RESEARCH

Unveiling Institutional Logics in Military Policing: Development and Validation of the PIL-M Scale, Including the Obscure Vigilante Logic

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Abstract

This study proposes the operationalization of the multidimensional construct of Military-Type Police Institutional Logics (PIL-M) by presenting the construction and validation of the PIL-M Scale in three consecutive studies. The scale is a new instrument for measuring latent institutional logics within Brazilian military police organizations. In Study 1, qualitative research ($N=17$) generated 80 items. In Study 2, in two phases, we conducted a content validity and instrument reduction ($N=5$), tested the internal structure, and verified the psychometric reliability in a large sample of military police officers ($n=379$), which enabled the identification of five institutional logics: military, bureaucratic, legalist, community, and vigilante. Study 3 ($n=137$) examined the nomological network, revealing relations with work and organization variables (workplace dignity, social identity, and psychological safety). These findings provide a robust basis for predicting police behavior and offer guidance for public-security reforms. The identification of the distinct "Vigilante Logic" highlights internal tensions in professional identity and uncovers hidden dimensions that may influence extralegal practices. Overall, the study advances the understanding of institutional complexity in law enforcement and supports the development of more human-centered and effective policing strategies.

Keywords Institutional logic · PIL-M · Military police · Scale · Vigilante logic

Introduction

What institutional logics drive a military police officer to act beyond legal boundaries in the name of order? Why do some logics remain embedded in silence - unspoken, obscure, and yet influential? These questions lie at the heart of institutional complexity in police organizations, where contradictory expectations shape not only behavior, but professional identity. That is why this paper investigates those dynamics by operationalizing the construct of Military-Type Police Institutional Logics (PIL-M), including a rarely discussed dimension - the obscure Vigilante Logic.

Institutional Theory has gained increasing prominence in the applied social sciences, particularly through the concept of institutional logics, which offers explanatory power for how cultural frameworks guide organizational behavior. Institutional logics are defined as historically constructed patterns of material practices and cultural symbols - including assumptions, values, and beliefs - that individuals and organizations use to give meaning to their actions, organize time and space, and reproduce their social reality (Thornton and Ocasio 2008), in other words, it is one way to understand culture. Within organizations, these logics serve as interpretive frameworks for social situations (Greenwood et al., 2011) and are especially relevant in professionalized fields where individuals navigate multiple, often competing,

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normative systems (Currie & Spyridonidis, 2016; Thornton et al. 2012).

Although conceptually mature, empirical research on institutional logics has predominantly relied on qualitative, inductive methods to identify logics in specific contexts (Thornton and Ocasio 2008; Greenwood et al., 2011). Such approaches, while rich in depth, are limited in their ability to generalize or predict organizational behavior. Few studies have attempted to quantify the perception of institutional logics (e.g., Picheth & Crubellate, 2019), and even fewer meet psychometric standards necessary for valid latent trait measurement (AERA et al., 1985). This methodological gap limits theoretical refinement and impedes the integration of institutional logics into broader models of organizational analysis.

The policing context (and particularly military policing) offers a fertile ground for exploring a complexity of logics. Police organizations are characterized by institutional pluralism, with logics that coexist and interact in complementary, conflicting, or overlapping ways (Ferreira et al. 2022). The organizational environment is further complicated by structural hierarchy, symbolic authority, and public demands for both efficiency and empathy (Terpstra and Salet 2019).

In the Brazilian context, these organizational complexities are amplified by a unique militarized policing model that differs fundamentally from police militarization processes. Brazilian Military Police are not civilian forces that adopted military characteristics, but constitutionally military organizations with legal foundations rooted in the Armed Forces militarism, still operating under Army regulations and maintaining military hierarchy, discipline, and socialization processes. Castro (1990) demonstrates that this military socialization creates a transformation process from civilians into military personnel involving a rupture with civilian life and the construction of new values inherent to military life, which establish a worldview fundamentally oriented toward combat and enemy confrontation rather than community service and social problem-solving.

This institutional design creates an apparent conflict between competing institutional logics within the organization. While military logic emphasizes hierarchy, discipline, and enemy combat (values designed for warfare contexts), policing requires engagement with social problems, community relations, and democratic accountability. Galvão (2016) documents how this tension manifests in daily operations, where officers differentiate between "being a police officer" (focused on social problem-solving) and "being military" (emphasizing combat readiness and hierarchical compliance), creating organizational dynamics where rituals and regulations are fulfilled differently between subordinates and superiors to manage these competing demands. This unique institutional configuration makes the Brazilian

Military Police a particularly interesting case for analyzing how conflicting institutional logics emerge and operate within organizations that must simultaneously fulfill military and civilian functions.

This paper presents the development and validation of the PIL-M Scale, a multidimensional instrument designed to measure the latent perception of institutional logics among military police professionals. The scale was built in three stages: (1) a qualitative and inductive stage to refine constructs and generate items; (2) a psychometric analysis of internal structure and reliability; and (3) a nomological network validation exploring associations with work and organizational variables (i.e., workplace dignity, social identity, and psychological safety). The result is the first quantitative instrument developed to measure perceived institutional logics in the military police context.

By unveiling dominant and obscure institutional logics, this study contributes to theoretical discussions about institutional complexity and provides a robust methodological framework to support evidence-based public security policies. Furthermore, the findings highlight institutionalized beliefs that may operate in tension with legality, equity, and democratic governance, thus opening avenues for future research into previously unexplored institutional dynamics.

Theory Development

Institutional Logic Conflict

The term *institutional logic* emerges as a novel approach within institutional analysis, initially presented by Friedland and Alford (1991), and further developed through the works of Haveman and Rao (1997) and Thornton and Ocasio (1999). This new concept diverges from earlier perspectives by shifting the focus from institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) to the effects of diverse institutional logics on individuals and organizations across various contexts, where logics shape rational and conscious behavior, and actors also influence the formation, maintenance, and transformation of these logics (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). In an organizational context influenced by multiple logics, actors may respond differently to contradictory logics, ranging from conformity to manipulation and reinterpretation aimed at achieving their own objectives (Friedland and Alford 1991).

Within an organizational environment, institutional logic always comprises symbolic factors (shared values, common interests, and joint efforts) and guides organizations on how to interpret their meanings, shaping appropriate behaviors to achieve success (Thornton 2004, p. 70). In most cases, this environment consists of multiple institutional logics

that are interdependent and, to some extent, contradictory (Friedland 2018). Competition among logics with divergent institutional premises seeks to influence organizational activities, interacting primarily in two patterns: compatibility or conflict (Ramus et al. 2017). These dynamics align with police subculture research, which identifies how officers develop informal values, norms, and practices that may compete with formal organizational expectations (Reiner 2010; Skolnick 2011). The institutional logics perspective offers a complementary framework for understanding how these subcultural "unwritten codes" (Paoline 2003) can manifest as measurable institutional logics that guide organizational behavior, particularly in militarized contexts where combat-oriented values may conflict with democratic policing principles (Kraska 2007). Such conflict arises from differences in means and goals inherent in the divergent logics' premises and the unique principles stemming from them (Pache and Santos 2010).

Public services such as healthcare, education and public safety are examples of professionalized contexts where professionals operate under multiple logics. Examples of logics in these areas include Bureaucratic Logic, typical of public services, emphasizing strict rules and processes aimed at impartiality (Hathaway and Askvik 2021); Professional Logic, based on the practices, norms, and values specific to a profession that guide work organization (Goodrick & Reay, 2011); Corporate Logic (also known as managerial logic), associated with managerial control (Thornton et al. 2012, p. 55); and Community Logic, where communities incorporate local understandings, norms, and rules legitimizing typical mental models (Marquis et al., 2007).

According to Cheng et al. (2023), the compatibility pattern between logics refers to institutional premises concerning values, goals, and means that are identical, broad, or similar, thus enabling these institutional logics to value, sustain, or support each other within an organization. In contrast, the conflict pattern involves a variety of institutional logics with heterogeneous premises, resulting in competition among these different logics. Such conflict arises from differences in means and goals inherent in the divergent logics' premises and the unique principles stemming from them (Pache and Santos 2010). For instance, Corporate Logic centered on financial economy might be incompatible with Community Logic focused on community service.

As logics are composed of various premises, relative conflict and compatibility between these premises from two logics jointly shape the behavior of organizations and individuals (Thornton 2002). Analyzing the reconciliation, coexistence, and relationships among multiple logics has become a popular topic in theoretical and empirical research within institutional analysis (Besharov and Smith 2014; Cheng et al. 2023; Ramus et al. 2017). Thus, beyond compatibility, the term "complementarity" between logics, which emphasizes differences and how to exploit them to create additional value (Mitsuhashi and Greve 2009), is highlighted in current research. Therefore, understanding the complementarity of logics involves primarily evaluating and analyzing conflicting premises within an organizational environment characterized by the relatively harmonious coexistence of institutional logics.

Constitutive Definition of Military-Type Police Institutional Logics (PIL-M)

Following the conceptualization of institutional logics previously introduced, in the context of military police, the first proposal to identify multiple logics in community policing was made by Ferreira et al. (2022), who highlighted four institutional logics: military, professional, community, and managerial – presented below. In this study, managerial logic is replaced by bureaucratic logic, as it better reflects the organizational characteristics and normative structures of Brazilian public administration. Although bureaucratic logic was not originally included in their framework, this study incorporates it, considering its relevance as the dominant logic in public service contexts (Hathaway and Askvik 2021).

Military Logic

The Military Logic is institutionally grounded in the logic of the corporation, which can also be interpreted, according to Thornton et al. (2012), as a form of managerial logic. In this study, however, it refers more specifically to the symbolic and structural foundations of military corporations, modeled on the operational dynamics of the army and armed forces. Its practical and symbolic motto is "hierarchy and discipline" (Ferreira et al. 2022). This logic is characterized by an autocratic, hierarchical decision-making structure, emphasizing physical strength, formal discipline, and organizational control. The core objective is to accomplish the mission, and operationally, it focuses on crime suppression, where the criminal is viewed as the enemy. A symbolic and relational distance is maintained between military personnel and civilians, reinforcing the separation between the military and non-military spheres.

The identity of the officer is shaped by civic-military values, often framed under ideals such as "morals and good manners". Legitimacy is symbolically derived from the flag, coat of arms, uniforms, and insignias (Verhun 2024). Within this logic, crime is typically interpreted as the result of individual moral failure rather than as a structural or social phenomenon.

Professional Logic

Professional Logic is grounded in the practices, norms, and values inherent to a given profession. It structures how work is organized and legitimized within professional fields (Goodrick & Reay, 2011). In the case of policing, this logic is linked to the symbolic figure of the hero-protector of society - an agent responsible for maintaining social order. Its motto is "to serve and protect" (Ferreira et al. 2022). The central goal of this logic is to uphold social order through the enforcement of laws and norms. The operational focus lies in preventing legal infractions and ensuring normative stability. The professional police officer perceives a moral obligation to maintain order at all times, even outside official working hours. Under this logic, it is sometimes deemed necessary to act beyond legal limits to fulfill one's duty.

Criminality is interpreted as non-compliance with social norms and legal standards. The police officer is expected to be "on duty 24 hours a day," maintaining high levels of vigilance and readiness—even while off duty. This heightened sense of professional engagement is tied to the notion of police acumen, or in Portuguese, *tirocínio policial*—a culturally specific expression used within Brazilian police forces to describe a kind of professional intuition developed through experience. In this logic, legitimacy is not only derived from formal procedures but also from accumulated expertise and moral positioning (Verhun 2024). The professional officer must be constantly available to protect society and enforce social norms as a moral extension of their role.

Community Logic

Community Logic is embedded in the cultural, social, and normative frameworks of the communities in which police officers operate. It reflects how local norms, shared understandings, and collective expectations shape legitimacy and define appropriate conduct for public safety professionals. This logic is anchored in the belief that democratic societies should be fair, and that the legitimacy of the police depends on ensuring human and constitutional rights in the relationship between police and citizens (Marquis et al., 2007).

Its symbolic motto is "common limits for all." The officer is portrayed as a guardian of the community, acting not as an outsider, but as an integral member of the collective. Rather than functioning exclusively through coercive means, the community-oriented officer seeks to revitalize security by controlling crime and addressing the sense of insecurity among citizens.

This logic encourages the development of personal relationships with community members, and the ability to listen and respond to the community's specific needs. It also emphasizes a focus on human rights, viewing criminality not as a moral or individual failing, but as a result of social inequality and exclusion.

Within this framework, the police officer is expected to be an enlightened guardian—a figure whose responsibility extends beyond traditional law enforcement. Their legitimacy is grounded in the experience of the community, and their role involves navigating cultural nuances and fostering mutual trust.

Bureaucratic Logic

Bureaucratic Logic is commonly associated with the public sector and is characterized by a strong emphasis on formal processes, regulatory frameworks, and hierarchical decision-making. It reflects an institutional order based on the State Logic, explicity linked to the role of civil servants and public administration (Hathaway and Askvik 2021; Nederhand et al., 2019). This logic privileges stability, neutrality, and procedural integrity in executing organizational tasks (Boitier and Rivière 2016).

Its practical and symbolic motto is "rules and manuals." The bureaucratic officer operates within a system defined by public sector processes, where fixed career paths, promotions based on seniority, and adherence to detailed legislation are expected norms. In this model, attention to legal compliance, cost containment, and accountability are key professional responsibilities.

The bureaucratic police officer is viewed as a technical expert who must meticulously follow procedural norms, particularly in administrative and criminal processes. Legitimacy is derived not from personal judgment or field experience, but from institutional documentation, such as manuals, data systems, and formal reports. These elements serve as tangible evidence of performance and public service quality.

As stated in your source, "the organization is characterized by a strong emphasis on processes, rules, and impartiality." (Meyer and Hammerschmid 2006, pp. 1002–1003). This ethos demands that officers respect procedural boundaries and apply the law uniformly, reinforcing a logic of impersonality and institutional trust.

Based on the available evidence, we offer the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 – The set of institutional logics perceived by military police professionals (PIL-M) is composed of four distinct institutional logics: Military, Professional, Bureaucratic, and Community.

Proposal for Construct Validation and Nomological Network of Military-type Police Institutional Logics (PIL-M)

The original conceptual framework was proposed by Ferreira et al. (2022), who identified four primary logics in the context of community policing. In addition to instrument development and internal structure validation, this research investigates the nomological network of the PIL-M construct. It seeks to establish empirical relationships with conceptually related variables, such as psychological safety, social identity, and workplace dignity, thus supporting the scale's convergent and theoretical validity.

Psychological Safety

Team psychological safety is defined as a "shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking" (Edmondson 1999, p. 354). It reflects a collective sense of trust rooted in mutual respect and open communication among members. The concept originated from research on distributive justice and focuses on how people evaluate the quality of social processes in group settings.

Psychological safety fosters shared meaning and mutual understanding through mechanisms such as trust and reflexivity. These dynamics support the integration of individual routines into collective frameworks, allowing organizational members to interact meaningfully and align themselves with the institutional logics of their peers (Sankowska and Söderlund 2015). Therefore, it is argued that the collective trust emerging from psychological safety correlates with the shared beliefs of the group, i.e., its dominant institutional logic (Bartlett et al. 2009). We propose a positive relation in the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 2**– PIL-M positively correlates with the group's psychological safety.

Social Identity

Social identity refers to how individuals define themselves not only through personal attributes, but also through the social characteristics associated with the groups to which they belong (Tajfel and Turner 1979). From the perspective of Social Identity Theory (SIT), individuals construct their self-concept based on group membership, classification, and the internalization of shared group norms, i.e., through the cognitive and affective processes of categorization and comparison (Miles-Johnson 2021). This concept is particularly relevant to the microfoundations of institutional logics, as it helps explain how actors engage with, interpret, and reproduce institutional orders. As emphasized by Thornton et al. (2012), social identity plays a central role in their integrative model of logics.

Evidence from previous literature suggests that the social identity of police officers is shaped by three interrelated dimensions: (1) centrality, which corresponds to self-categorization and the subjective importance of the self-defining group; (2) affection with the belonging group, which refers to the emotional evaluation and attachment to the group; and (3) group ties, which represent the perception of similarity and bonding with other members (Nascimento et al. 2023). These components support the idea that institutional logics are embedded in collective identities that are affectively and cognitively reinforced in practice. In consideration of the possibility that social identity is related to institutional logic, we propose the following hypothesis:

> **Hypothesis 3**– PIL-M positively correlates with the three dimensions of social identity.

Workplace Dignity

Workplace dignity can be defined as the value attributed to individuals by themselves and by others, acquired through engagement in meaningful work activities (Lucas 2015). The concept is linked to communication and emerges from interpersonal interactions; it depends both on how individuals evaluate their own worth and on the degree to which others signal respect and recognition. Workplace dignity is thus subjective, relational, and self-constructed.

Its theoretical foundation slightly overlaps with Social Identity Theory (SIT), as dignity is associated with one's sense of belonging and recognition within a group, i.e., it is shaped by social categorization and perceived value in interpersonal contexts (Thomas and Lucas 2019). However, it also transcends SIT because it encompasses apparently contradictory elements: inherent dignity (derived from human worth) and earned dignity (based on merit and conduct). Furthermore, it has a bivalent nature, meaning that it cannot be conceptualized without also considering its counterpart – indignity. Given that institutional logics influence both behavior and the interpretation of workplace experiences, it is reasonable to assume that they also affect how individuals perceive dignity and indignity in their professional environment. Therefore, our final hypothesis is as follows:

> **Hypothesis 4–** PIL-M positively correlates with workplace dignity (a) and negatively with workplace indignity (b).

The hypotheses tested in this study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Hypothetical relationships between PIL-M, psychological safety, social identity, and workplace dignity

Variables	Military	Professional	Bureaucratic	Community
Discriminant Validity by Socio-Professional Characteristics				
Age	0	0	0	0
Gender	0	0	0	0
H2 Psychological Safety	+	+	+	+
H3 Three-Factor Social Identity (ETIS)				
Centrality	+	+	+	+
Affect	+	+	+	+
Ties	+	+	+	+
H4 Workplace Dignity				
Dignity	+	+	+	+
Indignity	-	-	-	-

Overview of the Studies

The development of the measure was based on the four institutional logics proposed by the theory and utilized a qualitative analysis of focus groups (Morgan 1996) to adjust the context and develop the measurement instrument. Study 1 was conducted to generate items and qualitatively confirm content validity and the hypothetical structure. Study 2 was conducted to examine the validity of characteristics, internal structure, item response patterns, and reliability. Study 3 was conducted to examine the nomological network. Details about the study samples can be found in Table 2.

Table 2 Summary of Studies, Procedures, and sample characteristics

Study	Procedures and Variables	Sample
Study 1	Exploratory and lexical analysis using Iramuteq software Proposal of 20 items per institutional logic, totaling 80 items (4 institutional orders) for the PIL-M Questionnaire. After judges' analysis, reduced to 68 items.	*3 groups* *(G_{Oficiais}=6; G_{Mixed}=6; G_{Praças}=5)* Only 1 participant was a woman. Items analyzed by 6 judges.
Study 2	EFA and model adjustment Item reduction for the PIL-M Questionnaire Reliability estimation	*N*=379 (84.7% are men) *Mean age*=38.84 years (SD=7.24)
Study 3	CFA and reliability estimation for the PIL-M Questionnaire. Analysis and Nomological Network: Psychological Safety, ETIS, and Workplace Dignity.	*N*=137 (85.9% are men) *Mean age*=38.93 years (SD=6.96)

STUDY 1: Qualitative Analysis and Item Generation

Method

Three focus groups were conducted: two with six police officers and one with five, totaling 17 participants (only one of whom has a woman). The aim was to understand the latent institutional logics within Brazilian military police organizations. To ensure regional representation, officers from four Brazilian states—Rio Grande do Sul (RS), Pará (PA), Goiás (GO), and the Federal District (DF) were invited to participate. The military career structure was considered based on two main roles: *praças* (lower-ranking enlisted personnel with "on the beat" operational duties) and *oficiais* (higher-ranking personnel with command responsibilities; in Brazil, "oficial" is a specific hierarchical designation distinct from the general term "officer").

In line with recommendations for content variability and subgroup structuring (Morgan 1996), three focus groups were formed: one composed exclusively of officers, one mixed (officers and *praças*), and one composed exclusively of *praças*. Due to participant availability, the first two groups had six members, and the third had five, providing the diversity needed for content analysis.

The focus group method was chosen for its potential to generate knowledge from diverse experiences and for promoting rich interaction among participants. This interaction encourages the emergence of distinct content by highlighting perceptions, attitudes, thoughts, and cultural values (Grønkjær et al. 2011). The focus group sessions were guided by three main questions designed to elicit discussions about institutional logics and identity conflicts within military police organizations:

1. *What are the major transformations in values and behaviors when someone becomes a military police officer?*
2. *What are the main identity or professional role conflicts in your police organization?*
3. *What are the positive and negative aspects of internal and external roles in police activity? (family, church, community)*

The interviews began by building rapport with the officers and gathering behavioral characteristics, values, and perceptions acquired upon joining the police force. Next, participants were asked for evidence of logic conflicts to facilitate capturing the phenomenon. The third question aimed to understand whether peripheral institutions within the organization had any perceivable effect on conflicts and

behaviors. Finally, the goal was to capture other possible logics that may have emerged during times of crisis.

The structure and sequencing of the questions posed in the focus groups aimed to guide participants in rationalizing the process of change from before and after becoming military police officers, thereby evoking characteristics, values, and behaviors that had been broadly transformed in that process. Subsequently, questions about internal and external conflicts sought to highlight potential institutional logic conflicts to understand the dominant logics operating within Brazilian military police service. The content variability across groups was important for validating and constructing the items related to institutional logics, based on the content that emerged from the groups.

Focus group sessions were conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams during January 2023, and each session lasting approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. All sessions were audio-recorded with participant consent through signed Informed Consent Forms. The sessions were facilitated by the lead researcher, who maintained a semi-structured approach, allowing for natural discussion flow while ensuring all guiding questions were addressed. Participants were contacted through their respective military police headquarters, with positive responses obtained from four Brazilian states: Rio Grande do Sul, Pará, Goiás, and the Federal District.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was conducted using the software IRaMuTeQ (Interface de R pour les Analyses Multidimensionnelles de Textes et de Questionnaires). This tool is designed to analyze the structure and organization of lexical data, enabling identification of patterns in how participants articulate lexical worlds (Camargo and Justo 2013).

Three types of textual analysis were performed: (1) Classical lexicographic analysis, to assess the number of text segments (TS), lexical forms, and evocations; (2) Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC), to construct a dendrogram with distinct thematic classes - words with χ^2 values lower than 3.80 ($p<.05$) were excluded; and (3) Supplementary classification analysis, which compared chi-square scores among classes by group structure (focus group composition).

The inclusion of mixed focus groups (*Oficiais* and *Praças* -i.e., officers and "On the beat" personnel) was addressed through analytical strategies to account for potential hierarchical bias. As documented in military organizational literature, *Praças* personnel may restrict opinions in the presence of superiors due to fear of sanctions (Morgan 1996). To mitigate this limitation, response patterns were analyzed separately by group composition (*Oficiais*-only, *Praças*-only,

and Mixed), and chi-square distributions were examined to identify differential contributions across hierarchical levels to thematic classes.

After these lexical analyses and the theoretical elaboration of the constitutive and operational definitions of institutional logics in military police, we proposed a structure of four institutional logics, based on Ferreira et al. (2022), with minor adjustments for item construction. Twenty items were created for each logic, totaling 80 items, and submitted to expert review panels—three expert judges and three members of the target audience. The content validity coefficient was calculated according to Hernandez-Nieto (2002).

Lexical Statistics and Descending Hierarchical Classification

The corpus consisted of three texts—one from each focus group—divided into 736 text segments (TS), with 611 segments retained for analysis (83.02%). A total of 26,462 lexical occurrences (words, forms, or terms) emerged from the corpus, including 3,171 distinct words and 1,692 hapax legomena (words that occurred only once).

Supplementary Classification Analysis

Through the supplementary classification analysis, it was possible to compare and describe the chi-square-based evocations of the dendrogram classes across different groups, according to each focus group's structural composition. This analysis by group was essential for understanding whether perceptual differences existed between groups based on their hierarchical division within the organization.

Results

The analyzed content was categorized into five thematic classes, as shown in Fig. 1, along with representative text segments and class definitions: Class 1 – "Training Course," with 93 TS (15.22%); Class 2 – "Behavioral Change," with 157 TS (25.70%); Class 3 – "Bureaucratic Conflict," with 84 TS (13.75%); Class 4 – "Hierarchical Conflict," with 187 TS (30.61%); and Class 5 – "Professional Conflict," with 90 TS (14.73%).

The class labels were chosen based on the analysis of "typical text segments" using the Reinert method (Salviati, 2017). Transcripts of the highest-scoring text segments for each class, as well as other supplementary analyses generated by IRaMuTeQ.

The word classes show different distributions among the groups surveyed. This distribution is presented in Fig. 2.

The *Oficiais* focus group was significantly predominant in Class 1 – Training Course ($p<.05$). The mixed focus group was significantly predominant in Class 4 – Hierarchical

TEXT CORPUS 611 TS – Retention Rate: 83.02%	TEXT SEGMENTS (TS)	DESCRIPTION
CLASS 1 Training Course 15.22% – 93 TS **Word** / f / χ^2 Course 20 75,82 Training 18 61,39 Character 5 21,79 Shape 5 21,79	"[...] although some training courses last up to four years and the student is immersed in different values, and we begin to cultivate different values, such values do not necessarily define or shape our character." (Participant FG 1) "[...] it's a very common characteristic that once we become police officers, leadership emerges, along with other values shaped during the training courses, such as patriotism and police officers' sense of belonging." (Participant FG 2)	This class reveals perceptions about transformations occurring during training courses. Participants report the internalization of values such as patriotism, belonging, and ethics, highlighting that the formative process contributes to shaping collective attitudes and identities, establishing the boundaries between professional socialization and individuality.
CLASS 2 Behavioral Change 25,70% - 157 TS **Word** / f / χ^2 Change 17 38,09 Behavior 17 29,01 Civilian World 13 23,61 Transformation 7 16,22	"[...] when a civilian enters the training course, enters the institution, they are confronted with a completely different world, and the change in behavior is drastic and abrupt." (Participant FG 2)" [...] from the moment [you become a police officer], you begin to drift away from the civilian world because you realize the civilian world has a bit of... I don't even know the name... would it be this mess? This social zone?" (Participant FG 3)	This class reflects the rupture between the "civilian world" and the "police world." Testimonies highlight the abrupt change in behavior and worldview that occurs after entering the institution, frequently described as a shock or radical transformation. The analysis reveals an identity shift: professionals begin to interpret reality through new categories, aligned with the institutional demands and values of the military police.
CLASS 3 Bureaucratic Conflict 13,75% - 84 TS **Word** / f / χ^2 Service 22 94,46 Profile 10 63,78 Operational 13 63,14 Administrative 8 32,86	"[...] I even said this [conflict] about the military police officer on duty versus the officer who works in administration—it's more 'crystalline'..." (Participant FG 2)" [...] one of the conflicts we experience inside the military police is a conflict between the operational profile and the more administrative profile—more or less in the technical sense of the bureaucratic issue..." (Participant FG 1)	This class encompasses conflicts experienced by military police officers between operational and administrative profiles. While administrative work is recognized as fundamental to organizational functioning, professionals perceive field activities as more authentic and representative of the police essence. The contrast between these two profiles, described in terms of "crystallinity" or formalism, reveals tensions related to the bureaucratization of the profession and the differential valuation of professional roles.
CLASS 4 Hierarchical Conflict 30,61% - 187 TS **Word** / f / χ^2 Role 38 42,15 Commander 18 37,97 Conflict 54 36,46 Function 14 22,05	"[...] because of the various roles that the officer has to perform, like when you're a commander of a unit and end up in conflict, sometimes you can't be friends [with the praça], because if I'm a friend, I can't act like a boss." (Participant FG 2) "[...] I also think that [resolving this conflict] only happens when you retire, because I became an officer, and the praça did the opposite, he always tried to end this conflict between officer and praça." (Participant FG 2)	This class highlights tensions derived from hierarchical structure, especially in relationships between Officers and Enlisted personnel. Reports point to conflicts in the exercise of authority and command dynamics, where personal and professional bonds overlap problematically. The analysis shows how hierarchical rigidity can generate relational dilemmas and situations of strain, constituting a recurring source of internal organizational conflicts.
CLASS 5 Professional Conflict 14,73% - 90 TS **Word** / f / χ^2 The State 18 72,25 Conduct 8 46,93 Experience 4 23,31 Decision 5 22,70	"[...] so many times you want to do your job and end up harmed because sometimes the one who has the hierarchical authority to make the decision doesn't." (Participant FG 3) "[...] it's just that the citizen and at the same time the police officer—what he's doing is because the necessity forced him to, and while he believes he's right, since the State didn't help, it's difficult." (Participant FG 3) "[...] I'm in conflict with the State itself, but the State denied me even the minimum dignity, and so I'm not going to give up my son's sustenance just because I have to comply with an infraction." (Participant FG 3)	This class reflects dilemmas emerging from role overlap: police officer, state agent, and citizen. Participants describe situations where institutional demands clash with personal convictions or family interests, generating feelings of injustice and powerlessness. The relationship with the State appears as a central axis of tension, marked by contradictions between obedience to norms and expectations of justice.

Fig. 1 Dendrogram of classes, text segments, and descriptions

Chi-square of Groups by Class

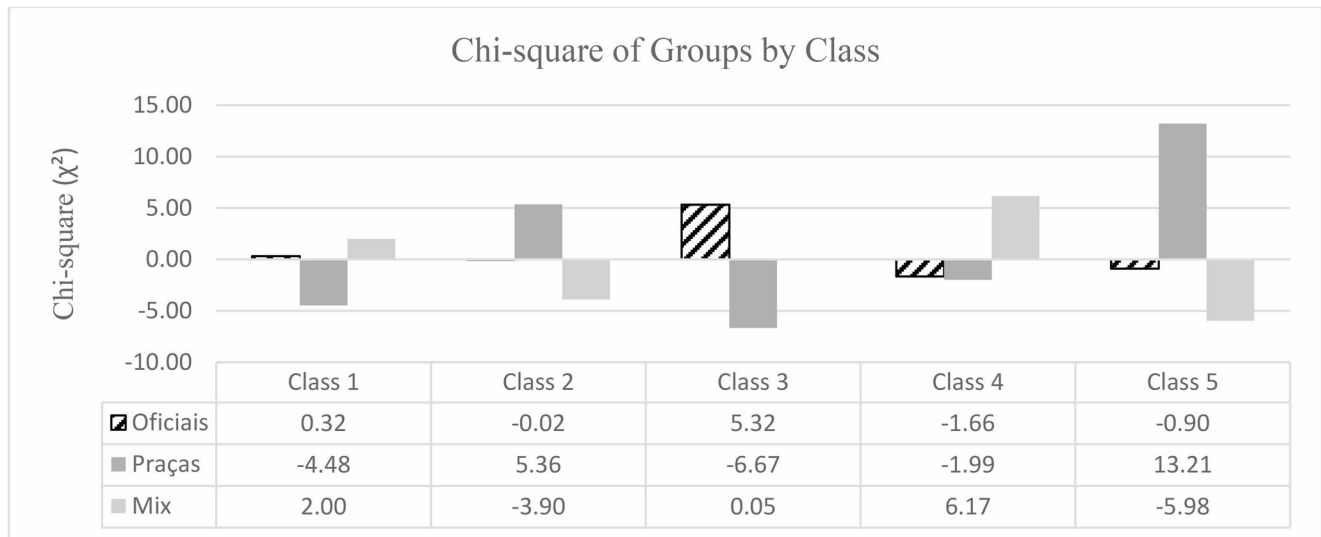|	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5
Oficiais	0.32	-0.02	5.32	-1.66	-0.90
Praças	-4.48	5.36	-6.67	-1.99	13.21
Mix	2.00	-3.90	0.05	6.17	-5.98

Fig. 2 Chi-square of groups by dendrogram class. Note. Class 1: Training Course; Class 2: Behavioral Change; Class 3: Bureaucratic Conflict; Class 4: Hierarchical Conflict; Class 5: Professional Conflict

Conflict ($p < .05$). The *Praças* focus group, in turn, was significantly predominant in two classes: Class 2 – Behavioral Change ($p < .05$) and Class 5 – Professional Conflict ($p < .01$).

The evocations of participants from the *Oficiais* group were prevalent in Class 3 – Bureaucratic Conflict. Two main themes stood out in this class: the conflict between administrative and operational policing, and cases of recently recruited officers who view the police as a temporary civil service job, without full commitment to police work. It is believed that this prevalence in the *Oficiais* group is because they spend most of their careers in administrative roles and are therefore more attuned to the behavioral and value conflicts of those immersed in a more bureaucratic logic than the professional frontline policing logic.

The evocations of participants from the *Praças* group were predominant in Classes 2 and 5, that is, Behavioral

Change and Professional Conflicts. Among this group, a prominent theme was the drastic behavioral shift when facing society, based on the perception that the so-called "civilian world" is disordered and at odds with the "military world." In the professional realm, they emphasized the tensions between the logics of police, military, and social service (the latter of which we will refer to as the community logic). Finally, in the mixed group of *Oficiais* and *Praças*, the evocation of conflict between them (Class 4 – Hierarchical Conflict) was more prominent than in the other groups.

In summary, Class 3 (Bureaucratic) emphasizes conflicts between administrative and operational behaviors (bureaucratic and professional); Class 4 (Hierarchical) highlights hierarchical conflicts that hinder police work (military and professional); and Class 5 (Professional) focuses on various professional conflicts between what a police officer is expected to do and what they believe as a citizen (community, military, and professional logics). In the latter class, elements of the legalistic logic also appear, but were initially interpreted as bureaucratic characteristics during the development of the first measurement instrument.

The findings corroborated the theoretical analysis of institutional logics in the military police within the Brazilian context and suggest an adaptation to the four pure types of institutional logics, namely: military, professional, bureaucratic, and community. Based on the narratives and the results from the lexical and content analyses, 20 items were created for each logic, totaling 80 initial items for the Military-Type Police Institutional Logics Questionnaire (PILQ-M). While it is understood that any organizational environment comprises a multiplicity of institutional logics, this study focuses on those perceived as predominant and conflicting in certain aspects. From this perspective, and in line with Ferreira et al. (2022), characteristics of four dominant institutional logics emerged. The statements and meaning representations from participants' narratives were used to construct the items.

STUDY 2: Evidence of Internal Structure Validity

Method

Study 2 was divided into two phases. The first focused on content validity, aiming to review, correct, and adapt items for the intended population. The second addressed construct validity by testing the internal structure of the scale.

Content Validity, Item Review, and Reduction

To evaluate content validity and ensure that each item was consistent with the latent construct, the initial 80-item version of the questionnaire was submitted to three expert judges. These experts had academic and applied backgrounds in psychometric scale development and Institutional Theory (particularly institutional logics), and were fluent in Brazilian Portuguese.

Each judge was asked to assess three aspects: (a) whether the item accurately represented one of the four hypothesized dimensions (Military, Professional, Bureaucratic, and Community) based on their definitions; (b) the theoretical relevance of the item; and (c) the clarity of its wording. A comments section was included for optional suggestions on each item. Based on this feedback, a second review round was carried out with two military police officers from the target population (all of whom held university degrees and were native speakers of Brazilian Portuguese). This group evaluated item clarity and linguistic appropriateness.

Both groups (experts and end-users) were instructed to apply the Content Validity Coefficient (CVC) proposed by Hernandez-Nieto (2002), which includes four criteria: language clarity, practical relevance, theoretical relevance, and dimensional consistency. Items scoring below 0.80 on only one criterion were revised; items with two or more scores below 0.80 were considered inadequate and removed.

Only the expert panel suggested substantive modifications to the item pool. Following these revisions, 12 items were excluded. The resulting version of the Military-Type Police Institutional Logics Questionnaire (PILQ-M) included 68 items, evenly distributed across the four dimensions.

Exploratory Factor Analysis

Participants and Instrument

The revised PILQ-M was administered to active-duty military police officers in Brasília, Brazil's capital. A total of 379 officers completed the 68-item instrument. Most respondents were *Praças* (67.1%), male (84.7%), and married (76.9%), with an average age of 38.83 years (SD = 7.23), an average of 13.34 years in service (SD = 9.71), and a high level of education − 92.7% held a university degree.

Data Analysis

Preliminary assumption checks were followed by an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to investigate the scale's factorial structure. The analysis was conducted using a polychoric correlation matrix and the Robust Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (RDWLS) extraction method (Asparouhov and Muthén 2010).

The number of factors to retain was determined via Parallel Analysis with random permutations of the observed data (Timmerman and Lorenzo-Seva 2011). Factor rotation

was performed using Robust Promin (Lorenzo-Seva and Ferrando [2019]). Both Bartlett's test of sphericity (χ^2 = 4181.1, df = 861, $p < .001$) and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index (KMO = 0.88). Parallel analysis suggested a five-factor solution, as these factors explained more variance than would be expected by chance. While the initial model proposed four institutional logics, a fifth factor emerged, capturing features associated with adherence to legalistic principles of the State.

In sequence, model fit was assessed using the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). According to Brown ([2015]), RMSEA values should fall below 0.08, with confidence intervals not exceeding 0.10. CFI and TLI values should be above 0.90, preferably 0.95.

Factor stability was evaluated using the H index (Ferrando and Lorenzo-Seva [2018]). In addition, item discrimination parameters and thresholds were estimated using the Reckase ([1985]) parameterization. Factor loadings are presented in Table [1], [2], [3], along with Composite Reliability, McDonald's ω, and factor replicability estimates (H-index) (Ferrando and Lorenzo-Seva [2018]) (Table [4]).

Results

The various analyses suggested a factorial structure composed of five factors (Table [3]). Initially, four factors were expected to emerge: Military, Professional, Bureaucratic, and Community. However, based on how the items arranged, what was originally conceptualized as the Professional Logic revealed a distinct configuration, which was subsequently labeled Vigilant Logic due to the textual content of the grouped items, partially supporting H1.

The items demonstrated adequate factor loadings, with strong loadings on their respective factors. Only two items presented a pattern of cross-loadings (i.e., items with factor loadings above 0.30 on more than one factor): items 9 and 10. These cross-loadings occurred between items from the Vigilant Logic and the Legalist Logic, with negative loadings of −0.31 and −0.38, respectively. This is easily understandable, as these items refer to the notion that officers must exceed legal limits to fully perform their duties.

The model fit indices were adequate. Composite reliability for all factors was acceptable (above 0.70). The measure of factorial structure replicability (H-index; Ferrando and Lorenzo-Seva [2018]) suggested that all factors are likely to be replicable in future studies (H > 0.80).

Item discrimination parameters and thresholds were assessed using Item Response Theory (IRT). The most discriminating item in the Military Logic factor was item 1 (a = 1.68). For Vigilant Logic, the most discriminating item was item 7 (a = 0.88). For Legalist Logic, it was item 20

(a = 1.29). For Bureaucratic Logic, item 27 had the highest discrimination (a = 1.45). Finally, for Community Logic, item 36 showed the highest discrimination (a = 1.22).

With respect to item thresholds, no unexpected response patterns were identified. Higher response categories required higher levels of the latent trait to be endorsed, as expected.

STUDY 3: Evidence of Validity Based on External Factors and Analysis of the Nomological Network

To evaluate evidence of validity based on external factors through a nomological network (Cronbach and Meehl [1955]) and to test the hypotheses proposed with constructs for convergent validity assessment, a third study was conducted.

Method

Participants and Instruments

A total of 138 military police officers responded to the following instruments: the 42-item version of the Military-Type Police Institutional Logics Questionnaire (PILQ-M), the Psychological Safety Scale (Edmondson [1999]), the Brazilian-Portuguese version of the Workplace Dignity Scale (Thomas and Lucas [2019]; adapted by Barbosa et al. [2024]), and the updated Brazilian-Portuguese Three-Factor Social Identity Scale – ETIS (Nascimento et al. [2023]).

A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the structural plausibility of each of the reported scales. The analysis was performed using the Robust Diagonally Weighted Least Squares (RDWLS) estimation method, which is appropriate for categorical data (DiStefano and Morgan [2014]; Li [2016]).

Analysis

The model fit indices used were: χ^2; χ^2/df; Comparative Fit Index (CFI); Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI); Standardized Root Mean Residual (SRMR); and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA). In sequence, Pearson correlation was conducted between factors to test hypotheses 2, 3, and 4.

Results

The first stage of the analysis involved testing the factor structures of the scales, followed by the evaluation of the nomological network. The structural models for all scales demonstrated satisfactory fit. As shown in Table [4], the chi-square values were non-significant, and the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratios were acceptable in all cases. The

Table 3 Factor loadings structure of the military-type police institutional logics questionnaire (PILQ-M) and items discrimination

Normally, in my organization...	Military Logic	Vigilant Logic	Legalist Logic	Bureau-cratic Logic	Com-munity Logic	Dis-crimi-nation
1.... hierarchy and discipline lead the military organization to function better than its civilian counterpart.	0.93					1.68
2....military discipline makes the officer a better professional.	0.89					1.65
3....hierarchy and discipline help organize police operations.	0.84					1.65
4....the division of duties by rank/grade contributes to effective service delivery.	0.59					0.85
5....care for the uniform reflects much about the military police officer.	0.45					0.59
6....the uniformed officer represents moral values and good conduct to society.	0.44					0.55
7.... strictly following the law hinders more than it helps.		0.62				0.88
8.... 'street smarts' are what define a good police officer.		0.61				0.78
9....maintaining order requires working beyond legal boundaries.		0.57				0.79
10....maintaining order and protecting society take precedence over law enforcement.		0.53				0.75
11.... the officer's main mission is to combat crime.		0.52				0.61
12....a true police officer is one who has worked the streets.		0.49				0.57
13....it is impossible to do quality police work while being strictly legalistic.		0.49				0.61
14....officers behave differently in society because they are constantly highly alert.		0.48				0.59
15....intensifying crime control is viewed as the main solution to social insecurity.		0.47				0.55
16....policing is learned far more in practice than in training.		0.47				0.54
17....the reason a person commits a crime is due to their low moral values.		0.46				0.52
18.... people who act immorally tend to become criminals.		0.44				0.49
19.... the police officer is described as a hero who maintains social order.		0.39				0.46
20.... human rights must always prevail in a police intervention.			0.81			1.29
21.... when responding to an incident, the officer must always prioritize what is established by law.			0.77			1.07
22.... compliance with public administration rules and laws is a premise for any officer.			0.70			1.15
23.... human rights are a priority in police work.			0.69			1.03
24.... a good police officer follows the law to the letter.			0.57			0.80
25.... although police expertise matters, patrol priorities are based on statistical data.			0.38			0.45
26.... adhering to legal procedures ensures cost and risk reduction.			0.32			0.37
27.... bureaucratic processes are inherent to public service and mastering them reflects a professional's quality.				0.87		1.45
28.... mastering bureaucracy and following administrative rules are fundamental to good police work.				0.82		1.31
29.... bureaucratic procedures are important for protecting officers.				0.63		0.96
30.... it is important that officers know how to complete all bureaucratic procedures.				0.60		0.78
31.... bureaucratic procedures may be tedious, but they are extremely important.				0.55		0.80
32.... formal records and procedures are essential to care for public property.				0.54		0.78
33.... those who master rules and bureaucratic procedures are recognized as good officers.				0.44		0.50
34.... rules and manuals help structure and make service more efficient.				0.37		0.48
35.... listening to the community's needs is a duty of the police officer.					0.76	1.19
36.... police work is only complete when the officer understands the needs of the community served.					0.75	1.22
37.... officers should seek to feel and be perceived as part of the community they serve.					0.71	1.00
38.... engaging with the community is part of the police officer's job.					0.69	1.14
39.... a good officer always seeks to understand the needs of the community they serve.					0.67	1.08
40.... when community problems are understood, crime is more easily reduced.					0.64	0.91

Table 3 (continued)

Normally, in my organization...	Military Logic	Vigilant Logic	Legalist Logic	Bureaucratic Logic	Community Logic	Discrimination
41.... policing an area without knowing its local problems is not enough for effective police service.					0.52	0.65
42.... as public servants, officers must be concerned with reducing costs and risks through management techniques.					0.46	0.61
Composite Reliability	0.86	0.82	0.81	0.83	0.86	
McDonald´s ω	0.84	0.78	0.79	0.83	0.85	
H-latent	0.92	0.85	0.89	0.90	0.90	
H-observed	0.90	0.87	0.93	0.90	0.86	

Model fit indices. $c^2 = 591.24$, $gl = 661$, $c^2/gl = 0.90$; $p < 0.05$; RMSEA = 0.00; CFI = 0.99; TLI = 1.00, SRMR = 0.04

CFI, TLI, SRMR, and RMSEA indices supported the adequacy of the measurement models.

Based on these results, the nomological network was tested. Descriptive statistics, correlations, and McDonald's ω reliability coefficients are presented in Table 5. The findings were consistent - even with the emergence of a new factor - thus supporting the existence of a new institutional logic. All constructs within the nomological network showed satisfactory McDonald's ω reliability (ω > 0.70).

The PILQ-M construct that contradicted the initial predictions was the Vigilant Logic. All other results were consistent with our hypotheses: the PILQ-M logics were positively correlated with Psychological Safety (Hypothesis 2), positively correlated with the Centrality dimension of Social Identity (Hypothesis 3), positively correlated with Workplace Dignity (Hypothesis 4), and negatively correlated with Workplace Indignity (Hypothesis 4).

The Vigilant Logic was only supported by Hypothesis 3c, showing a positive correlation with Ties with the belonging group, and contradicted Hypothesis 4b by displaying a positive correlation with Workplace Indignity.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to propose and test the validity evidence of the Military-Type Police Institutional Logics Scale (PIL-M). This objective was achieved through a multi-phase process involving instrument development and validity assessment, with satisfactory results across all evaluation indices. The hypotheses are presented and discussed below.

Hypothesis 1 proposed that the perceived PIL-M is composed of four distinct logics: military, professional, community, and bureaucratic. This hypothesis was partially supported, as in addition to the four anticipated logics, an additional factor emerged - designated the Legalist Logic. The internal structure validity analysis showed satisfactory model fit indices. The Legalist Logic grouped items related to characteristics and values tied to legality in policing, which were originally thought to fall under the Bureaucratic Logic. According to Wilson's (1978) typology of police behavior, he distinguished the so-called Legalistic Style - which adheres strictly to the law - from the Administrator, who is more concerned with bureaucratic aspects and management rules. This perspective supports the findings of this study, as different institutional logics influence distinct behaviors and cultural values.

Another point requiring deeper analysis within the hypothesis testing concerns the set of items originally designed to represent the Professional Logic, which was later proposed to be renamed Vigilant Logic. The items that composed this logic formed the largest group (13 items), yet none presented a factor loading above 0.70; the highest was 0.61. Despite the five-factor structure of PIL-M showing satisfactory stability - indicated by an H-index of 0.85 (Ferrando and Lorenzo-Seva 2018) - the items may benefit from refinement in future studies to better capture the latent traits of the perceived professional logic. The relatively low factor loadings of items within this logic suggest that the latent trait captured may differ from the original proposition. Upon closer examination, the four most significant items referenced acting beyond legal boundaries to maintain public order (i.e., the law hinders more than helps) and the

Table 4 Model fit indices for the measurement scales

Scale	χ^2 (df)	χ^2/df	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA (90% CI)
PILQ-M	1566.183 (784)	1.997	0.95	0.94	0.09	0.08 (0.07–0.09)
ETIS	29.246 (21)	1.393	0.99	0.99	0.06	0.05 (0.00–0.09)
Psychological Safety	13.873 (11)	1.261	0.99	0.99	0.04	0.04 (0.00–0.09)
Workplace Dignity	165.488 (134)	1.235	0.99	1.00	0.05	0.04 (0.01–0.06)

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics, Correlations, and mcdonald's ω (in diagonal) for Nomological and discriminant validity

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1 Military Logic	5.31	1.26	(0.86)										
2 Vigilant Logic	4.33	0.92	0.10	(0.77)									
3 Legalist Logic	5.49	0.91	0.28***	−0.22**	(0.76)								
4 Bureaucratic Logic	5.33	0.88	0.47***	−0.07	0.46***	(0.80)							
5 Community Logic	5.56	0.90	0.37***	0.13	0.29***	0.36***	(0.84)						
6 Psychological Safety	4.72	1.11	0.32***	0.03	0.29***	0.24**	0.21*	(0.80)					
7 ETIS Centrality	5.61	1.15	0.48***	0.13	0.22*	0.34***	0.39***	0.44***	(0.75)				
8 ETIS Affection	2.30	1.39	0.28***	0.01	0.06	0.08	0.22**	0.35**	0.46***	(0.70)			
9 ETIS Ties	5.36	1.26	0.54***	0.19*	0.14	0.36***	0.34***	0.51***	0.70***	0.33***	(0.86)		
10 Workplace Dignity	5.12	1.22	0.51***	−0.14	0.35***	0.48***	0.37***	0.61***	0.53***	0.33***	0.48***	(0.95)	
11 Workplace Indignity	3.07	1.57	−0.47***	0.27**	−0.24**	−0.28***	−0.23**	−0.51***	−0.36***	−0.53***	−0.29***	−0.74***	(0.83)

$* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001$

idea that a "good officer" is defined by intuition, street experience, and professional sagacity (*tirocínio*). These items are closely aligned with definitions of Police Vigilantism, which is characterized in the literature as officers operating outside legal and judicial systems to combat crime, often without accountability, acting as judge, jury, and executioner (Haas et al. 2014; Jauregui 2015). Thus, it is inferred that the captured logic more accurately reflects a Vigilant Logic than a professional one.

To assess the external validity of the PIL-M, the subsequent hypotheses aimed to verify correlations with latent variables that share meaning for police officers, through the analysis of a nomological network. Hypothesis 2 proposed that the PIL-M logics would positively correlate with psychological safety within the group. H2 was partially supported, as all logics were significantly correlated except for the Vigilant Logic. Psychological safety was proposed as a relevant correlate due to its conceptualization as a shared belief that team members feel safe to take interpersonal risks (Edmondson 1999) and to express opinions, ideas, and concerns without fear of retaliation or negative judgment (Sankowska and Söderlund 2015). This definition aligns with the original notion of a logic typically associated with the policing profession. However, a Vigilant Logic (or police vigilantism) is associated with characteristics that are often condemned by both the group and broader society. It is therefore reasonable to expect that a logic premised on disrupting the public security system to deliver justice through extralegal means would not align with group-based mental schemas. As will be seen later, the dimensions that capture group-based psychological traits do not correlate with this logic.

Hypothesis 3 posited that the PIL-M logics would positively correlate with the three dimensions of Social Identity: Centrality, Affection and Ties. This hypothesis was partially supported. For The correlation was not significant for the Vigilant Logic and was only weakly significant for the Legalist Logic and Centrality. The Centrality dimension refers to the amount of time and mental energy an individual dedicates to thinking about their identity as a member of a particular group (Cameron 2004), and the extent to which being a group member is a central part of one's self-concept (Nascimento et al. 2023). As discussed earlier, the Vigilant Logic does not reflect a group-oriented identity, but rather one rooted in opposition to the state justice system. Similarly, the Legalist Logic appears to derive from a broader societal logic of state governance. Neither logic is directly linked to internal police group identity, which may explain the weak or non-significant correlations observed.

The same line of reasoning regarding the assumptions underlying the Vigilant and Legalist Logics may be extended to the evaluation of Affection toward the belonging group,

and Ties with the belonging group. Affection toward the belonging group received partial support, as no significant correlations were found for the Vigilant, Legalist, or Bureaucratic Logics. The Affection dimension refers to the positive or negative feelings an individual has toward their group membership (Cameron 2004), including satisfaction, pride, and emotional attachment to the group. Both the Legalist and Bureaucratic Logics emphasize values as behavioral guides rooted in impersonal rules and norms rather than relational group dynamics. Therefore, it is plausible that institutional logics grounded in normative and legal structures may not correlate with group-based dimensions of social identity, which may help explain the observed results.

The dimension Ties with the belonging group was also partially supported. No significant correlation was found for the Legalist Logic, and the correlation with the Vigilant Logic was weak. This dimension refers to an individual's perceived sense of similarity, bonding, and belonging with other members of the group (Cameron 2004), encompassing feelings of connection and camaraderie. Although the Vigilant Logic is not intrinsically based on group values, it may involve a perceived sense of connection - particularly through shared experience - which could account for the (albeit weak) positive correlation. Therefore, it is conceptually coherent that such a logic would not strongly align with this identity dimension.

Hypothesis 4 proposed that the PIL-M logics would correlate positively with workplace dignity and negatively with workplace indignity. The hypothesis was partially supported for both sub-hypotheses. All logics showed significant positive correlations with workplace dignity, except for the Vigilant Logic. According to Thomas and Lucas (2019), workplace dignity is defined as the recognition and appreciation of individuals as persons, regardless of their role or position. Its correlation with PIL-M logics suggests that institutional logics perceived by police officers are directly related to respectful interactions, recognition of competence, equality of treatment, and general perceptions of dignity. The Vigilant Logic was the only logic that did not correlate with this perception, a finding consistent with its conceptual framework.

Regarding workplace indignity, empirical support was found across all PIL-M logics. However, only the Vigilant Logic demonstrated a positive correlation. Workplace indignity involves negative experiences that undermine officers' dignity, such as disrespect, lack of recognition, inequality, devaluation, and general perceptions of being treated unfairly (Thomas and Lucas 2019). In contrast to other logics, the positive association between the Vigilant Logic and workplace indignity suggests that officers who perceive the need to take justice into their own hands also feel that their work is unrecognized, devalued, or dishonored. This finding, again, aligns with the theoretical underpinnings of this logic.

When analyzing the Vigilant Logic in isolation, it is important to highlight its negative correlation with the Legalist Logic, indicating a conflict between institutional premises and a potential case of institutional complexity (Greenwood et al., 2011), which should be explored in future research. The Vigilant Logic reflects the belief in an institutionalized system of values that legitimizes taking justice into one's own hands—a system that is often incompatible with the professional expectation of legal compliance. Although the original intent was to capture a professional logic, the findings instead reveal latent traits of an institutional logic that aligns more with the dark side of policing. This may serve as a promising starting point for future investigations into arbitrary or extralegal police actions.

Our identification of Vigilante Logic aligns with police subculture literature documenting how officers develop informal codes that may prioritize operational effectiveness over procedural compliance (Paoline 2003; Reiner 2010). The positive correlation between Vigilante Logic and workplace indignity suggests that subcultural adaptations may emerge when officers feel their professional identity and effectiveness are threatened by organizational constraints or public criticism. This finding supports the theoretical connection between institutional logics and police subculture, demonstrating how informal "unwritten codes" identified in subculture research can manifest as measurable institutional logics that compete with formal organizational expectations, particularly in militarized police contexts where combat-oriented values may conflict with democratic policing principles.

These findings challenge the raditional "bad apple" explanations[1] for police misconduct by demonstrating that vigilante attitudes correlate with institutional conditions rather than individual pathology (Haas et al. 2014). The systematic emergence of this logic across different ranks suggests that addressing police misconduct requires organizational rather than merely disciplinary interventions, pointing toward the need for comparative studies examining whether similar institutional dynamics exist in other policing contexts.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study is not without limitations. However, although there are limitations, these do not invalidate this study. Among the limitations, the use of cross-sectional data restricts the ability to make causal inferences, nevertheless, we tried to address that limitation by offering three different samples, which adds value to our paper. Study 1 was conducted with a convenience sample of police officers, as participants were recruited based on their willingness and availability to participate. Future studies should include

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[1] We thank the anonymous reviewer for suggesting this interpretation.

professionals from different countries, as such variation could enrich the understanding of institutional logics across diverse policing contexts. The constitutive definition of the logics is still in an early stage of development, and future research may further refine their conceptual clarity and improve the alignment of items. It is also recommended that further efforts be dedicated to deepening the understanding of the more obscure logic identified among police professionals - one that was neither part of the initial research objective nor anticipated in our theoretical framework, although related concepts have been explored in policing literature through the guardian versus warrior cop debate (Bayley 1994; Bittner 1970).

In Study 2, the factor loadings for items in the Vigilant Logic revealed the need for further development. For future studies, we recommend revising and improving these items, as well as reconsidering the nature of the logic being measured. This logic appears to be linked to behaviors and values associated with the darker side of policing, in which officers believe they must go beyond legal limits to effectively perform their duties. Even when such actions are perceived as undignified, they are still viewed as necessary - or even obligatory - within the police function. This constitutes a promising and underexplored area for future research.

Future research should investigate whether Vigilante Logic appears in civilian police forces and other organizational contexts, particularly those experiencing institutional stress or resource constraints. Comparative studies examining the relationship between organizational conditions and vigilante attitudes could provide valuable insights for developing evidence-based policy interventions. Additionally, longitudinal research examining how changes in workplace dignity and organizational support affect the prevalence of vigilante attitudes over time would contribute to understanding the institutional factors that shape police behavior and inform reform strategies.

In Study 3, the nomological network yielded correlations of low magnitude. It is suggested that other constructs be explored to better understand the consequences and dynamics of institutional logics. Although the model fit indices for PIL-M in Study 3 were satisfactory, further refinements are still possible. Enhancing the design of earlier stages of the research could help resolve these issues in future studies. Thus, greater conceptual and empirical attention is needed to deepen our understanding of the Professional Institutional Logic within Military Police organizations.

Conclusion

Understanding and measuring the latent traits of Police Institutional Logics (PIL) may be instrumental in predicting police behavior across a range of professional activities.

Moreover, it can guide public policies aimed at institutional change or adaptation - initiatives that are essential for achieving behavioral changes that directly impact police performance, as well as factors related to quality of life and occupational health.

The primary aim of this study was to propose an operationalization of the multidimensional construct of military-type police institutional logic (PIL-M). Evidence of validity was presented for a construct that, until now, had only been explored qualitatively. In addition to identifying positive institutional logics, this study revealed the existence of a logic that appears to be more obscure or problematic - referred to here as the Vigilant Logic - which provides an important extension of previous research.

Partial evidence was also found supporting a nomological network, particularly in relation to perceptions of dignity and indignity in the workplace, a result that is arguably expected given the complex and often high-risk nature of the police profession. The measurement of perceived institutional logics remains an emerging field and offers fertile ground for future research. The development of a quantitative instrument to assess latent traits related to the perception of these logics may prove useful, for instance, in predicting organizational behavior or acting as a moderating variable in the implementation of public policies. Starting from the understanding that beyond compatibility and conflict, complementarity of logics can serve as a valuable analytical lens to examine differences and use them constructively, this study focused on exploring coexisting logics, even when their underlying premises appear to be divergent.

Author Contributions F.O.D.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Visualization.A.R.P.N.: Conceptualization, Supervision, Methodology, Writing – review & editing.E. V.G.: Writing – review & editing, Validation, Theoretical insights.F.G.L.G.: Writing – review & editing, Structural refinement.

Data Availability The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declarations

Ethical Approval This study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Brasília (Certificate of Ethical Appreciation Submission—CAAE 66828023.0.0000.5540).

Consent for Publication Not applicable (the manuscript does not contain any individual person's identifiable data).

Consent to Participate All participants provided written informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study.

Competing interests The authors declare no competing interests.

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