, adesivação dos carros, uniformemente, um estudo e uma obrigação de uso próprio do emblema. Então teve uma série de padronizações em termos de imagem, talvez não capitaneados pela comunicação em si, eu não tenho certeza, mas eu acho que foi na parte de logística que isso começou a segmentar bem, uma imagem da PF. Hoje você vê, a pintura do carro é tradicional e onde vai ele vira referência. Então, acho que já que você colocou ali de 20 anos pra cá, isso aí vai ser interessante. Como é que foi feita essa unificação, essa massificação da imagem na Polícia Federal.

^{xliv} Entrevistado 8: A pauta do dia depende do dia. E eu acho que é muito bem pautado pelos acontecimentos eventuais, operações nossas que a gente vai fazer. (...) Então essa minha experiência, o que eu vejo é a pauta definida pelo dia mesmo, pelos acontecimentos.

^{xliv} Entrevistado 2: a gente recebe muita demanda. A gente não tem muito tempo para traçar uma estratégia externa, a gente trabalha muito por demanda mesmo, porque é uma avalanche de coisa todo dia. E, dependendo do assunto que surgir, a gente não tem como definir o que vai ser o assunto do momento. Tipo, agora tá na moda os incêndios, aí chega a eleição. Então é o que vai surgindo. A eleição já foi planejado, né? Mas de vez em quando a gente planeja uma certa divulgação de algum assunto, mas é mais raro e geralmente é por demanda mesmo.

^{xlvi} Entrevistado 4: É muito uma preocupação é muito uma questão de transparência, sabe? Então é que aí entra todas, todas as faixas etárias. Então, essa é uma preocupação constante, que é a questão de você mostrar que é que está sendo feito, como o que está sendo feito, por que é que está sendo feito. Então assim. Como eu disse ali no Twitter que 100% das ações são comunicadas ali, que é um pouco com essa preocupação de que não estamos, não estamos favorecendo ninguém, não estamos mostrando operação que só está prendendo rico, nem o contrário, não está se mostrando... para mostrar tudo. Então, assim, eu acho que um pouco nessa linha de transparência (...) ser transparente para todo mundo.

^{xlvii} Entrevistado 8: Uma polícia transparente, uma polícia democrática e eficiente. Estou repetindo muito a palavra democrática. Acho que falam tanto, enfim. Mas eu acho que, pelo menos na minha experiência, ela sempre foi ali transparecer a nossa eficiência, a preocupação com um princípio basilar de todas as polícias, direitos humanos e persecução. Mas, essa palavra acho que eficiência é bem presente. Então, mostrar os nossos serviços de forma eficiente e transparente. (...) Juntando as respostas, existe uma diretriz, uma direção dada pelo comandante e pelo chefe que está no poder agora. Mas a missão é clara, é fazer de forma transparente e visando, lógico, agregar a essa transparência positividade à imagem da polícia.

^{xlviii} Entrevistado 1: acho que tem uma missão de transparência com a sociedade, de mostrar o que está sendo feito, que a polícia está fazendo e entregando para a sociedade, que é o nosso grande público, é para quem a gente trabalha, para a sociedade brasileira, acho que um retorno, é uma missão importantíssima, que é essa transparência, a outra missão e com a questão da segurança, mostrar que a gente está empenhado sempre com a segurança do país. Que mais? E mostrar os serviços, mostrar que a Polícia Federal também é uma polícia cidadã, que presta serviços para a sociedade. E acho que a missão é informar, ser transparente e mostrar o trabalho que está sendo realizado né, mostrar os avanços tanto de investigação como de prisões. Enfim, acho que é por aí.

^{xlix} Entrevistado 2: A missão? Eu acho que é, deixa eu pensar aqui... a missão, proteger a imagem da PF, divulgar as informações, ter transparência e proteger a gente também de informações falsas, de qualquer coisa. Acho que isso é o mais importante. Ser transparente também. Divulgar tudo o que a gente faz, mesmo que seja algo negativo. A gente tem que dar uma resposta.

ⁱ Entrevistado 2. Eu acho, o que a gente quer é construir uma imagem de uma polícia séria, transparente. E é isso que a gente quer, continuar fazendo um trabalho bem feito. É isso que a gente quer transmitir. Que a gente não tem o viés político, que a gente realmente não tem, e que a gente está só fazendo o trabalho de forma séria.

ⁱⁱ Entrevistado 6: A missão é totalmente estratégica dentro da instituição, porque é por meio do setor de comunicação que a gente dá transparência as ações da Polícia Federal, as ações e as operações. Conseguimos antecipar crises e trabalhar de forma a minimiza-las. Eu acho que é isso, uma missão de dar mais transparência ao órgão, às ações do órgão e se aproximar, ter essa aproximação junto com a sociedade.

ⁱⁱⁱ Entrevistado 4: Sim, segue um cronograma. A gente faz a parte de comunicação institucional,

a gente costuma fazer um planejamento anual. Então, por exemplo, agora a gente já vai, já tá começando a pensar no planejamento do ano que vem e sempre ajustando as demandas específicas que surgem no decorrer do ano. A gente vai ajustando ele.

Pesquisadora. E das atividades é conforme a demanda, como funciona?

Entrevistado 4: Das ações? conforme demanda. De operação, de ação e conforme demanda. Então se chega, se chega ali 5 a 6 operações no dia, a gente avalia qual o que é mais importante, que que espera se que dê mais repercussão, para fazer as publicações dela e vai diluindo o restante durante o dia, mas ação ou operação é tudo conforme, conforme demanda mesmo.

^{liii} Entrevistado 8: Talvez em dias calmos a gente consiga colocar “oh precisamos divulgar tal assunto”. Aí é muito mais em cima da nossa ação de divulgação de ações da PF. Vejo que tem ali hoje uma preocupação com a participação das mulheres na Polícia Federal. Então, dentro disso, vai se encaixando as pautas interessantes nossas, sem as casuísticas de operação ou de resposta a crises.

^{liv} Entrevistado 6: Nós temos uma estratégia, ampla. Um plano de comunicação que renovamos anualmente com algumas estratégias específicas em relação a ações daquele ano e eventos. Por exemplo, esse ano nós temos a eleição, tem um plano de comunicação voltado para as eleições municipais. (...) E de acordo com os acontecimentos do ano, alguma operação específica, eleições, posse ou grandes eventos. Por exemplo, ano passado teve o 8 de janeiro. Nós atuamos com estratégias mais voltadas para esses eventos.

^{lv} Entrevistado 6: A pauta de conteúdos da comunicação social é extremamente dinâmica, porque nosso carro chefe hoje são nossas ações, nossas operações. Geralmente a gente fica sabendo da operação depois que ela aconteceu. Raramente, em operações muito estratégicas, a comunicação social tem ciência antes, até para ajudar no planejamento. Por exemplo, uma operação de lesa pátria, que é aquela operação de identificação das pessoas que depredaram o Congresso Nacional, o STF e o Palácio do Planalto lá no 8 de janeiro de 23. Mas a maioria das operações, diria 95%, ficamos sabendo no dia e aí a gente elabora o nosso planejamento ainda pela manhã, depois que aquelas ações já chegaram para nosso conhecimento. Em paralelo, nós temos um planejamento semanal, que vai sendo atualizado semanalmente com outras pautas estratégicas do órgão. Por exemplo, lançamos essa semana um edital de recrutamento para postos no exterior. Isso já entra no planejamento de divulgação da semana. Essas campanhas para trazer mais mulheres para o órgão entram também no planejamento semanal.

^{lvi} Entrevistado 1: A gente tem cronogramas mensais de publicação e tem as editoriais. aí tem os temas, tem datas comemorativas, tem eventos que a gente cobre. Aí as operações são diárias, é algo que a gente não tem como programar e vem diariamente e a gente recebe muito material de operação das pontas, dos estados. E aí a gente tem um grupo que vai acumulando esse material de fora. Mas aqui, com relação ao planejamento, a gente faz um planejamento mensal e aí a gente lista lá os assuntos que a gente quer falar no mês, por exemplo “Ah, esse mês, um mês, o meio ambiente”, Não sei. Vamos tratar sobre crimes ambientais, vamos tratar sobre crimes contra a fauna. (...) Tem uma programação. A gente tem editoriais, por exemplo, os serviços da PF. Então a gente coloca lá, a gente já falou de... esse mês passado, a gente falou de passaporte. Então, no próximo mês a gente vai falar de registro de antecedentes criminais. No outro mês a gente vai falar de porte, de arma, enfim, a gente vai mudando, sabe? Tem um cronograma.

^{lvii} Entrevistado 1: Sim, existe uma estratégia, aqui até dessa nova gestão, de humanizar a polícia.

Entrevistado 1: Então, um dos objetivos é atrair mais mulheres para a polícia, mostrar que o serviço policial pode sim ser feito por mulheres. Que a gente tem medidas de proteção para as mulheres dentro da polícia, seja na amamentação, mesmo no momento de ingresso, em provas e tudo, enfim, tem uma série de medidas. Na amamentação a policial que tiver lactante, ela pode fazer duas horas de serviço residencial, de tele trabalho, e ela não vai ser escalada para ir para operação, para missão, para esse tipo de coisa. Então ela já uma medida protetiva e que a gente quer divulgar bastante nesses próximos meses vai ser interessante. Então é basicamente aproximar o público para se aproximar da sociedade. Mostrar mais uma galera jovem assim, uma polícia com uma pegada mais jovem e mostrar mais mulheres. (...) Assim, depende bastante. Mas essa questão das estratégias gerais aí são diretrizes, de mostrar mais mulheres, e tentar humanizar.

^{lviii} Entrevistado 4: Sim, a gente, normalmente cada gestão tem sua estratégia de comunicação. Então, assim, a gente se adequa aos valores e aos princípios que aquela gestão, que aquele período está seguindo. Então. Por exemplo, hoje, não exatamente dessa gestão em si, mas das últimas gestões que a gente já vem trabalhando muito a questão de uma polícia mais humana, uma pessoa, um ser humano de verdade dentro daquele uniforme. Então, assim, sempre, a gente tem diretrizes de

gestão que a gente segue, e campanhas específicas também. Sempre que tem alguma demanda, algum momento específico, a gente acaba criando, ajustando o planejamento para pra atender aquela, aquela necessidade momentânea.

Pesquisadora: (...) E poderia me dar um exemplo de uma estratégia específica?

Entrevistado 4: Específica? Por exemplo, a gente tem a questão de atrair o público feminino. Então, assim, é uma questão que a gente está trabalhando mais nesses últimos meses. E mostrar também que a polícia é um local feminino e um local que, digamos, confortável ali para uma servidora mulher também, que muitas vezes o público não imagina isso e fica com aquela imagem de uma polícia masculina e acaba que, no concurso desde a inscrição, passando por todas as etapas do concurso, acaba que a gente tem uma dimensão muito maior de um público masculino. É um exemplo de que a gente tem trabalhado hoje, atrair o público feminino.

^{lix} Entrevistado 1: Até porque a gente tem que fazer uma linguagem bem mais, mais clara, mais rápida, mais fácil, mais acessível, sabe? E falar em termos técnicos, jurídicos, qualidade da prova, enfim, acho que as pessoas, mas acho que tem uma preocupação. Acho que até o, essa questão do 8 de janeiro, a gente mostrou bastante atuação da PF junto aos órgãos aí da Justiça e tudo mais. Eu acho que mais esse caminho. Muito tentar simplificar.

^{lx} Instagram. 6 de abril de 2022. Texto: Começando o dia com os melhores amigos!!!

Instagram. 18 de junho de 2022. Texto: Bom final de semana a todos! 🧡👊🏻👊🏻

Instagram. 24 de junho de 2022. Texto: Sexta-feira chegando ao fim, com esse 📷 do 🚔 da PF. Bom final de semana a todos!!

Instagram. 5 de dezembro de 2022. Texto: 🧑🏻👮🏻♂️ Acompanhe #OsFederais em mais uma missão! No episódio de hoje você vai conhecer um pouco sobre o fascinante universo da inteligência e da investigação policial 🧐👩🏻👮🏻 Segunda (5/12), às 22h na TV Brasil. @tvbrasil

^{lxi} Título: Polícia Federal investiga suspeito de compartilhar imagens com pornografia infantil em Joinville/SC

Subtítulo: PF apreende na materiais eletrônicos com imagens armazenadas.

Publicado em 31/01/2022 21h00 Atualizado em 03/02/2023 14h43

Título: PF deflagra operação contra o tráfico de drogas em Ponta Porã/MS

Subtítulo: Operação Carga Oculta investiga esquema logístico de escoamento de grandes quantidades de drogas para outros países.

Publicado em 31/01/2022 21h00 Atualizado em 03/02/2023 14h42

Fonte: Site da Polícia Federal. Acesso em 10/02/2025.

^{lxii} Entrevistado 3: Assim, a gente é a Polícia Federal. Ela tem uma diferença, inclusive nessa questão de imagem, né? A PF, diferentemente da Polícia Rodoviária Federal, porque a Polícia Rodoviária Federal, essencialmente é uma polícia ostensiva. Já a PF é uma Polícia Judiciária. O nosso papel ele é mais interno, para depois chegar à fase da ostensividade, que é diferentemente das outras polícias. Então, esse já é um dos nossos principais diferenciais e é um dos principais pontos que a gente não consegue se igualar, estabelecer uma homogeneidade com as outras forças de segurança(...) A Polícia Federal não é só arma. A Polícia Federal é um universo de serviços, de prestações, de resgates, de vítimas de abuso sexual, infantil, de migrantes, enfim, tem muita coisa humana e a gente tenta passar isso também. Não só armamentos, não só operações. Claro que isso acaba sendo nosso carro chefe, mas tem muita coisa humana, muita coisa bacana mesmo para as pessoas terem conhecimento. E a gente tenta focar nisso também e a gente acaba se diferenciando das outras forças, não positivamente ou negativamente falando, é só uma questão de diferente.

^{lxiii} Entrevistado 1: A gente busca sempre mostrar essa diversidade de atuação e diversidade de atribuições que a gente tem. E essa questão de ser uma polícia mais investigativa, mais técnica? Eu acho que isso a gente mostra bastante. Essa parte de crimes cibernéticos, essa atuação nessa parte, eu acho que a gente está sempre buscando se diferenciar mesmo e mostrar que nós somos uma polícia mais técnica.(...) Com isso, com inteligência, com perícia, com equipamentos, com tecnologia, esse tipo de coisa.

^{lxiv} Entrevistado 6: Não é até uma dificuldade que a gente tem, uma das grandes metas da nossa comunicação social é fazer com que a Polícia Federal seja enxergada cada vez mais como polícia judiciária e investigativa, um pouco se distanciando dessa visão de polícia ostensiva, arma, distintivo, viatura. Claro que existe essa parte da atuação da Polícia Federal, que se, é o que a sociedade vê na verdade, que são ali, isso é evidenciado na deflagração das nossas operações. Mas a gente tem um trabalho de deixar claro e dar transparência ao trabalho investigativo, técnico científico da Polícia Federal, que a diferencia das polícias militares. Certo, por exemplo, da polícia ostensiva, da PRF. Só que outra prioridade da comunicação social é mostrar também o trabalho de integração das polícias. Hoje nós temos A Ficca, que é a força integrada de comando e controle,

força integrada de combate ao crime organizado, que é uma organização que existe em todos os Estados, de várias polícias e integração no combate ao crime organizado Polícia Federal, Polícia Militar, Polícia Civil, às vezes a PRF, os departamentos estaduais de, penitenciários também, integram a FICCO. E assim, embora a Polícia Federal queira trazer essa imagem de polícia judiciária, técnica e científica, é importante também pra gente mostrar o trabalho em parceria com as outras instituições policiais. Essa importância da integração que a PF também atua de forma ostensiva, operacional, embora não seja o nosso carro chefe.

^{lxv} Twitter (X). 16 de dezembro de 2023. Texto: PF reforça compromisso na luta contra crimes ambientais em encontro da @INTERPOL_HQ. Na última semana, a Polícia Federal participou da 34ª Reunião do Grupo de Trabalho sobre Crimes contra a Vida Selvagem, realizada na sede da Interpol em Lyon. O Diretor de Amazônia e Meio Ambiente da PF, Humberto Freire, apresentou o projeto PF80 e o Plano AMAS e explicitou os projetos que estão sendo implementados pela Polícia Federal para combater os crimes ambientais, com destaque para a implantação do Centro de Cooperação Policial Internacional na Amazônia (CCPI AMAZÔNIA).  Saiba mais: <https://t.co/BmSGqQ9emn>

Twitter (X). 28 de novembro de 2023. Texto: PF participa da abertura da Assembleia Geral da Interpol. Teve início nesta terça-feira, 28/11, a 91ª Assembleia Geral da @INTERPOL_HQ, em Viena. O Diretor-Geral da Polícia Federal, Andrei Rodrigues, chefiou a delegação Brasileira. Marca presença ainda o Diretor de Cooperação Internacional da Polícia Federal Valdecy Urquiza, que ainda é o atual Vice-Presidente da INTERPOL para as Américas. Urquiza concorre ao posto de Secretário-Geral da INTERPOL. A Assembleia Geral é a reunião anual dos 195 países membros da INTERPOL, quando são tomadas as principais decisões que afetam a os rumos da maior organização não governamental global, os recursos necessários para a cooperação internacional, os métodos de trabalho, as finanças e os programas de atividades.

Instagram. 09 de junho de 2023. Texto: SINGAPURA – A @interpol_hq realiza, nesta semana, a 18ª Conferência de Chefes de NCBs.  Os Escritórios Centrais Nacionais (National Central Bureaus – NCBs) são os pontos focais da INTERPOL em todas as atividades desenvolvidas nos países membros da instituição.  O Vice-Presidente da INTERPOL para as Américas, Diretor de Cooperação Internacional da PF, Valdecy Urquiza participa do evento, reafirmando a importância da cooperação internacional no combate à criminalidade e o papel de destaque que o Brasil desempenha na Organização Internacional de Polícia Criminal – INTERPOL.

^{lxvi} Twitter (X). 10 de novembro de 2022. Texto: A Polícia Federal, através de sua Representação da Interpol em Pernambuco, prendeu na quarta-feira, 9/11, um homem nacional de Portugal. Saiba mais: <https://t.co/MVHr3E8JNN> <https://t.co/FRMFxhdhPw>

Twitter (X). 17 de maio de 2022. Texto: A Polícia Federal prendeu nesta segunda-feira (16/5) um foragido, procurado pelas autoridades do Paraguai, pelos crimes de extorsão mediante sequestro e triplo homicídio, sendo objeto de Difusão Vermelha na Interpol. <https://t.co/8AicAVoKnO>

^{lxvii} Twitter (X). 09 de novembro de 2023. Texto: A assinatura do Tratado da Ameripol em Brasília é demonstração da prioridade atribuída pelo governo brasileiro tanto ao fortalecimento da cooperação internacional contra o crime quanto à promoção da integração com os países da região.  Saiba mais: <https://t.co/JTn2gv1Hdd>

Twitter (X). 19 de Abril 2023. Texto: COOPERAÇÃO INTERNACIONAL | A Polícia Federal passou a integrar nesta semana o programa “No More Ransom”, iniciativa da @EC3Europol que tem por objetivo ajudar vítimas de crimes de extorsão digital. Saiba mais: <https://t.co/Ym5ELAAQFh> <https://t.co/NwtjZF90P5>.

Twitter (X). 04 de agosto de 2023. Texto: Na segunda-feira (7/8), acontecerá em Belém/PA a Reunião de Altos Dirigentes de Polícia Sobre Crimes na Amazônia, com a presença de autoridades de Bolívia, Brasil, Colômbia, Equador, França (Guiana Francesa), Guiana, Peru, Suriname e Venezuela, além de representantes da @AmeripolOrg e @INTERPOL_HQ. O evento, organizado pela Polícia Federal, tem como objetivo discutir a temática da criminalidade organizada transnacional no contexto amazônico, bem como estratégias de cooperação internacional para o enfrentamento desses crimes.

Twitter (X). 13 de junho de 2023. Texto: O Diretor-Geral da PF, Andrei Augusto Passos Rodrigues, discursou hoje no evento. Andrei é Secretário Executivo da AMERIPOL e, juntamente com o Diretor de Cooperação Internacional da PF, Valdecy Urquiza, foi agraciado com a Ordem da Comunidade de Polícias das Américas.

Twitter (X). 08 de abril de 2022. Texto: PF e @AmeripolOrg assinam acordo para implantação de Centro Internacional de Combate ao Tráfico de Pessoas. Saiba mais: <https://t.co/XkUE1bPOtw> <https://t.co/hUaoTLc1jk>

^{lxviii} Entrevistado 6: No ano passado, início de 2023, uma das diretorias criadas pela nova gestão foi a de Diretoria de Cooperação Internacional. Com a criação dessa diretoria, acho que tornou se

mais importante, mais forte o papel da comunicação social na divulgação das ações de cooperação internacional, tanto entre a Polícia Federal e órgãos policiais estrangeiros, quanto a cooperação local também entre as diversas polícias. A comunicação social da Polícia Federal tem um contato direto com a DCI e essa Diretoria de Cooperação Internacional, ela tem um ponto focal de comunicação social dentro dela, até para evidenciar mais ainda essa importância, essa... não diria nova diretriz, é algo que acontece há muito tempo. Mas assim, da mesma forma que a coordenação de Comunicação Social ganhou relevância nos últimos anos, o aspecto de cooperação internacional da Polícia Federal também cresceu em termos de organograma, em termos de efetivo, em termos orçamentários. (...) E essa importância fez com que a comunicação social intensificasse também a divulgação dessas ações em parceria com órgãos internacionais. Temos vários acordos de cooperação técnica firmados entre a PF e outros países no combate ao crime organizado internacional.

^{lxi} Entrevistado 7: E isso porque, como eu disse, o trabalho da Polícia Federal tem muita repercussão, muito interesse internacional nessas áreas, por exemplo, que citei. Eu não sei se você sabe, mas a Interpol no Brasil é a Polícia Federal. Porque não existe a Interpol, uma polícia Interpol, a Interpol é como se fosse a ONU, é uma junção de várias polícias no mundo afora. E quem faz a interlocução, quem faz as vezes de Interpol no Brasil é a Polícia Federal. Então muito assunto, muito assunto da Polícia Federal, principalmente relacionado à cooperação internacional, que é o Brasil cooperando com outros países, e outros países demandando o Brasil, o Brasil demandando outros países, é feita via Interpol, que aqui é aqui dentro da Polícia Federal. Então tem sim muito interesse internacional.

^{lxx} Entrevistado 1: Na verdade, a nova gestão criou a Diretoria de Cooperação Internacional e eles têm demandado bastante da gente. Assim, para mostrar essa questão da cooperação internacional mesmo e da proximidade que a Polícia Federal tem com as polícias internacionais. Então, a gente sempre divulga. Sempre que tem algum evento internacional que a PF participa, a gente divulga, a questão da Ameripol, Interpol, sempre que está envolvendo esses órgãos a gente, a gente divulga bastante. Operações que envolvem polícias de outros países, operações lá nas fronteiras, enfim, Foz do Iguaçu, que tem ali a tríplice fronteira. Então a gente tem divulgado bastante, bastante mesmo. E agora, inclusive o delegado da PF, Dr. Urquiza, ele vem, ele foi eleito secretário geral da Interpol. Ele vai ser o novo secretário da Interpol.

^{lxxi} Entrevistado 4: Tem esse papel institucional, de toda cooperação internacional que é feita hoje, que é o papel da Polícia Federal. E sim, como citei antes, é a preocupação que existe em mostrar o verdadeiro papel da Polícia Federal, entra essa questão de cooperação internacional, a gente busca, sim, mostrar, digamos, no Brasil que é o papel da PF esse, e também sempre que há oportunidade a gente tenta colocar esse conteúdo para fora do Brasil, para o mundo.

^{lxxii} Pesquisadora: Você acha que essa demanda vai aumentar?

Entrevistado 1: Eu acho que vai se manter, porque ela aumentou. Ela aumentou bastante. Com a criação da nova Diretoria de Cooperação Internacional, mas acho que agora a tendência é manter. Não sei se vai aumentar ainda mais. Não sei. Vamos ver as cenas dos próximos capítulos.

Entrevistado 2: A gente tem um setor aqui de cooperação, a gente tem a divisão de... Diretoria de Cooperação Internacional. E quando tem alguma ação com a Polícia internacional, a gente divulga também. Geralmente a nota vem por essa diretoria, até o nosso, um dos nossos delegados agora vai ser, esqueci o cargo dele, vai ser o chefe lá da Interpol. Diretor de alguma coisa? Secretário geral eu acho da Interpol então, deve aumentar até essa cooperação.

^{lxxiii} Entrevistado 7: As principais agências de notícias nos principais veículos, também internacionais. E eu estou falando de Associated Press, a France Press, Reuters, a BBC hoje tem sucursais no Brasil que são ocupados, eu já percebi, a gente já percebeu., por jornalistas estrangeiros que são brasileiros também. Mas a gente recebe a demanda, e eles, apesar de profissionais brasileiros, eles falam majoritariamente pra fora. Então a gente recebe sim, bom, dos veículos que estão localizados aqui, mas a gente recebe muita demanda de veículo que não sequer tem correspondente aqui, que nunca pisaram no Brasil. A gente recebe demandas e atende. Só pra te dar um exemplo, eu sempre brinco com o pessoal aqui. Quando houve, lamentavelmente, o episódio envolvendo o jornalista dom Philips e o indigenista Bruno Pereira, eu cheguei para trabalhar, a primeira ligação que eu atendi no telefone fixo foi de uma voz da Austrália e a gente estava com muita dificuldade ali, o sotaque, enfim, consegui falar com ela "Envie um e-mail para mim que eu te explico o que está acontecendo". Então constantemente a gente recebe ligação, email de jornalista, e-mail em língua estrangeira que tem de traduzir, a gente recebe muita demanda diretamente de profissionais que estão fora do país. Porque muitos assuntos têm repercussão mundial né. Questões de meio ambiente, a Amazônia, esse caso que citei pontualmente na morte de um jornalista estrangeiro de forma brutal como foi, tráfico de pessoas, pessoas retiradas da América do Sul e

levadas pra Europa, Ásia. Então são assunto que tem repercussão mundial e o pessoal bate muito à nossa porta aqui sim, diariamente, para pedir informação diretamente de veículos que são estrangeiros. A gente nem sabe nem conhece, ficamos conhecemos aquele veículo ali na hora, é uma agência russa, que chama Sputnik que está sempre nos demandando e eles não têm sede no Brasil.

^{lxxiv} Entrevistado 6: E a comunicação está sempre atenta a fazer essas divulgações. Grande parte hoje dos jornalistas que acompanha o trabalho da Polícia Federal são jornalistas de agências estrangeiras, e o tratamento é igual, é muito parecido com o que a gente tem com a imprensa nacional.

^{lxxv} Entrevistado 8: Polícia Federal é muito grande em termos de atribuições. E a gente acaba tendo em âmbito federal uma mistura de Polícia Civil com Polícia Militar, com Guarda Municipal e tudo mais. Então, dentro da parte, eu acho que a gente acaba tendo que falar de tudo. Temos a nossa parte operacional propriamente dita, Comando de Operações Táticas, o Comando de Aviação Operacional, onde é sempre dado o destaque na ostensividade das operações, na qualidade técnica, na qualidade de meios, de armas, de armamento, de investimento e tudo mais. Então nisso, comunica-se parecido com a parte operacional das polícias civis, polícia, militares

^{lxxvi} Entrevistado 8: Se você, algo que eu me recordo dos acompanhamentos que eu faço, assim, você vê a mesma quantidade de divulgação de operações, ações de polícia judiciária, de repressão preventiva. Quanto à ostensividade, as ações da polícia ostensiva. É lógico que a ostensiva vende pra caramba. Todo mundo acha lindo, o preto (cor do uniforme), armas e equipamentos. Mas, eu acho que é feito de forma igual.

^{lxxvii} Entrevistado 7: Essa percepção, ela é muito individual e pessoal e é externa, e ela vai assim da pessoa, opa, você falou em símbolos né, uniforme da PF, o distintivo, o emblema, melhor dizendo. Ah eu acho que aí a construção é pessoal. Eu quando era um leitor e não polícia., bom, eu via notícias envolvendo a PF e “opa, deixa eu olhar aqui, porque olha ali o emblema da PF, olha a camisa, deixa eu ver do que é que está se tratando”. Eu tinha naturalmente um interesse maior. Mas é por algo que eu acho que era construído a partir da informação do receptor da informação. Não que a polícia trabalhe para criar isso. É natural, ao meu ver é natural.

^{lxxviii} Entrevistado 7: Assim, a realidade aponta que aquela operação determinada foi tratada dessa forma, teve tal e tal repercussão e a gente precisa, “olha, apareceu um elemento novo na comunicação, vamos ficar atento a ele”. Mas não teve nenhuma operação, nem a Lava-Jato, nem outras grandes operações na história da Polícia Federal, que foi, digamos assim, um divisor de águas na comunicação. Mas eu diria que tem aprendizados, com relação cada operação traz elementos novos, necessidades novas e a gente vai aprendendo. Opa, já deram um direcionamento pra gente, como devemos trabalhar, assim, vamos ficar atentos para o nosso próximo a gente já ir adaptando. Mas uma que seja divisor de águas ou não, eu não percebi. É um conjunto de mudanças.

^{lxxix} Entrevistado 8: E o Lava Jato foi um marco comunicacional, sem dúvida. Mas junto dela ocorreram várias outras operações ali, tanto correlatas, com temas correlatos quanto totalmente diferentes. E querendo ou não, essa caminhada ali do Brasil ou da polícia como instituição de Estado, não dá para falar que ela não é longa. Então, assim, aprende-se muita coisa no caminho, muita coisa é aprendida no caminho, em termos de cautela da prova de, como é que eu falei esse termo hoje me fugiu até agora, do domínio da prova, evoluiu-se muito. Mas muito também pelas evoluções tecnológicas. A gente tem uma transição muito grande nesse século, ali, nesses 20 anos, que seria, de repente o escopo, que provas lá atrás eram muito obtidas ali áudio, interceptações telefônicas ou, na polícia old school ali, de observação e apreensão na hora. E hoje, com essa evolução toda das comunicações, dos meios, de transferência de dinheiro, de como esconder, como lavar ou como transitar no mundo do crime, eu acho que essa evolução veio mais uma vez de forma ali contemporânea. Ao mesmo tempo, Lava Jato sim, e sem dúvida. Como foi uma coisa muito intensa, muito grande, muito foi desenvolvido naquela época. Mas acho que como seria desenvolvido em qualquer operação, em qualquer tema que acontecesse, daquela profundidade, com aquele nível de investimento. Foi um investimento grande, tanto na operação quanto na polícia. Acho que uma coisa pode ter levado a outra. O investimento veio antes dela. Então esse investimento e essa autonomia levou ao caminho que nos trouxe aqui e depois ruiu. Mas enfim.

^{lxxx} Entrevistado 10: Acontece que a Polícia Federal e a comunicação da Polícia Federal já erraram bastante ao longo dos muitos anos de atuação. E como a gente é esperto, a gente aprende com os erros. Então a gente foi deixando a comunicação cada vez mais técnica, cada vez mais profissional, então as pessoas que estão no setor de comunicação geralmente são formadas nesta área também, é, e tem regramentos a serem obedecidos, tem uma centralização para conferir se esses regulamentos estão sendo obedecidos ou não. Pra que? para que a gente não caia nos mesmos

erros do passado, então a gente não vai divulgar coisas sigilosas, a gente não vai expor as pessoas, mas divulgar os fatos, (...) A comunicação da Polícia Federal hoje está em um patamar elevado é porque já batemos muito a cabeça e aprendemos com os erros e a gente tem essa vertente de entender que é uma prestação de contas para a sociedade.

^{lxxxj} Entrevistado 8: Eu cheguei aqui bem no meio dela. A comunicação hoje é feita de forma diferente na época da Lava Jato(...). Era muito comum fazer coletiva de imprensa nacional.

Pesquisadora: Hoje não se faz mais? Tanto?

Entrevistado 8: Hoje a diretriz é não fazer não. Se eu não me engano, não é que esteja proibido, mas não é, como diretriz, como tem que fazer. À época eram feitas. Eu vejo na minha visão, vejo muitos prós, mas não tem como não mencionar os contras ali de eventuais furos ali e o derrapadas nessas coletivas.

^{lxxxii} Entrevistado 5: Mas depois da lei de abuso de autoridade, eu acho que a gente é uma polícia pioneira sim, nesse caso da lei de abuso de autoridade, e isso tem se disseminado entre as polícias do Brasil todo, de evitar mostrar a preso, evitar aquelas entrevistas, aquelas gravações, quando o preso chega na delegacia, ele é, na teoria, ele tem presunção de inocência. Não, você não sabe se é uma pessoa que será condenado. E não sei se você lembra, há uns dez, 12 anos atrás, ainda era aquele negócio do jornal local mostrando o preso, mostrando a pessoa presa, mostrando vítimas também. Eu acredito que a PF evoluiu nessa linha de não de evitar ao máximo expor qualquer tipo de pessoa. Até os nossos policiais, se você olhar nas fotos na agência, são pessoas de costas para evitar personificar a Polícia Federal.

^{lxxxiii} Entrevistado 2: A gente nunca divulga nem, jamais divulga presos ou alvos das operações, nem parte de corpo. Imprensa gosta muito daquelas fotos “a um cara que foi preso no aeroporto com droga presa ao corpo”. Aquela foto de corpo... Não, a gente não divulga por aqui no site, jamais vai ser publicado.(...): A gente procura, até porque todo mundo é inocente até que se prove o contrário. A gente tem esse cuidado de não divulgar nomes. O pessoal insiste muito quando há e fulano foi preso. A gente não divulga nomes, nem de alvos, não é a gente que condena, né? A gente está no meio do processo, então a gente não. Ah” a gente quer acesso a inquérito”, não, a gente não dá acesso ao inquérito, a gente não divulga nome. A gente tem todo esse cuidado nas nossas notas. A gente sempre coloca “responderá pelo crime tal”, não, a gente coloca “poderá responder”. A gente atualmente não coloca nem a pena. Antigamente a gente chegava a colocar “com pena de 10 a 20 anos”. A gente conversou recentemente, resolveu não colocar mais, porque também não é definição nossa, depende do juiz, do Judiciário. Então a gente resolveu tirar e é isso. É a gente tem cuidado.

^{lxxxiv} Entrevistado 6: Acho que é um desafio. Nós precisamos ter cada vez mais atenção na forma de com que as nossas ações são divulgadas. A política de comunicação social da PF, você vai receber a nossa IN Ela já é muito restrita desde 2008. A gente tem muito cuidado com exposições, com exposição. Você vai reparar que nas nossas divulgações oficiais nós nunca citamos os nomes e procuramos não expor os nossos alvos. Isso independentemente se é um político conhecido, você é um cidadão, enfim, classe baixa que não tem não teria grande interesse da mídia em si.

^{lxxxv} Entrevistado 1: E a gente tem uma série de normas para a comunicação externa, que é basicamente o que eu estava te falando. Então, tomar cuidado com a questão de casa do alvo, não expor o alvo, não expor, não pegar material de apreensão e informar nome da PF com droga, por exemplo, com armamento, com munição. Que mais... não ficar mostrando detalhes de armamento. Tem uma série de norminhas que estão descritas em instruções normativas que eles precisam seguir. Tem um item, o nosso manual de identidade visual, que eles também precisam seguir. Eles têm que estar bem, sempre alinhados com a gente. E é difícil.

^{lxxxvi} Entrevistado 3: Antigamente chamavam a Polícia Federal de caixa preta, que ninguém sabia de nada, ninguém comentava nada e na verdade isso foi mudando justamente para poder atender a imprensa e também a sociedade em geral. Então a gente busca não deixar o jornalista sem resposta, mas também a gente não se compromete, dando aquilo que a gente pode se esforçar para dar para o jornalista, mas sem comprometer as nossas atribuições fins, que é operações, investigações. Essa é uma das nossas estratégias

^{lxxxvii} Entrevistado 1: Ah eu acho que com essas, com esses objetivos de atração de mais mulheres, de diversidade de gênero, de público, de tudo. Eu acho que é uma visão, essa parte de tecnologia também, de ser uma polícia que tem tecnologia, que tem a parte de perícia tem vários equipamentos. Eu acho que mostra um pouco dessa polícia do futuro, né? Acho que sim

^{lxxxviii} Pesquisadora: E quais os principais desafios em executar essa missão? Na sua visão.

Entrevistado 4: Eu acho que hoje é estar atento à mudança do mundo, a mudança tecnológica, evolução tecnológica, social. Então, assim. estar sempre atento aos novos valores, aos novos modos da sociedade e se adaptar. Não ser uma instituição, não ser um modelo de instituição perfeita para

uma geração que já passou, está parada, parado no tempo. A gente percebe que os valores sociais mudam bastante. Então a polícia de 20 anos atrás, o que ela mostrava, que era aceito a 20 anos atrás, não é o que é cobrado hoje pela sociedade.

^{lxxxix} Entrevistado 7: Nós estamos sempre em constante adaptação. Por quê? Porque o público de hoje é diferente do público de amanhã. Então a gente precisa também estar antenado. O que funciona hoje para a comunicação, talvez daqui, as coisas estão muito rápidas, aqui um ano já não funciona mais. A gente tem que assim, dar uma enxugada nos textos. Olha, não adianta mais, por mais relevante que seja, não adianta mais a gente publicar texto muito grande que as pessoas não vão ler, vamos tentar cada vez mais adaptar o texto, as informações a um formato de texto menor pra atender essa necessidade do público. Então, nesse sentido, sim, a gente está sempre antenado e preocupado. Puxa, comunicação hoje, a gente tem uma noção de como é, mas ela é muito diferente do que era há dez, 20 anos atrás. E com certeza vai ser diferente do que foi, do que vai ser daqui a cinco, dez anos. Temos que estar atentos às mudanças de linguagem, mudança de comportamento e tentar adaptar.

^{xc} Entrevistado 7: E também o que a gente faz é “olha, aqui, minha sobrinha de 15 anos se interessar por uma notícia da PF ela não vai entrar no site da PF, talvez ela entre no Instagram da PF. Então pensa nesse sentido, de ver a realidade. A gente tem um público que é heterogêneo, então a gente tem que pensar nisso. Bom, temos que divulgar uma operação X, mas se divulgar só no site talvez não alcance todo mundo. Aí entra a rede social, que trabalha sempre em paralelo conosco. Seria, nesse sentido, de tentar também entender a característica do público atual, o que predomine.

^{xcí} Entrevistado 6: Criação de políticas nesse sentido, que incentivem a mulher, por exemplo. E hoje as mulheres não entram mais em escala, mulheres que acabaram de, estão amamentando ou acabaram de ter filhos. Se eu não me engano, nos dois primeiros anos, elas não entram mais em escala de operação em escala de sobreaviso. A mulher que amamenta tem direito a duas horas de teletrabalho por dia. São políticas, assim, inovadoras. Não sei como é que na Polícia Civil, mas é algo inédito, inédito, dentro de força policial.

^{xcii} Entrevistado 5: É aí que eu falo, talvez da inovação, que a gente começa, mas aí todo mundo começa a fazer, porque assim, eu acho que a polícia é uma polícia muito legalista, sempre olhando ali para a parte da lei. E aí? Por exemplo, a lei de abuso de autoridade leva um tempo até você acostumar as pessoas a não mostrar o rosto, não mostrar partes do corpo. E aí a gente começou com isso aqui. Aí eu acredito que outras polícias também já estão começando ou já começaram e já estão até talvez mais avançadas nisso de não fazer isso né, respeitando a dignidade da pessoa humana.

^{xciii} Entrevistado 5: A gente tem que fazer as coisas primeiro, entendeu? Não necessariamente a gente está fazendo inovação. A gente só está fazendo o que tem que ser feito. A lei fala no artigo lá que você não pode mostrar parte do corpo da pessoa. Se não pode, não pode, está na lei. Então você tem que cumprir o que está ali e aí talvez demore um pouco também. E o órgão vai se renovando também e vão chegando novas pessoas, porque assim, muita gente mais antiga também está acostumada a trabalhar de um jeito e se muda, você demora um pouco para ir se adaptando.