

STATE UNIVERSITY OF MONTES CLAROS  
POSTGRADUATE PROGRAM IN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**CONTRIBUTIONS OF EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE CLOSET TO QUEER  
CRIMINOLOGY: A DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS IN THE MILITARY POLICE OF  
MINAS GERAIS**

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**MOISÉS OLIVEIRA COSTA**

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CRIMINOLOGY: A DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS IN THE MILITARY POLICE OF  
MINAS GERAIS**

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I dedicate this work to all the people who struggle or have struggled a little more because of the beasts in their closets (and outside of them too).

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If I could thank you properly, I would give away a book...

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## **‘Só tem bicha na cidade?’**

A cena aconteceu segunda passada, no Bob's do Largo do Machado. Um senhor se recusou a ser atendido por um funcionário transsexual. No que o gerente, gay, pôs as mãos na cintura e disse: "Homofobia é crime!". A polícia foi chamada e, para a surpresa do senhor, o PM também era homossexual. "Só tem bicha nessa cidade?", soltou. O homem acabou sendo levado à 10ª DP, em Botafogo, onde foi autuado por desacato à autoridade e crime de homofobia.

## ABSTRACT

This research addresses the intersection between Epistemology of the Closet and Queer Criminology, with a methodological focus on Discourse Analysis of LGBTQIA+ military police officers from the state of Minas Gerais regarding closet experiences and the treatment of crime. The nascent nature of the queer branch of Criminology in Brazil, combined with the attempt to integrate Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's seminal work "Epistemology of the Closet" (1990), reflects an effort to approach peripheral experiences concerning how the sexuality closet influences the handling of crimes. The main objective was to contribute to the criminological field focused on dissident sexualities, through theoretical inquiry and empirical perspective. Methodologically, this is an exploratory qualitative study in which a bibliographic review was conducted, primarily based on Sedgwick's work and subsequent revisions on the topic. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with military police officers from Minas Gerais identifying as LGBTQIA+. The participants were selected through a snowball sampling method and based on their availability to participate. The data was analyzed qualitatively using theoretical categories derived from "Epistemology of the Closet", French discourse analysis studies, and the support of the Atlas Ti-8 software for organizing and selecting statements. The data analysis indicates the existence of multiple forms of closets within military institutions, which directly or indirectly influence how police officers handle criminal incidents, particularly those involving queer individuals, whether as victims or perpetrators. Within these institutions, a cycle of repression and silence emerges, driven by disciplinary mechanisms imposed on both openly queer and closeted individuals, often resulting in feelings of panic and paranoia. This creates a double binding system marked by ambiguous and negative arguments regarding the experience of sexuality. Outside the institutions, mirrored violence was observed, with agents distancing themselves from other queer individuals to avoid institutional repercussions or discriminatory jokes. The impact on crime handling manifests mainly in gaps in incident reports, prejudiced actions during interventions, fear of interaction between groups, and tendencies to neglect homotransphobia in offenses. The dissertation contributes to Queer Criminology by centering on the dissident experiences of police officers, understanding the impact of closets on police approaches involving LGBTQIA+ individuals, and identifying criminological aspects stemming from institutions and the ways in which sexual and gender subjectivity is interpreted.

**Keywords:** Closet; *Queer*; Criminology; Military Police; LGBTQIA+.



## RESUMO

Esta pesquisa trata sobre a interseção entre Epistemologia do armário e Criminologia *queer*, com centralidade metodológica em uma Análise do Discurso de policiais militares LGBTQIA+ do estado de Minas Gerais sobre as vivências do armário e a tratativa do crime. A incipiência da vertente *queer* da Criminologia no Brasil somada à tentativa de união da obra *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) de Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, representam uma tentativa de abordagem de vivências periféricas sobre como o armário da sexualidade influencia a lida com crimes. O propósito principal foi de elaborar contribuições para o campo criminológico voltado para as sexualidades dissidentes, com perquirição teórica e perspectiva empírica. Metodologicamente, trata-se de uma pesquisa exploratória de cunho qualitativo, em que a pesquisa bibliográfica foi realizada, principalmente, na obra de Sedgwick, e nos revisionistas sobre o tema, enquanto a coleta de dados se deu pela realização de entrevistas semiestruturadas com policiais militares de Minas Gerais que se identificavam como pessoas LGBTQIA+. Os agentes foram selecionados por amostragem de bola de neve e por disponibilidade de participação. Os dados foram analisados qualitativamente utilizando as categorias teóricas extraídas do livro *Epistemology of the Closet*, os estudos da Análise do discurso de vertente francesa, e com o suporte do *software Atlas Ti-8* para organização e seleção de enunciados. A análise dos dados indica a existência de diversas modalidades de armários dentro das corporações militares, que, direta ou indiretamente, influenciam na forma com que policiais lidam com ocorrências criminosas, especialmente aquelas em que pessoas *queer* estejam envolvidas, sejam elas vítimas ou praticantes dos delitos. Dentro das corporações, cria-se um ciclo de repressão e silenciamento, mobilizado por uma disciplinação dos sujeitos, assumidos ou não, que são movidos constantemente por sentimento de pânico e paranoia. Com isso, tem-se um sistema de duplas amarras, com argumentos ambíguos e negativos à vivência da sexualidade. Fora das corporações, foi possível observar uma violência espelhada, em que, devido à antecipação de punição, os agentes se distanciam de outros sujeitos *queer* para que não sofram com represálias institucionais ou piadas discriminatórias. A influência na tratativa do crime incide, principalmente, nas lacunas em registros de ocorrências, atos preconceituosos em abordagens, medo de interação entre os grupos, e induzimento à preterição da homotransfobia em delitos. A dissertação contribui à Criminologia *Queer* por centralizar experiências policiais dissidentes, por compreender o impacto dos armários em abordagens envolvendo indivíduos LGBTQIA+, e por identificar aspectos criminológicos advindos das instituições e da forma com que a subjetividade sexual e de gênero é interpretada.

**Palavras-chave:** Armário; *Queer*; Criminologia; Polícia Militar; LGBTQIA+.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In this work, I propose to elaborate contributions to Criminology based on the theoretical categories of Eve Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990). These categories will be observed in the discourses of police officers who, in dealing with their own sexualities, are confronted with the queer public in their daily profession. The central question of the research is: *In what way, according to the perception of dissident sexuality police officers, can the closets present in the Military Police influence the handling of crime?* To answer this question, I conduct a hermeneutic analysis of the subjectivity contained in the discourses of these police officers.

In this dissertation, I intend to demonstrate how the “institutional closets” of the Military Police of Minas Gerais shape the practices and discourses about crime. They function as normative devices that regulate not only the conduct of queer subjects within the corporation, but also their perception and approach to crime. Such closets impose silences, discipline performances, and produce subjectivities within a binary and heteronormative logic. Consequently, they affect the way police officers with dissident sexualities experience their professional routine and deal with equally dissident citizens in the context of police action. It becomes evident, then, that the control of sexuality and the maintenance of an institutionalized masculinity not only influence the internal structure of the corporation, but also cut across and define the construction of what is considered crime, who should be punished, and how police power is exercised.

The main thesis defended is that these closets are not mere symbolic spaces of concealment, but active devices for the production of truth, control, and exclusion in the penal structure. The original contribution of this work lies in the articulation of the *Epistemology of the Closet* with the studies of Queer Criminology, offering an unprecedented discursive analysis of how these mechanisms operate in Brazilian public security. With this, I propose a criminology that is sensitive to multiple identities and to the violence—both symbolic and institutional—perpetuated by silence, the normalization of heteronormativity, and the discursive construction of hegemonic masculinity in the police environment.

By involving the dynamics of public and private, Discourse Analysis proved to be a viable method of investigation. The choice of military police officers as research subjects, in turn, stemmed from two main factors: the intrinsic characteristics of militarism and the central role these agents play in crime repression - a fundamental circumstance for Criminology. Although traditional Criminology focuses on victims and delinquents, the perspective of social

control agents is equally crucial. Therefore, military police officers were chosen as the methodological focus of this study, and not as its central theoretical object.

Broadly, this study aims to add to the growing body of so-called Queer Criminology or “Criminologia Transviada” (Deviant Criminology), as it has been designated in Brazil. To do so, I revisit a fundamental work of queer literature and analyze it in a contemporary reality that involves crime: the situation of queer professionals responsible for dealing with other queer individuals in a context of crime and institutional silencing.

To understand the theoretical categories that underpin the analysis, it is essential to know the author who proposed them: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. The theorist and poet helped build what is now called Queer Theories. Aligned with a Foucauldian line of thought, she believed that “knowledge and sex become conceptually inseparable from each other” (Sedgwick, 2007, p. 73). Among her various productions, *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) stands out, considered a seminal work both in her collection and in queer studies. It is the brilliance of this work that this research seeks to leverage to understand the relations of the closet and its complex developments in the military criminological discourse.

The book is composed of a series of essays in which Sedgwick unifies meticulous analyses of the culture of her time and prospects on how binarisms—not only of gender, but of various natures—shaped the period considered Modernity. A central question that pervades the work is how much our knowledge about the world was and still is influenced by the dynamics between homosexuality and heterosexuality. This answer unfolds throughout the text with the presentation of theoretical categories that, although seemingly unrelated to sexuality, are intrinsically linked to Western points of view on the subject (Sedgwick, 1990; Garcia, 2018).

The categories of the *Epistemology of the Closet* thus present themselves as stimulating lenses for analyzing contemporary discourse on 21st-century relations. Their relevance is amplified when we consider that they are not restricted to the theme of sexuality and that exclusionary dualities are far from being exhausted.

I observe, for example, that studies on closets have had repercussions in cultural and media production, especially in streaming and television productions, which are now interpreted through the lens of closet theory. Such representations manifest a form of updating the studies initiated in the epistemology of the closet and highlight the impacts of capitalism on the “coming out” process. Examples of this include the pedagogical use of comedy works to represent queer people and promote a break with hetero and homonormativity (Henry; Bryan; Neary, 2023).

Thus, the argumentative potential of Queer Theories and, more specifically, of closet theory, is highlighted as an instrument for interpreting and modifying reality, whether on the streets, on television, in institutions, or in Academia. However, just as the benefits, the obstacles also multiply. This becomes evident when placed in the perspective of Law, Social Development, and Public Policies, fields in which there is an intense and controversial debate about the adequacy of these theories to legal formalism and political relations. On the other hand, the crucial role that non-heterosexual and non-cisgender criticism can play in overcoming the essentialist and assimilationist view of these discussions is recognized (Ramos, 2021; Garcia, 2021).

As an example of the evolution in representations of closets, Russo (1973) already highlighted the role of cinema in portraying the queer subject in a caricatured, stigmatized, or decadent way - a trend that, although reminiscent of the 1990s, still persists in productions where the tragic end for LGBTQ+ characters constitutes a "bad representation." In a movement named "bury your gays," several series present tragic lives and sudden deaths as the definitive narrative path, as in *Game of Thrones*, *The 100*, and *Killing Eve* (Henry; Bryan, Neary, 2023). In contrast, there are coming-out stories that highlight a healthier and more hopeful facet of the queer experience, and it is here that the study of closets excels. This is the case with the adaptation of the book "Heartstopper," the series "Love, Victor," and, in a surprisingly positive national perspective, the films "Hoje Eu Quero Voltar Sozinho" (The Way He Looks) and "Alice Júnior." This does not mean that tragic plots are non-existent in these stories, which would not be plausible; it means, rather, that current representations present a multiplicity of closets, and not just the unhappy ones.

The adaptation of Queer Theories to various fields of study and artistic productions demonstrates a notable resilience when confronted by conservative, radical, or anti-postmodern arguments. Examples of this are found in its articulation with Law and Criminology, even in the face of criticism from authors such as the conservative Brazilian jurist Pavinatto (2022) or Elbert (2010), who questions the atomization of agendas. Despite these challenges, works based on these theories promote the restructuring of socio-institutional problems from new perspectives, providing perspectives and alternatives for interpretation and the search for solutions.

In a way, the media sphere serves as a reflection of the interactions between society and academia, subtly entering institutional spaces: whether on the couches of homes or in workplaces. I highlight the latter as a central field of observation in this research and emphasize queer theoretical argumentation as a useful tool in identifying the oppressive effects of closets

in institutions (public and private), in entering the job market, and in discriminatory practices in the work environment (Irigaray, 2008; Souza; Carrieri, 2010). Furthermore, it promotes organizational changes in scientific investigation methods, because, as Souza (2017, p. 319) points out, it is not just about knowing minorities, but also about unveiling the "hegemonic identities naturalized as standard and normal."

Given this, it is necessary to contextualize the need for this study, an original undertaking for uniting the studies of closets with Criminology and for focusing on the reality of Minas Gerais, Brazil. I emphasize this point because the studies that deal with public security agents, crime, and sexuality, although diverse, focus on foreign realities. Some of the pioneers are "Gay Cops" by Leinen (1993) and "Coming out of the Blue" by Marc Burke (1993). Both focused on narratives of gay and lesbian police officers, the former in New York (USA) and the latter in the United Kingdom. It is important to highlight the value of these researches for their respective countries, since, after their publications, some jurisdictions in the US prohibited employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, and in the United Kingdom, police agencies became notably more receptive to the gay community (gay-friendly) (Panter, 2018).

Furthermore, considering the presence of transgender people in policing, even if minimal, there is research on the motivations for these people to join American and English institutions. Such studies also address organizational aspects, the perception of cisgender agents, occupational difficulties, and administrative issues faced by both trans police officers and trans civilians in conflict with the law (Panter, 2017; 2018).

In Brazil, research that intersects crime, sexuality, gender identity, and public security is also expanding. As reinforcement, I cite the studies of Serra (2017a, 2017b) on the judicial discourse in the criminalization of *travestis*, based on the analysis of 100 judgments from the Court of Justice of São Paulo, which led him to perceive the reproduction of *travestis* as deviant and criminal figures. In the same vein, Martins (2022) starts from a queer criminological critique to elaborate contributions on *transviado* (deviant) penal abolitionism as an alternative to the penal system. In another historical context, Lima and Hogemann (2023) observe the "hunt for LGBTQIA+" during the civic-military dictatorship, pointing out that, in the absence of formal criminalization, persecution was induced in an authoritarian and discursive manner.

In Minas Gerais, much of the research on the topic is concentrated in federal universities. Notable examples are the works of Faria (2023) and Martins (2010) at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), and those of Almeida, Souza, and Nascimento (2018) and Brito (2021), respectively at the State University of Minas Gerais (UEMG) and the Federal University of Uberlândia (UFU). These are diverse works that address "closets" in different contexts, such

as architecture, health, and social psychology, all in dialogue with other major areas, but none with a direct focus on Criminology or Public Security.

In the North of Minas Gerais, however, research within the Postgraduate Program in Social Development (PPGDS) stands out, investigating the presence of women in military institutions. Among them are the analysis of the sexual division of labor in the Fire Department (Araújo, 2011), the study on the perception of women in command positions in the Military Police (Araújo, 2022), and the analysis of the subjectivities of female police officers from the perspective of the military institutional space (Oliveira, 2020). Such works, although essential for understanding human development in the region, focus on the perspective of cisgender women and do not have sexuality as their focus. Even so, they allow for the prior identification of certain institutional closets and the importance of gender performance and conduct in these spaces.

The choice of Sedgwick's work represents the rescue of useful knowledge from the past, less common in contemporary references dominated by names like Butler or Foucault. As a defender of multiplicity, Sedgwick does not affiliate with a specific theoretical current, although she deeply inspired queer theories, affect theory, and performativity theory (Edwards, 2009; Fawaz, 2019). Her interest lay in understanding heterogeneous realities and the multiple forms they take. Instead of focusing on dichotomies, she dedicated herself to otherness itself: a deep view of the differences between subjects and, crucially, of what these subjects *do* with such differences (Fawaz, 2019). It is this perspective that proves particularly applicable to current times, in which identities and differences are often transformed into spectacle.

This specific questioning of 'what is done with the differences' intersects with the institutional discourse of control of bodies and behaviors promoted by Criminology – defined in a simplistic way as: “The scientific study of the nature, extent, cause, and control of criminal behavior” (Siegel, 2011, p. 4, My translation).

Just like Criminology, the theoretical sub-area of the closet also expands through multiple spheres, welcoming the specializations of its scholars to map its impacts on society. While the former includes researchers from Law, Sociology, Psychology, and Economics, among others (Siegel, 2011), the latter branches out through social institutions, seeking to understand its effects in schools, at work, in the police, in hospitals, in the media, and in the family - fields that, evidently, do not exhaust its possibilities (Williams, 2012).

The criminal sciences were founded under a parameter of rationality inherent to Modernity, which promised, through technology and progress, collective well-being. In this vein, social control agencies emerged as instruments to manage deviations and punish crimes,



acts considered proper of "barbarians" and seen as failures in the civilizing promise instituted by the violent colonization of peoples (Carvalho, 2013).

Criminology does not aim only to punish the transgressor, but to contextualize the crime within a complex social model that involves the delinquent, the victim, social control, criminal law, and society (Fontes; Hoffmann, 2018). Criminal law, however, is distinguished from repression, which acts to silence in a targeted way everything that bothers the State. About the repressed, one should not speak, hear, or even affirm its existence. This reductive movement results in: exclusion from profit circuits, governmental hypocrisy, pathologization, imprisonment, and the designation of a permanent space of clandestinity for practices considered impure. The response of power, as Foucault (2005, p. 10) describes, is tripartite: "prohibition, non-existence, and mutism."

In this sense, queer Criminology follows a path that intertwines with that of feminist criminologies and racial studies. Such fields were essential for the understanding of criminal phenomena that historically harmed the security of these groups and, as is the focus of this study, of the LGBTQIA+ community (lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals, transgenders, *travestis*, queer, intersex, asexuals, among other expressions), whose manifestation of sexual orientation and gender identity has remained insecure for centuries.

Criminology and queer studies have a strange connection, and can be considered dangerous bedfellows, with this bed being science itself (Dwyer; Ball; Crofts, 2016). Something that connects with what Groombridge (1999) asks: *hasn't criminology always been queer at some point?*

The supposed danger described by the authors refers mainly to the perspective through which LGBTQIA+ people were seen by societies and sciences. Researchers tended to study sexual and gender diversity as unnatural deviations that needed correction, cure, or control, treating these individuals as if they belonged to a different and sexually defective species (Groombridge, 1999).

Sexuality was not only analyzed by sexologists, but also by psychologists, psychiatrists, educators, and sociologists, all imbued with an ideal of sanitizing sex and a regulation that would make performances of desire and identity "acceptable," even if by perverse means (Miskolci, 2009). In the 19th century, while sexologists sought to identify the "inverted man" as distinct from the "normal male," criminologists classified the "criminal male" in an analogous way. Regarding women, both groups of scholars had difficulty differentiating the "normal" from lesbians and criminals. The solution found was to define, categorically, that criminal women and lesbians were masculine, based on the notion that only men possessed

markers of action and desire (Groombridge, 1999). It is evident that Criminology was built on discriminatory bases, which is especially noted in the interpretations attributed to those who commit crimes (Carvalho, 2012).

In this discussion, some subjects remain silent or only reproduce what they have been taught: public security agents. Given the importance of their role in protecting society and maintaining the State, military police officers, who deal with crime daily, can offer a unique view on what is controlled and what is permitted regarding sexuality. In other words, about what is inside or outside the institutional closet, since the very construction of the "good soldier" presupposes training, valuation of specific characteristics, and a clear distancing between civilians and military (Foucault, 2014; Huntington, 2016).

In this study, some divisions were made to facilitate the understanding of the theory and methods that are undertaken, the context in which it applies, and the data that was collected. Strategically, this research is divided into four chapters, in addition to the introduction and final considerations.

Still in this introductory moment, "Terminological Considerations" are made regarding some vocabularies and concepts that are used throughout the text, considering the genesis of closet studies being in foreign research, in addition to other names and acronyms that will be used and the motivations for them. Another moment at the beginning of this work is in the presentation of the "Debts and Inheritances" of Eve Sedgwick, in which I present the justifications for the choice of this work, and explain some criticisms and gaps that need recognition.

Chapter 2, named "A Queer Journey Through the Method," deals with the methodological process of this study. Considering that it is a work of French-style Discourse Analysis and the understanding of this in the control and structuring of social institutions in line with Closet Theory, it is important that the procedures and foundations used are well defined before proceeding to the analysis itself. I divide this section of the text into three parts: "First Mirror: Discourse Analysis"; "Second Mirror: The Method of the Closet"; "Third Mirror: Data Collection and Analysis."

Chapter 3, titled "The Epistemology of the Closet," is subdivided into three subtopics, namely: "Closets and their Skeletons"; "Double-binding system"; and "Panic and Paranoia." It deals with Sedgwick's work in perspective with the historical origin and evolution of the discourse around sexuality, and how it relates to the institutions for dealing with crime in contemporary times, in addition to highlighting the subjective reflections of closet relations on the subjects.

In Chapter 4, "Queer Criminology: Interpersonal Effects of Control," I work with what this branch involves, correlating it with the state's role, with masculinity, and policing. As subtopics in this session: "Crime and sexuality before the State and the need for a Queer Criminology," "Institutionalized masculinity and policing," and "Main evidence of the interaction between policing and sexuality."

Finally, the results of the data collection and analysis are presented in Chapter 5, named "Mirroring View: Police Perceptions of the Closet." Subdivided into "The spectacle of the closet" with a presentation of the analyses by theoretical categories; "Tangencies: lines of action and escape," with a practical materialization of the strategies developed to mitigate the harms of the closet; and "Effects on Criminology" with considerations on how these closets affect the treatment of crime and the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people involved in crimes. And then, in a specific area, the final considerations on the research process and the results found are exposed.

### **1.1. Debts and inheritances**

The transposition of a theoretical work to contexts and times distinct from its origin is an exercise that always carries risks and potentialities. No theoretical framework is free from criticism, and this applies both to Sedgwick and Foucault, Butler, Paul Preciado, and the other authors mobilized in this research. Naturally, the analyses proposed here are also subject to scrutiny. Therefore, to avoid gross interpretative misunderstandings, it is essential to acknowledge the 'debts' intellectuals incur when accepting the 'inheritance' of Eve Sedgwick's work.

The analogy that titles this section was presented to me by Professor Dr. Rafael Baioni do Nascimento during the "Gender and Diversity" course in the Graduate Program in Social Development. Inspired by the teachings of Theodor Adorno, the professor uses the terms 'debts' and 'inheritance' in a connotative sense, and the course, as a whole, significantly contributed to the development of this research. These terms do not refer to their legal or economic meaning, but rather to an intellectual balance: inheritance is the entire theoretical framework left by Eve Sedgwick, which can be used positively today; debts are the gaps and criticisms of her work, which can be revisited or filled by temporal and social transformations. Thus, those who appropriate a theoretical legacy must recognize its absences and, with that, seek to address them, mitigate them, or at least avoid repeating the original author's mistakes. Proposing a complete correction of the gaps in the closet theory would be a pretentious task, but science is

done by many hands. This dissertation is, therefore, an attempt to extract contributions from this inheritance and, from my perspective, settle some of these debts.

To this end, I adopt in this text a queer first person format. The term, which spontaneously emerged in sexuality studies, refers to writing in the first person singular that assumes and makes visible the dissident experience of the author (Edwards, 2009). Writing in queer first person means, therefore, acknowledging that the author of this study is a queer person. However, the goal is not to dissect aspects of my identity as a form of contribution but rather to add a new dissident voice to a topic I know both through academic investigation and personal experience. This methodological choice is also crucial for discourse analysis, as my own experience inevitably informs the interpretation of the data collected.

I do not present here a history of my relationship with the closet, as this is not an autobiographical study. However, Sedgwick's analysis has its limits, and it is precisely in this space that my perspective as a researcher operates to analyze the data and produce interpretations that fulfill the proposed objectives. Being a person with a dissident sexuality undoubtedly makes the writing, interviews, and elaborations on the topic come from a distinct place — just as this may also happen with the perspective of my reader.

It is important to highlight that I am neither a police officer nor a public security agent, which positions me outside these institutions and allows me to approach sensitive issues with greater detachment. In this sense, I do not intend to speak for the corporations or the agents I interviewed, but only to offer my analytical capacity as a researcher on the material provided to me.

Thus, critique and vulnerability can become powerful tools for scientific production. Through this writing, I realized that the academic spaces I have frequented and the familial, romantic, fraternal, and work-related contacts I have had are filled with closets and violence, some more explicit than others. However, I also found many alternatives for confronting and subjugating these control devices: friends who promptly came out, others who never felt the need to, tactical plans for coming out, constant reaffirmations, self-control of performance, difficulties at work, dangerous relationships, psychological and physical hideouts...

The exposure of the debts and inheritances I propose in this section is a writing strategy that aims not only to avoid the repetition of theoretical errors but also to include experiences that were not, or could not be, contemplated by the authors used here.

The criticisms directed at Eve Sedgwick and her work, *Epistemology of the Closet*, stem mainly from the period of its release, but not only from it. The 1990s, which followed the publication, was a turning point in the fight for safe expression of sexuality and gender identity,

especially in light of the 'AIDS crisis' and the intensification of civil rights debates (Garcia, 2018). Academically, the moment was crucial for the rise of the writer, who became highly sought after in universities. However, the attacks were not always directed at her work, but often at what she represented as an activist. The change in academia was interpreted as the cause of transformations in Western sexual life.

Initially, Sedgwick's work caused estrangement in academic circles of the time, but more grounded opinions emerged later. Despite the undeniable influence of the book on Queer Theories, it is notable that its arguments did not reach the mainstream academic community with the same force as Judith Butler's, for example (Silva, 2019). This, however, does not diminish the impact of the closet theory. On the contrary, I note the relevance of its topics by observing that one of the most compelling arguments in the social body (or at least in liberal gay circles) is that 'if you were born this way, then it's okay,' precisely the minoritizing view that the theorist problematizes (Sedgwick, 1990; Garcia, 2018).

One criticism made to the arguments of the book was regarding the excessive use of heterosexuality as a reference to describe sexuality in the 20th century. Goldberg (2021), the author of the critique, later retracted, recognizing that his initial reading was a misinterpretation of an argument that, being powerful, was difficult to comprehend. He came to understand that the constant linkage of the term 'homosexual' to 'heterosexual' did not mean that the former was not self-sufficient in the lexicon of the time, but was, in fact, a way to demonstrate how intertwined both identities were.

Moreover, the work of the American critic is sometimes considered superficial in relation to lesbian experiences. By distancing herself from certain strands of feminism in sexuality studies, Sedgwick reaffirms the need for new approaches, distinct from a purely feminist perspective (Sedgwick, 1990). And although she focuses her efforts on the analysis of male sexuality and sociality, she reiterates the importance of considering the sexual spectrum in its entirety, whether male, female, or neither (Garcia, 2018).

This interpretation stems mainly from the author's focus on homosociality (the social relationship between men) and homosexuality (desire between men), especially in her book "Between Men" (1985). Although both works focus on the male sphere, they do not fail to contemplate the position of women in society as a consequence of these relationships. In the introduction to *Epistemology*, while discussing terminology, the author herself acknowledges identification issues with terms (such as women who love women and define themselves as lesbians but not as gay). She clarifies that when referring to 'homosexuality,' she makes no gender distinction but refers to the phenomenon of desire between people of the same sex.

Sedgwick explains that part of the confusion stems from the false etymology linking the prefix to the Latin term *homo* (man), when, in fact, it derives from the Greek *homos*, which means 'same.'

Axiom 2 of “Epistemology of the Closet” aids in understanding this distinction by proposing: 'The study of sexuality is not coextensive with the study of gender; correspondingly, the anti-homophobic investigation is not coextensive with feminist investigation. But we cannot know beforehand how they will differ' (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 27, our translation). In short, the logic is that not all discussions of sexuality will be analogous to feminist agendas, especially those of the radical feminist strand. The author continues, explaining that, while there are similar questions in both fields, the answers will not be equally useful for both. One can think, therefore, of lesbian sexuality: it has specific issues that are not identical to those of gay men, bisexuals, or transgender people, and starting investigations from other frameworks can be a fruitful path.

The following Axiom 3 recognizes the difficulty in conceptualizing gay and lesbian identities, whether together or separately. Although it may seem contradictory, the naming of these groups is what grants them the condition of existence. At the same time, this classification process must be cautious to avoid homogenizing individuals and their respective agendas (Silva, 2019; Sedgwick, 1990). In other words, each letter and symbol in the LGBTQIA+ acronym represents a unique identity with specific needs, but an absolute separation of these constructions can be counterproductive in political and theoretical realms.

Another essential point of criticism to highlight is the relationship of Queer Theories, especially Sedgwick's work, with race. Although this strand of studies is proposed as an 'umbrella' for all dissidences — with exponents such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Letícia Nascimento, and Tatiana Nascimento, an analysis of the more prominent theorists of the movement, such as Sedgwick, Butler, and Paul Preciado, reveals that race is often only cited, and not deeply contemplated (Weimer, 2021). The criticisms of Sedgwick on this point are not unfounded. Her cultural analyses mention the racial issue, but the central discussion does not seem to be truly influenced by it. Ross (2005), for example, points out that the fixation on the concept of the closet as a starting point for sexuality studies can exclude racial perspectives on the very 'inside/outside' dynamics. The author critiques this excessive centrality, which he calls 'claustrophilia.' However, Ross does not only criticize but also emphasizes the immense potential that the intersection of these areas can bring to social development.

This gap motivates comparisons between Sedgwick's elaborations and those of Teresa De Lauretis, another exponent of Queer Theories. Both are seen as authors who, despite

mentioning race, promote a research focus that does not deeply address it. Far from invalidating their contributions, this absence raises important questions about the very possibility of analyzing the mechanism of the closet without considering class and race aspects (Ross, 2005; Weiner, 2021). The theory has not yet fully delineated the contours of whiteness, but the relationship this concept establishes with homonormativity, liberalism, and queer assimilation politics is a crucial topic for thinking about more inclusive epistemologies.

Unfortunately, when considering the *methodological corpus* of this work, the interviews practically do not cover racial themes, which made it impossible to analyze topics in this sense. Therefore, despite considering the criticisms directed at the author and the context (from Minas Gerais) of the interviewees, I see that there is still an absence at this point.

Despite these theoretical gaps, the importance of Queer Theories as tools for subversion and understanding dissident reality is undeniable. After all, the complexity of identities goes beyond a single axis: trans and intersex people can be heterosexual; bisexuals can relate to people of the opposite sex or not be in any relationship; asexuals may or may not engage in romantic relationships. All these people, in their singularities, can also be crossed by violences based on race and class. Academically, reflecting on the diverse identities that seek recognition today, I perceive the different ways in which 'sexuality devices' (Foucault, 2005) adapt to social institutions, manifesting uniquely in each instance, depending on multiple physical and performative markers.

The “sphere of the body” defined by race becomes over time (moments, days, weeks, decades, centuries?) the model for other “new identities of bodies” defined by something other than race: gender, sexuality, class, criminality, etc. The abstraction of “the body” into a further abstraction of its “sphere”—currently a customary and necessary way of talking about these problems in academe—has the effect of covering over how a single person’s body could, from the outset (that is, at the originary moment within the nineteenth century or whenever), be seen as carrying both visible and invisible markers of more than one identity discourse already interfused and embodied in that single person. (Ross, 2005, p. 135, free translation).

One of Sedgwick's (1990) positions on race lies in her attempt to define sex, gender, and sexuality in a chain: race should be understood through class; class, in turn, analyzed through gender; and gender, finally, interpreted through the specificities of sexuality. This hierarchical formulation, however, is not without objections and has motivated criticism regarding how prominent Queer movement theorists, such as Sedgwick, Butler, and Preciado, often only cite race, without fully addressing it (Weimer, 2021).

In contrast to Sedgwick's view, authors such as Gloria Anzaldúa (2005) propose the inseparability of these elements. Anzaldúa expands the notion of queer beyond sexuality,

interpreting it as a 'borderland' where differences merge to constitute subjects of multiple compositions. For her, queer is, by essence, racialized - a view certainly influenced by her origin as a Chicana woman.

In Brazil, a potent example of this intersection is Tatiana Nascimento's (2018) 'cuiérlombismo.' It is a conceptual decolonization that evolves from 'queerlombismo' and 'quilombismo' by Abdias do Nascimento (2020), functioning as a strategy for deconstructing heterocisnormativity through black narratives and epistemologies.

The relevance of this discussion intensifies when we look at crime data in Brazil. Black and transgender people continue to be the most victimized, even within the professional class of police officers (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2023). Vulnerability is even greater for those who do not have full social recognition, especially if they are black and peripheral (Medeiros; De Castro; Siqueira, 2022). Adding to these data, the statement that 'queer is born racialized' (Weiner, 2021, p. 208) highlights the crucial intersection of these issues. Ignoring such markers in the analysis, therefore, represents a profound epistemological loss.

This loss occurs because the paradigm of 'coming out,' when interpreted as an exclusively white phenomenon, triggers a binary and comparative notion. It associates being 'out of the closet' with progress and being 'in' with backwardness, making the development of the individual measured by their psychosocial freedom in relation to the social body or even the minority they belong to. This narrative, however, stems from predominantly European experiences and does not accommodate other realities and experiences (Ross, 2005). This is the case in Brazil, specifically in Minas Gerais, a context marked by deep colonial, Christian, and patriarchal influence, where such differences must be considered in analysis (Cardoso Júnior et al., 2022).

Despite the criticisms presented here of Eve Sedgwick's closet studies, her work remains extremely relevant for investigation and observation. As scholars of the topic well point out, the closet is an invisible and broad tool that, nonetheless, does not become less oppressive or imperceptible.

## **1.2 Terminological considerations**

This research engages with the main interest of linguistics with a queer perspective: understanding the ways in which common expressions and statements about sexuality become acceptable and considered under organic, correct and obvious notions (Leap, 2015). Under this



interest, scholars seek to understand institutionalized organizations of normative authority and dominant power, as taught by Foucault (2005).

The problem of this investigation is concentrated precisely on this point: What effects do the institutional discourses of the Military Police lockers have on the treatment of crime? Therefore, contextualizing the speech is essential for understanding this space and its social reflections. After all, “(...) language makes my subjectivity “more real” not only for my interlocutor but also for myself” (Berger; Luckmann, 2004, p. 58).

This prelude aims to present the need for a specific topic to explain the terms used and the reasons why they were chosen to express the ideas present. The rupture that occurs with each attempt to subvert reality can begin with the use of language as a positive and beneficial point for the emancipation of limitations, however the criticism that falls on the possibility of the non-existence of limits conflicts with the idea of an objective and technical science (Williams, 2012; Elbert, 2010).

The theoretical “novelty” represented by the criminological approach focused on sexuality requires a primary understanding of the term “queer.” This is a vernacular term in the English language that has been used by social sciences in contemporary theories with a new meaning, given that in its original form it refers to something strange, odd, or even original. Previously, the term was attributed in a pejorative way to people whose social performance did not conform to the heterosexual standard, in an aggressive sense, just as in Portuguese we have: “veado,” “bicha,” “boiola,” “sapatão,” and “gay.” However, by adopting these terms to describe a new way of viewing criminology, the intended perspective is political and theoretical, of redefining words whose interpretation was negative, and which will now serve as a scientific reminder of the discrimination that preceded the studies (Carvalho, 2012; Louro, 2008).

It is not an easy term to describe, which can be summarized in a few words, but it has an abstract basis that requires sensitivity and perhaps a little poetry (and experience) to at least try. It can represent a place where the private becomes public, but also the means of transforming public concerns into private ones, or vice versa (Sellberg, 2019).

Queer is all of this: it is strange, rare, weird. Queer is also the subject of deviant sexuality – homosexuals, bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, *drag queens*. It is the eccentric who does not wish to be “integrated” and much less “tolerated”. Queer is a way of thinking and being that does not aspire to the center nor does it want it as a reference; a way of thinking and being that defies the regulatory norms of society, that assumes the discomfort of ambiguity, of the “in-between places”, of the undecidable. Queer is a strange body, that bothers, disturbs, provokes and fascinates (Louro, 2008, p. 7-8).

There is a significant double path of the term, being that, at first, it encompasses this new way of thinking, a way of living and being that escapes the centrality and normality established by regulatory social norms, especially those of a heterocisnormative nature, adhering to the transgression of ambiguities, even though it is not tolerated or assimilated by the system (Louro, 2016). On the other hand, the term can be an alternative to the name of the group constituted by subjects whose gender identity and sexual orientation are considered “diverse” or dissident – this possibility being more problematic and difficult to manage when it comes to the discussion of identity (Souza, 2017).

Eder Van Pelt (2022) criticizes the emptying and sanitization that the term has received, especially in contact with Law, a more formal area, which, by nature, would not encompass all the subversive character that the term proposes. The author understands that:

assuming oneself as *queer* is like putting oneself in the position of 'non-being', it is not identifying oneself within the way in which recognition policies are developing, it is a revolt against the expansion of the *status quo*, which has been expanding without being able to encompass all those marginalized by the system” (Van Pelt, 2022, p. 62, free translation).

In the course of this research, and given the institutional difficulties of encountering transsexual, transvestite, intersexual, and asexual people in the Military Police, in addition to the difficulty in naming desire, I use both the term *queer* and the acronym LGBTQIA+ to represent the identities that I explore here. The 'alphabet soup', as it is pejoratively called, expands and seeks to encompass sexual orientations and gender identities that do not fit into heterosexual and cisgender normativity.

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I consider and admire the expansion of Queer Theories as an instrument for studying the normal and the abnormal, as taught by Sedgwick (1990). Therefore, I understand that the trivialization of the term *queer* can be detrimental to the continued expansion of this area, as highlighted by Van Pelt (2022). In this investigation, I even focus on people of dissident sexuality in public security, however, I understand that there are hegemonic identities in the

organizations that make up this public sector that also need to be identified and problematized, since:

All forms of identities need to be understood as power devices that organize society through the establishment of hegemonic systems of binary logic about what is normal and what is abnormal, constructing discursive categories, identities and hierarchies between subjects (Souza, 2017, p. 319, free translation).

I choose to use both terms as a way to avoid compromising this study with identities that are not yet included or do not feel included. Therefore, I emphasize from the outset that I do not intend to homogenize an identity in a single word, but to maintain a critical position regarding the universalization of identity categories (Nascimento, 2019; Souza, 2017). Given the context of removing the opacity that this work has, limiting some analyses to the rigid use of experiences that are only within my reach may hide others that are not yet contemplated by studies and recognition policies.

As a verb, the term embodies a subversive call that enchants, but that subverts the very logic of the term. Just like Van Pelt (2022), who felt “queered” when he began reading about the theories, I became deeply interested in a topic that spoke to me – but to what extent am I the *queer* they speak of? To what extent do I use *queer*, and to what extent does it use me? At what point do I become a product seen in this word?

Who is afraid of “queer theory” these days? Outside of the university environment, I would browse Netflix and Spotify and come across the new queer, the big rainbow-colored umbrella reinterpreted by neoliberalism and the capitalism of digital platforms that now contained within itself all the letters of the LGBTQIA+ alphabet. We queered queers and transvestites. We queered country music and love songs. Queer series can be accessed anywhere in the world. Love is queer and now we can all be happy. Big companies have also become queer. Capitalism is queer. How much does it cost to be queer? (Van Pelt, 2022, p. 22-23, free translation)

These are questions that can map a colonized perspective of the term and its uses. Furthermore, in addition to focusing on theory alone, queer has political weight. One of the possibilities of meaning would be this already explored “(...) open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of someone’s gender, or someone’s sexuality, are not made (or cannot be made) to signify monolithically.” (Sedgwick, 2011, p. 200-201). An alternative, and one that adheres to what I think, is to view queer as beyond sexuality and gender, but with race, ethnicity and coloniality as constituents of identity (Sedgwick, 2011).

Furthermore, Sedgwick (2011) adds that it can refer to new forms and meanings in which discourses and organizations can be freer in their relationships, with the constant possibility of crossing unnecessary boundaries, rather than reinforcing them. Despite being a utopian form of academic thought, *queer* is anti-separatist and anti-assimilationist, unlike the sanitized meaning of gay and lesbian (white and cisgender) by neoliberalism.

Having defined the multiple faces of queer, I move on to another terminological consideration at the heart of these theoretical and feminist discussions: the interpretation of sex, gender, and sexuality. A task undertaken by Butler (2010), Sedgwick (1990), Preciado (2022), and many others, and which has become a controversial and volatile act, see Miskolci's (2021) position on the very notion of cisgender as opposed to transsexuality, which has made her persona non grata in some debate spaces; or the problematization of the term "sexual orientation" by Butler (2010) and bell hooks, raised by Faria (2023, p. 111): "after all, we may not have total agency over our sexuality, but no one is born sexually oriented toward anything either." Furthermore, "talking about sexuality has become a lurking monster that could undermine all the supposed good relationships established between society and the family structure" (Silva, 2019, p. 26), therefore, each term, definition and positioning can culminate in a political strategy favorable or contrary to what is defended (Nascimento, 2019).

These are concepts in a constant state of dispute over knowledge-power (Foucault, 2005), with various areas of study incessantly seeking a definition that perfectly encompasses their understanding, and consequently, social institutions reproduce them (Louro, 2000; Gomes Filho; Santos; Silva, 2017). After all, "the legal structures of language and politics constitute the contemporary field of power; consequently, there is no position outside this field, only a critical genealogy of its own legitimation practices" (Butler, 2018, p.16).

This sexual division of bodies allows for an asymmetrical notion of what is physical, and, consequently, of everything that derives from it – a reductionist idea that triggers the isolation of reproductive sexual organs as a tool for domestic imposition on women, subjection of the workforce and assignment of socio-reproductive roles in a system that benefits the male sexual organ as the source of sexual impulse, and the female erotic surface as a mere receptor (Preciado, 2014; Butler, 2018). This polymorphic discursive power over sexual definitions would be what Foucault (2005) calls the "truth of sex".

Following the logic that human beings tend to identify as belonging to one of two genders, and that a person's genitals are exclusively linked to the sexual desire they have, we have a system in which 'male' babies will grow into men who desire women and 'female' babies will grow into women who desire men, this system is heteronormativity (Lee, 2011).

In this system, the use of genitals, the identification of chromosomes and characteristics attributed only to men and women, everything must be in perfect agreement for reproduction with partners of the opposite sex (Lee, 2011). Some effects of these systems affect intersex babies, for example, who face surgeries and hormonal treatments to maintain alignment with the heteronormative system. Another consequence is in the sexual reassignment procedures, often interpreted as sinful or even "necessary" to maintain the genital-sex-gender-sexual partner correlation. Thus, in addition to naming biological inconsistencies, medical knowledge is ready to correct them (Gomes Filho; Santos; Silva, 2017).

Sexual organs, at least as they are currently recognized, are intrinsically linked to sex, and this also results from the heterosexual machinery, which, as technology, inscribes bodies in a context of meaning, naturalization and immobilization of these concepts. Paul Preciado (2014) indicates that the very architecture of everyday life, of people and institutions is the result of "space-time delimitations" that create a sexual context that helps to perpetuate the binary order between homo/hetero, private/public, social/intimate, among others.

The heterosexual system is a social device for the production of femininity and masculinity that operates through division and fragmentation of the body; it cuts out organs and generates zones of high sensory and motor intensity (visual, tactile, olfactory...) that it then identifies as natural and anatomical centers of sexual difference (Preciado, 2014, p. 25, free translation).

Gayle Rubin (1975) calls the creation and self-justification of gender roles in a given society the "sex-gender system." Behaviors do not need to "make sense" to others, only to those who practice them. Therefore, when we think of Brazil, there is a specific system that differs from others, even Western ones, such as the valorization of sexual performance as a definition of sexuality in the country: the one who penetrates (active) is socially read as masculine, while the one who is penetrated (passive) refers to the feminine (Nanda, 2000). Observing this example, there is a lesser focus on sexual organs as gender definers, which is what Lee (2011) sees in the act of some transvestites having no intention whatsoever of undergoing sex reassignment surgery.

These cases are supported by Butler (2018), who reflects on this pre-discursive character attributed to sex, that is, that it is a category defined only by the biological, of an immutable and indisputable nature. The author offers the following interpretation: "sex is as culturally constructed as gender" (p. 25), thus, what we consider to be sex is a reflection of the discourses that normalize some bodies and identities. In this sense, sex and gender are on a fine line of distinction.

Butler (2018) also makes an important distinction between gender and sex. The former is understood as a social construction of norms, while the latter is a biologically determinant category. However, sex can also be interpreted as the former, being a discursive tangle that reproduces symbolisms and controls differently for different types of people. This is a similar argument to the one Sedgwick (1990) proposes in relation to sexuality – both promoting a scientific discourse that contradicts essentialist and biological-determinant theories (Garcia, 2018).

Thus, we can consider gender identities as ways of reclaiming oneself, even if they contradict the assigned biological sex (Gomes Filho; Santos; Silva, 2017) and alternatives to breaking the logic of sexed bodies in binary structures (Butler, 2018).

Butler's (2002) interpretation of Sedgwick's work reiterates the argument that dissonant relations between gender and sexuality should play a primary role for those who study the subject. There is no structural connection or causal link that can define and position these concepts in a fixed and completely relational manner. In other words, there are differences between gender and sexuality - one does not necessarily need to define the other - and these differences are the residual data that is important for understanding how discourses influence each other when it comes to these topics.

A central problematization in Epistemology concerns how dealing with sexual orientation has suddenly become similar to defining a person exclusively as homosexual or heterosexual. This matrix of interpretation is limited and fails to contemplate a significant number of dimensions regarding people's expressions of sexuality, some of which are described by Sedgwick (1990, p. 25-26, free translation):

- Even identical genital acts mean very different things to different people.
- For some people, the nimbus of the "sexual" seems hardly to extend beyond the confines of discreet genital acts; for others, it loosely surrounds them or floats virtually free of them.
- Sexuality makes up a large part of some people's self-perceived identity, a small part of others.
- Some people spend a lot of time thinking about sex, others spend little time.
- Some people like to have a lot of sex, others little or none.
- Many people have their richest mental or emotional involvement with sexual acts that they do not do or even do not want to do.
- For some people, it is important that sex be inserted into contexts full of meaning, narrative and connection with other aspects of their lives; for other people, it is important that it is not; there are others to whom it does not occur that it could be.
- For some people, the preference for a particular sexual object, act, role, zone or scenario is so long-standing and enduring that it can only be experienced as innate; for others, it seems to come late or seems random or discretionary.
- For some people, the prospect of bad sex is unpleasant enough that their lives are heavily marked by avoiding it; for others, it is not.

- For some people, sexuality provides a necessary space of heightened discovery and cognitive hyperstimulation. For others, sexuality provides a necessary space of routine, habituation, and cognitive hiatus.
- Some people like spontaneous sex scenes, some people like highly scripted scenes, some people like spontaneous scenes that are nevertheless completely predictable.
- Some people's sexual orientation is intensely marked by autoerotic pleasures and stories - sometimes more than by any aspect of alloerotic object choice. For others, the autoerotic possibility seems secondary or fragile, if it exists at all.
- Some people, homo, hetero and bisexual, experience their sexuality as deeply rooted in a matrix of gender meanings and differentials. Others of each sexuality do not.

The list (which is not exhaustive) presented by Sedgwick (1990) reaffirms what Berger and Luckmann (2004) elaborate on the constitution of man and his sexuality. Human sexuality is distinguished by being highly flexible, whether in relation to time, the object of desire, or the ways of expressing oneself. “Ethnological evidence shows that in sexual matters man is capable of anything” (Berger; Luckmann, 2004, p. 72), after all he can stimulate himself through imagination, and is not internally limited by norms that may guide a community of which he is not a part. Thus:

If the term “normality” must refer either to what is anthropologically fundamental or to what is culturally universal, then neither this term nor its antonym can be meaningfully applied to the variable forms of human sexuality. At the same time, of course, human sexuality is directed, sometimes in a rigidly structured manner, in each particular culture. Every culture has a distinctive sexual configuration, with its own specialized patterns of sexual conduct and its “anthropological” assumptions in the sexual area. The empirical relativity of these configurations, their immense variety and exuberant inventiveness indicate that they are products of man’s own socio-cultural formations and not of a biologically fixed human nature (Berger; Luckmann, 2004, p. 73, free translation).

These multiple dimensions of sexual expression in a person's life should serve as a parameter for thinking about other forms, not as an exclusive list. However, it is important to note that considering expressing “sexuality” only as “gender of the object of desire” substantially affects the expansion of this movement (Sedgwick, 2011) or even observing an isolated space as a rule of general application (Rubin, 1975; Lee, 2011; Berger; Luckmann, 2004).

I believe that words can be mere words when detached from context, but as I intend to demonstrate, they also construct reality, including subjectivities. Whether good or bad, terms carry meanings whose social and, mainly, academic importance must be analyzed. Continuing with the metaphor, the closet is filled with words, not like colorful and decorative stickers that we can stick to the door, but like nails that pierce its occupant and shape behavior – perhaps an “Iron Lady” is more visible than what I want to demonstrate than thinking about a common wardrobe.

Before delving into the theoretical perspective and beginning to make contributions to the field of Queer Criminology, I will now explain the method I used to achieve the results I present throughout this dissertation, with the aim of making it possible to visualize the path I took and to facilitate understanding.

## 2. A JOURNEY THROUGH THE METHOD

The idea of a 'journey' in the title was inspired by Guacira Lopes Louro's (2008, p. 13) analogy about "displacement, uprooting and transit". When discussing the 'postmodern subject', the author uses the image of a trajectory to sensitively highlight the importance of the *path* taken, not just the destination. I perceive a direct similarity with scientific work and, especially, with methodological construction. In this process, detours, resummptions and crossroads are frequent, finding balance only in the movement of progress itself.

Travel transforms the body, the “character”, the identity, the way of being and living... Its transformations go beyond changes in the surface of the skin, aging, the acquisition of new ways of seeing the world, people and things. The changes that travel brings can affect bodies and identities in dimensions that are apparently defined and decided since birth (or even before) (Louro, 2008, p. 15, free translation).

The gayness, however, I bring from home and from the fun handling of words that I saw in an article by Gomes Filho, Santos and Silva (2017) about *via(da)* gens in concepts of sexuality, sex and gender.<sup>1</sup>

The production context of *Epistemology of the Closet* coincides with the rise of cultural studies and the growing influence of theorists such as Foucault and Derrida. However, a notable challenge of this period, according to Garcia (2018), lay precisely in defining *what type* of literature would be most useful for ongoing critical endeavors.

It was in this stability of structuralist studies that Sedgwick found an opportunity to explore new ways of criticizing and elaborating the theory of the closet, and to influence many others. The theorist proceeded to analyze works of great impact in English literature, seeking evidence for the argument that all aspects of Western modernity should consider the influence of the homo/hetero binomial and others. However, the singularity lies in the fact that the books did not explicitly deal with queer characters or have authors with “open” dissident sexuality. Thus, the queer was extracted from the closet of literature.

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<sup>1</sup> The title of this section in Portuguese is “Via(da)gem pelo método”, a playword using the words *viagem* (journey) and *viadagem* (which refers to the slang “viado”, commonly used to describe gay men).



There are several classic works in Brazilian literature that could serve this purpose, perhaps even books from Minas Gerais, but I consider that this type of work would be counterproductive given the cultural differences between the realities of the global North and the writing of the 19th and 20th centuries and would not serve the purpose I am undertaking.

In a lecture in Ochanomizu University in Japan, later published in the work "Weather in Proust" (2011), Eve Sedgwick reported that she believed that two principles guided her life and thought. The first of these would be a denial of dualism, and the second would be impatience with separatism of any kind. I am inspired by these principles and am driven to present the method that I will use in this work, under the belief that homogenizing groups, intellectually and politically, is a retrograde act, and that:

(...) The only predictable thing about the landscapes of critical thought is how they change—constantly and almost kaleidoscopically. With each new twist of the kaleidoscope, a particular theoretical orientation will reveal new useful relevances and, unfortunately, new ways of being off-point. (Sedgwick, 2011, p. 191, free translation).

In this kaleidoscope that I propose as a methodological path, I will divide this session into three parts - three mirrors in which I hope to reflect the procedures that will support what I present. The subtopics will deal with: French Discourse Analysis; the theoretical categories of the work *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) and the construction of the interview script; and finally, how the data collection and analysis were carried out in the face of criminological analysis.

## **2.1. First Mirror: Discourse Analysis**

To discuss the criticisms that can be made of science, Herbert (1966) subdivides this act into two spheres: internal and external. Internal criticism refers to the exercise of those who, with in-depth knowledge of an area, criticize it without going beyond its imposed limits, since there is no need or intention to understand spaces outside the field in order to solve the problems that are proposed. On the other hand, there is external criticism, understood as the observation of science in its relationship with "the rest". In this, a neutral observer is assumed (a role often attributed to philosophy) who, endowed with multiple knowledge and a critical conscience in his own training, could analyze the internal from the external.

This evaluative philosophy, however, has been criticized for acting strategically to shape or transform certain types of science. Without going into the merits of these attitudes, we can

start with the idea that, regarding the social sciences, this strategic action persists, since neutrality is unattainable. On the contrary, the researcher is faced with the interests of his or her own field of study (Herbert, 1966). It was in this context that the human and social sciences found themselves needing to reformulate concepts previously considered fixed, such as those of subject, ideology, language and history, so that the formalization of language itself and its effects could be analyzed.

As an example, Panter (2018), a scholar of transgender police officers, highlights the need he had to alternate between the positions of *insider*, *outsider* and *in-between*. This mobility allowed him to obtain the data in the least disrespectful and most productive way possible, without compromising scientific rigor and, at the same time, without assuming neutrality in the face of the facts.

In the panorama presented by Herbert (1966), it is possible to note the dispute for the hegemony of discourses, as explained in the criminological context by Zaffaroni (2012) and Lyra Filho (1972). Considering my position in the Social Sciences and the lack of neutrality that permeates this study, I now present how my Discourse Analysis methodology was carried out. To this end, it is important to first contextualize what Discourse Analysis is about and then focus on the French strand and the reasons for its use.

Furthermore, a well-founded methodological procedure is crucial, given the historical difficulties of accepting this method in the academic environment, marked by a hegemonically positivist construction (Couto; Carrieri, 2022). The same issues are highlighted by Machado (2023) when describing the search for space for this strand of study in Brazil in the 1990s. It is under this same notion of resistance that I reiterate the "vulnerable methodology" character of this work, in the terms of Saraiva (2023). In this sense, the presentation of the *queer experience* for research purposes does not imply a scientific loss, but rather a contribution to movements that seek to overcome positivist limitations in universities.

As an initial premise of Discourse Analysis, it is assumed that human beings construct themselves and the environment around them. As they understand the space in which they live and who they are in relation to others, a need arises that transcends the biological, demonstrating how the social order of the world precedes that which constitutes it "naturally" (Berger; Luckmann, 2004). It is to meet this need for order that linguistic signs present themselves as the main instrument of creation and reproduction of that which is internalized by the subject.

In the structure of reality, there are several ways of managing individuals. The space that is proposed as a manager also defines what is possible and what is impossible, with the aim of controlling and getting as close to the "real" as language allows (Pêcheux, 2006). As an

example given by Pêcheux himself, it would be impossible, linguistically, for a person to be "single and married" at the same time. In terms of gender, in the past, it would have been equally impossible for a person to be "man and woman" at the same time. These are ideas that are easy to visualize and, therefore, easily assimilated. But are they, in fact, real?

These propositions, socially constructed within institutions and motivated by experts who hold knowledge, classify, compare and separate what is and what cannot be. They thus constitute discursive spaces in which everyone knows what is being said, since there are structures behind speech that do not need to be said (Pêcheux, 2006).

Pêcheux (2006), however, argues that the responsibility for these classifications is not solely and exclusively that of the experts who impose them. According to the author, there is a universal human need to ensure control over the "real", limiting it with boundaries that prevent failures to happiness or to the biological constitution itself. It is in this desire for order that space opens up for the "entry of discourse".

Discourse Analysis (DA) represents a broad area that seeks to reveal the meaning behind what is said explicitly; in other words, it assumes that speech hides something beyond what is initially perceived. DA does not claim to be the only correct path for interpretation, but it seeks to contribute to contemporary hermeneutics by starting from the principle that there is a hidden meaning to be revealed in any field of analysis. Its objective is to equip the researcher with techniques that fulfill this purpose (Maingueneau, 1997) and, as Batinga and Saraiva (2022) add, not only to provide tools, but also to expand the theoretical and methodological foundation of the analyses.

Maingueneau (1997) differentiates what would be "Discourse Analysis" from the idea that a discourse is any combination of words with meaning. He points out that Linguistics, as a field of study, tends to be closed in relation to disciplines of social attention, such as Social Sciences, History and Psychology, while these, in turn, maintain a more intense dialogue with each other. What we have is a differentiation in the meaning of the term "language" for each of these areas. In Linguistics, language represents a set of formalizations with specific characteristics; on the "disciplinary periphery", the term refers to language contextualized to the field, the subject, the social body and the history in which it is inserted. It is to this last representation that DA sticks. Evidently, this duality creates a hierarchy, in which Linguistics defends the rigidity of its core, while the other disciplines understand that language is constituted both by firm rules and by subjective and social crossings.

Maingueneau (1997) also criticizes how the expansion of the French school of Discourse Analysis itself has made it difficult to disseminate its limits. The disciplinary

adaptation nature of the area disrupts the delimitation of what is and what is not DA, because, when dialoguing with other fields, the discourse is fed by concepts that are external to it. Thus, if analyzed from the perspective of psychology, the discourse will be permeated by the concepts of this area, modifying itself according to the multiple branches and aspects with which it establishes a relationship.

To define which discourses DA focuses on, Maingueneau (1997, p. 13-14, free translation) highlights that the analysis will focus on those produced in specific contexts, such as those that occur: "within the framework of institutions that strongly restrict enunciation; in which historical, social, etc. conflicts crystallize; which delimit a specific space outside a limited interdiscourse".

Discourse Analysis is interested in discursive formations constituted in specific contexts. Its observation is not literal and direct on words, but involves the socio-historical positions in which the *corpus* was constituted. In other words, it is not only contextualized rules or texts that are of interest to DA, but the inseparable set of them. In the apparent infinity of objects that a discourse analysis can encompass, the French school adopts a methodical approach, worrying only about those discourses that permeate a community in its own context. It is based on this that the choice of DA as an appropriate methodology for the study of institutional cabinets in the Military Police of Minas Gerais becomes evident, since it is a defined field of investigation, with a collectivity modulated by an institutional organization, a historicity and a discourse of its own.

To operationalize a French-style Discourse Analysis, elements of Linguistics are commonly used, but not restricted to them. The idea is that there is a theoretical construction that adequately supports the interpretation that will be carried out - in this case, Eve Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990). However, some conceptual elements of the method itself stand out in the application of the techniques, which I will present below.

The first central concept to highlight is 'discourse' itself. Although it has already been addressed, it is worth reiterating that its rigid definition is a difficulty recognized by the authors. This complexity becomes evident when we observe its recurring need for support in other theories in order to be operationalized. The resource used by Maingueneau (1977) refers to *discursive formations*, in the terms of Foucault (2008), and to discursive surfaces in Pêcheux (2006).

Discursive formations name statements that have similarity in terms of the dispersion system or a certain regularity and ordering in terms of the type, concept, and thematic choice of the enunciation (Foucault, 2008). Discursive surfaces name the multiplicity of statements

produced in a single context, as well as the normative set that will allow the interpretation of these statements in this singular condition.

One point made by Maingueneau (1997) that applies to this work is that, for some discourse analysts, a position that I adopt here, the institutional complex in which the statement is produced is considered the central point where the discursive surface manifests itself. These concepts reinforce the relevance of Discourse Analysis (DA) for organizational studies (Batinga; Saraiva, 2022; Carrieri et al., 2006; Couto; Carrieri, 2022), especially in research that addresses the intersection between organization and criminality (Borghi, 2021).

Regarding the practice of the method itself, there are some important aspects that will be analyzed together with the theoretical categories (presented in the next topic). Below are the elements of the operationalization of AD, which were observed in the interviewees' statements:

- The condition of discourse production, and the positions that the subject takes to elaborate it;
- Imaginary, ideological and discursive formations;
- Interdiscursivity and intradiscursivity;
- Ideological and enunciative forgetfulness;
- Paraphrase, polysemy and ideology.

Orlandi (2000) highlights that there is no language without slips, so there will always be room for interpretation. This statement dialogues with the process of producing meanings at its core, since this slip (whether by metaphor, paraphrase or displacement) highlights the presence of another possibility in speech that is not said. It is therefore necessary to understand why.

The condition of production of meaning concerns the context in which the discourse is produced, and is therefore proof of the historicity and ideology in the text. In other words, there are linguistic relations of power that permeate the subjects and allow us to see that history gives the present meaning, but also allows it to be modified into another (Orlandi, 2000).

In addition to the discursive formations explained previously under Foucault's theorizations (2008), the materialization of the conditions of production creates a mechanism that allows the subject to imagine himself within the context in which he speaks – these are imaginary formations. Thus:

It is therefore an entire imaginary game that allows the exchange of words. And if we bring anticipation into play, this game becomes even more complex because it will include: the image that the speaker has of the image that his interlocutor has of him, the image that the interlocutor has of the image that he has of the object of the discourse and so on (Orlandi, 2000, p. 40, free translation).

This anticipation of images in the context allows the subject to question who he represents, what he says and what is said to him, and what is being said. With this, it is possible for individuals to change positions through their own imagination, taking the place of another who does not represent him, but who he assumes thinks in a certain way.

On the other hand, in the relationship between text and discourse there are two sides that constitute communication, and which, in the face of any ideological or technological transformation (of signs), can be transformed in terms of enunciative condition and at the center of the relationship itself (Maingueneau, 2015).

Thus, a set of speeches, behaviors and manifestations of the individual that are produced in a socio-historical context constitute an ideological formation, and motivate the discursive formation of what can or cannot be said (Orlandi, 2000).

It is ideology that provides the evidence by which “everyone knows” what a soldier, a worker, a boss, a factory, a strike, etc. is, evidence that makes a word or a statement “mean what it really says” and that masks, (...) (Pêcheux, 1997, p. 160, free translation).

With this, Pêcheux (1997) presents interdiscourse and intradiscourse as dimensions that appear in the analysis of the text. The author considers that each discursive formation has a relationship with other formations, which, in turn, constitute a “complex whole with a dominant” that connects with ideological formations. Thus, it is typical of them to conceal the apparent meaning of the discourse, since something said has already been said previously in another place - this constitutes interdiscourse.

The “complex whole with dominant” of discursive formations is interdiscourse (Pêcheux, 1997). It is evoked by discursive memory, which refers to the set of knowledge that allows us to say and retake another thought that has already been put forward, as defined by Orlandi (2000, p. 33-34, free translation):

Interdiscourse is the entire set of formulations made and already forgotten that determine what we say. For my words to have meaning, they must already make sense. And this is the effect of interdiscourse: what was said by a specific subject, at a particular moment, must be erased from memory so that, passing into “anonymity”, it can make sense in my words.”

This definition by Orlandi (2000) also highlights the existence of an intradiscourse. It is the way in which the subject decides to transpose his/her own discourse, using a specific order and meaning. It is speech in itself. Carrieri *et al.* (2006) highlight how all discourse is presented

simultaneously from both perspectives, the intra and interdiscursive. In the analysis, the interviewees' speeches will be observed in themselves, and how they assimilate other discourses in order to then externalize them, but also in a broader context, that of the police institution.

Orlandi (2000), based on Pêcheux's (1997) seminal idea, also points to forgetting as a fundamental part of the constitution of the subject and interdiscourse. Pêcheux divides this concept into two types. The first, called *forgetting number one* or, conventionally, *ideological forgetting*, is unconscious in nature. It manifests itself when the subject, immersed in a discursive formation, enunciates his ideas with the illusion that his speech is the origin of the thought, forgetting that ideologies permeate him. The second type, known as *forgetting number two* or *enunciative forgetting*, is semiconscious. It evidences the choice to say something in one way and not another, through paraphrase, revealing that “the saying could always be different” (Orlandi, 2000, p. 35, free translation).

Finally, the elements of paraphrase and polysemy represent forces in discourse that bridge the gap between the same and the different. In Orlandi's definition (2000, p. 38, free translation):

(...) paraphrase is the matrix of meaning, because there is no meaning without repetition, without support in discursive knowledge, and polysemy is the source of language since it is the very condition of the existence of discourses, because if the meanings – and the subject – were not multiple, could not be other, there would be no need to say. Polysemy is precisely the simultaneity of distinct movements of meaning in the same symbolic object.

Léon and Pêcheux (2011) understand that discursivity is situated in the tension between the "same" and the "different". In the analysis, one must seek to understand the interplay between replacing one statement with another (paraphrase) and the peripheral relations in speech that, simultaneously, can be linked to what has already been said or evoke a new meaning (polysemy). Paraphrase acts in a process that maintains a memory in the discourse, linking to what was said before, but in a different way. Polysemy, in turn, does not have the same character of return, representing instead a creativity in the discourse itself, with the objective of displacing and breaking with other processes of signification (Orlandi, 2000). In short, paraphrase produces variations of the same discourse, while polysemy is creative, generating discursive movements that alter the subject's position in relation to history and language.

These are, therefore, some of the most important aspects of the French Discourse Analysis methodology that will be mobilized in the analysis of the interviewees' statements.

These are elements that dialogue with the discussion about the closet, especially with regard to the character of silencing and the strategy that permeates it. Since this is a qualitative work with a hermeneutic orientation, the analysis will be carried out with a focus on interdiscursivity and intradiscursivity, since the military institutional context constructs a symbolic universe in which, as emphasized by Carrieri et al. (2006), DA allows us to observe the instruments of power and manipulation present. Interspersed with these aspects, the theoretical categories of Sedgwick's work will also be presented, some of which, as will be noted, are equivalent to the elements of DA itself, only with different names.

Regarding the criminological method, it is important to highlight that it is similar to and different from DA in certain proportions. DA focuses on discourse and the context in which it is constructed, involving the subject, the history and the ideology that permeates it. In contrast, Criminology is not usually based solely on discourses, but on the observation of the phenomenon as a whole, valuing facts over opinions (Shecaira, 2020). However, the criminological approach resembles DA in its multiplicity of techniques and its main objective. Regardless of whether it is a crime, offender, victim or social control, the focus of the study is on the "real world", on what can be observed, and not only on what is considered normative (Shecaira, 2020). DA, although it also focuses on the axiological (the world of values), observes the real world through the forms of linguistic materialization used to understand it (Pêcheux, 2006).

The purpose of presenting the criminological method, albeit superficially, is to highlight the particularities that involvement with "crime" brings to research. Shecaira (2020), for example, highlights the discomfort of those involved in giving interviews to researchers, the refusal of police authorities to provide confidential information, and the sensitivity inherent to the topic. In line with this, Panter (2018) points out challenges that he encountered in his research with transgender police officers, such as the delay in establishing a relationship of trust with the interviewees, the scarce number of officers willing to participate, and the need to "change positions" during the interviews, depending on the experiences that were narrated - something that also manifested itself in the conduct of this research, as I explain in topic 2.3, on Operationalization.

## **2.2. Second Mirror: The Closet Method**

Reading *Epistemology of the Closet* piqued my interest on two fronts: some of its theoretical elaborations stood out for the depth of their arguments, while others touched me for



their resonance with lived reality. This admiration is not merely personal; Butler (2002), as a reader of Sedgwick, expressed a similar appreciation for her contributions, as did other authors. What motivated the use of this work in particular, however, was the unique method of constructing her critiques. Whether in Literature, Philosophy or Social Sciences, Eve Sedgwick's discursive analysis brought to light hidden *queer figures* in literary classics, while forging a new epistemology: vulnerable and productive.

Sedgwick takes us beyond this logic and opens up what I want to claim as a certain ethics of thought, which postpones the question of logical incoherence in the name of historical possibilities that emerge when no single scheme ends up exhausting the epistemological field. Who can hold these schemes together without wanting to take sides, decide what is true, close off the irrationalized and the "incoherent." We are, it seems, structured by incompatible desires, but they relate to each other in ways that we cannot fully foresee at this moment, which are, we might say, a function and a sign of our time (Butler, 2002, p. 124, free translation).

In order to mitigate the limitations of this study and avoid a lack of contextualization of the work, I sought to understand the genesis of Sedgwick's thought. Her work interrelates both literary works by writers such as Herman Melville and Oscar Wilde and the thought of highly relevant academics, such as Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, whose contributions to *Queer Theories* are undeniable. Despite the deep dialogue that exists between the works of Sedgwick and Foucault, especially regarding the "History of Sexuality", the latter is not used as the main reference because he does not employ the "closet" as a central category of analysis. His insights on repression, silencing and the production of discourses on sexuality, however, are an essential part of the construction of Eve's work and, consequently, of this dissertation. Similarly, Judith Butler, another fundamental author for *queer studies*, does not appear here as a main reference, although her contributions on the closet and the definitions of sex, gender and sexuality cannot be (and have not been) ignored.

The operationalization of the French school Discourse Analysis methodology is multiple and must be adapted to the area in which it is anchored. Therefore, from the reading of *Epistemology of the Closet*, theoretical categories were extracted that help to support the study, complemented with concepts from Linguistics, allowing us to reveal the hidden meanings in the interviewees' speeches. Something interesting to be highlighted is that, in the work in question, I came across a clear focus on linguistic aspects. Eve Sedgwick herself, as a theorist and literary critic, observes in depth what a given author intended to say and what was hidden in his words. As mentioned, I chose not to analyze the plots of the books analyzed by Sedgwick, as this is not the objective of this work. However, it is worth noting that the

elaboration of the binarisms that I discussed previously arises precisely from this discursive and well-contextualized approach to epistemology.

I have sought to explain in the following chapters some of the categories that I bring here, and relate them to the context of *queer experiences*, crime and policing, but, at this moment, I outline them in a list with the respective explanations for interpretation together with the method of the French school of Discourse Analysis:

- **Double-binding system:** *refers* to the contradictory arguments of security and justice institutions that are used to harm, in some way, LGBTQIA+ people, whether due to social or financial relationships or violations of physical or psychological integrity.
- **Antisentimentality:** refers to the feeling and behavior of aversion to the expression of feelings. It originates in the attribution of sentimentalities to the feminine and the domestic, and the opposite to men and masculinities, in general.
- **Sentimentality:** identifies actions that are linked to the feminine, the *queer*, desire, the body, and the domestic. It can be used to analyze the connections that are made between crimes and gender identity/sexuality, which arise from social performances, passion, or the commercialization of pleasures. Furthermore, this is one of the main categories to be extracted from the Epistemology of the Closet, since it has subcategories that allow us to divide the perspectives of people who are confronted with the closet: the view that one has of someone else's closet or the absence thereof ( *spectacle of the closet* ) and the view that one has from being in the closet ( *the viewpoint of the closet* ).
- **Closet:** these are the instruments and spaces for repressing and silencing important parts of one's personality in certain environments or in front of specific people. It can take many forms and is highly manipulable by others, and can become extortionate. In this study, the closet is the main category of analysis, given the harmful nature it has in the lives of LGBTQIA+ people compared to heterosexual and cisgender people.
- **Closet relationships:** these are the relationships that arise between what is known and unknown, between the explicit and the implicit, and the private and the public. Here we observe what types of discourses and silences are performed before people with whom the closet barrier is established, and a comparison of the behaviors outside these relationships.
- **Self-revelation and self-naming:** refers to the subject's power to choose a moment to break out of the closet, the projections that are made for the future without the presence

of the closet, and the authority regained (or not) to be able to define oneself in a certain way regarding one's own sexuality or gender identity.

- **Paranoia:** would be the direct opposite of knowledge, in which knowing and being known can have the same process and anguish. These are the acts resulting from putting oneself in a closet, what is changed, what is removed and what is imagined from the perception of others. (“ *under the eye of the paranoia the Only man more “questionable” than the one in prison is the one out of it*”/ “*under the gaze of paranoia, the only man more questionable than the one in prison is the one outside it*” – Sedgwick, 1990, p. 102).
- **Mirror violence:** It is knowledge beyond paranoia, and it is one of the instruments of the closet itself. It is specifically the use of a certain performance or discourse of the other as a power of advantage over the one present in the closet, and the relocation of a reflex that confronts the person himself. “ *It takes one to know one* ” (*It requires one to know another*) is the epistemological principle of this category.
- **Violent and exemplary discipline:** acts to induce certain behavior or the feeling of a duty to be fulfilled, which can also be represented by punishments that can be considered “exemplary” because they induce others not to perform the same acts that incurred the sanction. In this case, actions and performances related to sexuality.
- **Male panic:** represents the vulnerability of being interpreted as something that is not true, which generates forged behaviors and performances as a form of self-protection. Here we would see the fear of men associating with other men, even if it is not sexual or romantic. This panic generates two possibilities: manipulation through fear and the potential for violence brought about by doubt.
- **Preterition:** one of the instruments of the closet that consists of attributing a significant void to something to the detriment of naming it as *queer* .
- **Paraphrase:** another tool of the closet, it uses other words or terms, even of a sarcastic or humorous nature, to avoid naming something as *queer* or repressing it in a way that does not speak directly and properly about the subject.

I highlight the last two categories “Preterition” and “Paraphrase” as elements of Linguistics that are also present in Sedgwick’s writing (1990). Preterition, as it constitutes one of the ways of not saying something, is similar to what I mentioned in the previous topic as “Enunciative forgetting”, which is the semi-conscious choice to talk about one subject to silence

another. In *Epistemology*, it refers more to the position of hierarchical superiors or colleagues who avoid naming sexuality (even if evident and assumed), whether unconsciously or strategically.

Paraphrase is also present in the book and is both a theoretical category of the closet and of Linguistics (and used by DA). In the first case, it represents the different ways of talking about dissent or deviation, choosing different terms to silence an identity in the discourse, while in the second area, it refers to the very possibilities of reclaiming and maintaining the meaning, even if expressed differently.

These theoretical categories helped to construct an interview script (Appendix I), with questions related to the relevant topics and experiences. Thus, as argued by Batinga and Saraiva (2022) and Maingueneau (1997), the epistemological area that surrounds Discourse Analysis not only serves as an instrument but also helps to provide new theories and foundations for the construction of a hermeneutics that is appropriate to the context in which it is applied.

### **2.3. Third Mirror: Operationalization of Data Collection and Analysis**

As the last topic in this methodological path, I present the operationalization of the data collection and analysis that supported this study.

I must emphasize that this was one of the greatest difficulties encountered in carrying out this research. I received “warnings” from the beginning about how difficult it would be to find them available, and I would have already settled for 5 of them, if possible. However, I had the pleasure of talking to 11 professionals, 8 men and 3 women, who indicated themselves. It is important to emphasize that one of the interviewees later withdrew his consent, and therefore, the interview was not used in the *corpus* analyzed.

As Shecaira (2020, p. 78, free translation) points out: “All research involves some difficulties inherent to its object. Access to research material can be difficult in many disciplines, but it is particularly complex when dealing with issues involving crime”. Not only because of the involvement of this topic, but the institutional environment itself should be highlighted as a possible difficulty. The isolating nature of organizations such as the Police, as argued by Huntington (2016), combined with the exposure of sensitive and intimate topics related to subjectivity can make contact with these subjects difficult, but as highlighted in Melo's (2022) study on the inclusion of trans identity in Public Security and the Armed Forces, there are several forms of activism that do not involve demonstrations or social movements, but

merely positioning themselves against oppression. This gives me greater confidence in the chosen methodology.

As an introduction to the findings, I consider it important to outline a general overview of each interview, along with initial impressions gathered during the conversations and first readings (before systematic coding). To this end, I present the interviewees in Table 1, with their main information, followed by brief descriptions highlighting relevant aspects of their identities and discourses.

**Table 1- Identification of interviewees**

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Approximate time in the corporation (in years)</b>	<b>Identification</b>
PM1	8-10	Cisgender homosexual man not out at work
PM2	18-20	Gay cisgender man partially out at work
PM3	20-25	Cisgender man, without a definitive definition. Out at work.
PM4	25-30	Bisexual cisgender man. Partially out at work.
PM5	20-25	Cisgender homosexual man. Out at work.
PM6	25-30	Gay/Homosexual cisgender man. Partially out at work.
PM7	7-10	Lesbian cisgender woman, openly out at work.
PM8	5-7	Gay cisgender man. Out at work.
PM9	5-7	Lesbian cisgender woman. Out at work.
PM10	20-25	Cisgender homosexual woman. Openly gay at work.

Source: Own authorship.

The first participant, referred to here as PM1, was interviewed in person and, right from the start, one can see that he was reticent at the beginning of the conversation, but was generally relaxed, judging by the clothes he chose and the jokes he made in his speech. The individual has between 8 and 10 years of professional experience, defines himself as homosexual, but reports having gone through a “bisexual phase” in the past, and is not open about it in the workplace. The main markers in the discursive formation of PM1 are the presence of an institutional military discourse, with emphasis on points such as hierarchy, heteronormativity and “behavioral patterns” and, on the other hand, a discourse of resistance, in which there is a contestation of police culture in relation to sexuality and discontent with other points, mainly in areas where he has been and is being harmed.

PM2 has between 18 and 20 years of experience as a police officer and identifies as gay. He reports being out to only a few people in the workplace, most of whom are also people of diverse sexuality. In the discursive formation, the same conflict as PM1 also appears between a military discourse based on hierarchy and masculinity and between expressions of abjection. It is important to highlight that, despite it being an open and calm conversation, the participant chose not to turn on the camera during the interview.

PM3, in turn, has between 20 and 25 years of professional experience and does not define himself with any label regarding sexuality, however, at times he refers to himself as an “open guy” and that he feels “more gay” in some situations and “more straight” in others. He also presents the same discourses as the previous interviewees, however with a certain manifestation of opposition to conservatism on certain points, such as in the act of labeling himself and in the concept of family – issues that affect him personally.

PM4 defines himself as bisexual, partially out at work, with approximately 25 to 30 years of service and a discourse marked by institutional hierarchy and a neutrality in which he positions himself to distance his personal life from the institutional. There are many contradictions in the statements, in which, initially, there is a very positive image of sexuality in the police, but later its negative side is highlighted by other statements.

PM5 has a particularity in his interview, being that he conducted it while he was on duty at work and we were interrupted for a brief moment, however, he reported being alone. He declares himself to be a “cisgender homosexual”, with 20 to 25 years of service, he is out at work, and in his first statement, the moment he came out made absolutely *everything* change in the police, and that only then did he gain respect.

PM6 has between 25 and 30 years of service and identifies as gay, “homosexual in this case,” as he immediately corrected. He reports having recently come out as gay, and that very

few people at work know about it, despite the fact that he is married. This officer's discourse is critical and marked by political activism and intellectualism and displays a certain level of paranoia regarding the environment and situations in general.

PM7, in turn, identifies as a lesbian and has a discursive formation of resistance within the structure that she considers oppressive. However, there are conflicting identities, such as professional and sexual, but with a well-defined critical positioning. There is a constant indignation that dialogues with a certain conformity and cynicism in knowing that there will be no change. She has between 7 and 10 years of service in the police force, and reports having her sexual orientation "open" at work, and the moment that can be considered her coming out of the closet was when she cut her hair very short, and that, as a result, people defined her as such, in addition to other factors such as not wearing earrings or makeup. She reports that she does not hide her orientation and has always chosen to say "girlfriend" instead of "person", for example.

PM8 defines himself as a cis gay man, with 5 to 7 years of service as a police officer, and says he is open at work and in his personal life, with a difficult process in the latter, but practically nonexistent in the former, given the exposure he has on social media and the constant jokes regarding sexuality. The discursive formation here also contains a critique of the structure combined with the duality between the personal and professional, in which the main apparent objective is self-preservation, with attempts to mitigate mannerisms. Like PM7, he does not expect major changes.

PM9 is a lesbian woman who has worked for the police for 5 to 7 years. She is open about her sexuality and her personal life. She says she has never hidden it and that the act of telling people was always casual. She treats her sexuality "naturally" and sees that others treat her that way too. Her effeminate appearance makes some colleagues not believe in her sexuality, but she sees a certain benefit in everyone knowing, in addition to being highly respected. She recognizes the difficulties that exist for *queer people* in the police force, where men are given greater prominence, but she is confident that improvements are being made. Compared to the others, this was the interview with the most positive *feedback* about the work environment.

PM10 is a homosexual woman with 20 to 25 years of service in the police force, and she humorously reports that she is unable to disguise her orientation due to her appearance. The discursive formation here is composed of military discourse and there is a strict separation between personal and professional life, there is also the presence of a critical discourse of resistance against the machismo culture. She calmly reproduces institutional norms in her

speech and, at the same time, recognizes the difficulty of queer people in the police force, also highlighting that it is worse for men (as is PM9).

In general, the interviewees feel *trapped* in a duality between sexual identity and police identity. Although these identities should not be mutually exclusive, in practice they impose a significant burden. All of them reported the need, at some point, to develop specific skills or strategies to reconcile personal aspects (such as dealing with colleagues, issues of sexuality) with professional demands (such as dealing with crimes, violence and maintaining efficiency in the service). The “military mentality”, as highlighted by Huntington (2016), becomes apparent with the multiple reproductions of norms, hidden prejudices and reports of cases that occurred in each person’s career. On the other hand, there is a vulnerability present in the statements, which, at the beginning of each interview, does not seem to manifest itself, but which evolves as they trust me as an interviewer, and develops in conversations that touch on the “venting” of issues that few are interested in hearing.

Based on Zaffaroni's (2012) premise that the dispute in the criminological field focuses on communication and the struggle for hegemony of discourses, Borghi (2021) defends the use of DA in critical studies of Criminology. This approach proved to be particularly productive for the present research.

Although the operationalization methods of DA and the "closet categories" have distinct origins, I chose to place them in intersection to analyze the interviewees' statements, as detailed previously. The originality of this work resides, after all, in the proposed dialogue between the Epistemology of the Closet and *Queer* Criminology, seeking a mutual enrichment between the two areas.

As Marconi and Lakatos (2017) teach, collecting data from different sources should be a pillar in all research, enabling the collection of prior information about the object of study. In this work, I use bibliographic research to access publicly available content on the topic.

The work *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, is the central bibliographical source. However, her analysis is deepened by reading revisionist works and works that inspired Sedgwick herself, such as “History of Sexuality (Vol. I)”, by Michel Foucault (2005). Sedgwick’s fascination with Foucault, according to her, was due to “the serious attempt to formulate things that do not want to be formulated” (Sedgwick; Barber; Clark, 2002). Additionally, I mobilize authors who, although not directly linked to Sedgwick’s book, promote debates relevant to the thematic, temporal and geographic context of this research.



The starting point was the reading and interpretation of Sedgwick's work, from which I extracted the theoretical categories that guided the data analysis. Later, these same categories served as the basis for the elaboration of the interview script. This script consisted of both direct questions about the research problem and "breather questions". The objective of the latter was to make the discussion lighter and create an environment in which the participants would not feel emotionally pressured when addressing topics related to their own sexuality.

The data were collected through intensive direct observation, using the semi-structured interview technique, which allowed me to ask free questions, in addition to those present in the previously prepared script. With this approach, face-to-face conversations allowed the "determination of feelings" and the identification of "conscious reasons for opinions, feelings, systems or behaviors" (Marconi; Lakatos, 2017, p. 212) during the interview.

The semi-structured interviews, conducted using a script developed in parallel with the theoretical categories (Appendix I), allowed the identification of the intended subjects and the exploration of possible clarifications, in addition to new information. As Ribeiro (2008, p. 145, free translation) points out, the questions are designed with the intention that the interviewee verbalizes his/her thoughts and inferences about the topics covered, thus "the sequence and details are left to the subjects' discourse and the dynamics that occur naturally".

To conduct interviews, I submitted the research project to the UNIMONTES Research Ethics Committee, obtaining a positive opinion for the procedure (Appendix II).

With the participants' consent, I recorded the speeches using a telephone in order to avoid memory lapses and distortion of facts in case of later notes. Afterwards, I transcribed the conversations to enable categorization in the *software. Atlas Ti.8*, in which I classified the information according to the theoretical categories mentioned above, selecting the relevant statements to analyze them discursively.

The Discourse Analysis approach used was the French one, as highlighted in topic 2.1. By considering reality as a social construction (Berger; Luckmann, 2004), and discourse as the very materiality of language and ideologies that permeate subjects (Pêcheux, 1997), this method guided the contextualization of the historical character of the agents' speeches and social formations in the institutional space analyzed - this would be what Foucault (2008) calls "discursive formation". And "(...) every discursive formation refers to a given ideological formation. The subject of the discourse brings to the debate a group of individual representations regarding himself, the interlocutor and the subject addressed" (Brasil, 2011).

To achieve the overall objective, the interviewees were military police officers from Minas Gerais who identify with dissident sexualities. It was not established as a requirement,

however, that the sexual orientation of the participants be known within the corporation. The selection of participants occurred through the snowball sampling technique. This method, which benefits from the expansion of contact networks, starts with a few initial individuals (the "seeds"), who match the desired profile. These, in turn, indicate new participants who also meet the research criteria (Parker; Scott; Geddes, 2019; Panter, 2018).

In general, I reiterate my writing in “*queer first person*” (Edwards, 2009) – an organic method of *Queer Theories* in which the author who identifies as being of dissident sexuality can provide his/her own perspectives on the subject. I consider this writing and the method itself as an opportunity to deal with the subject in a theoretical and personal way, but also as a summation of the movement to adapt academic spaces to new epistemologies and an expansion of the interpretation of science as merely objective and neutral (Saraiva, 2023), thus, other groups can claim the say of science about deviant bodies (Louro, 2008).

In the wise words of Machado (2023, p. 301), we have here “imperfect methodologies subject to criticism, but open to investigations that will advance thought”.

### 3. THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF THE CLOSET

#### 3.1. The closets and their skeletons

The moment of "coming out" occurs in the lives of many people; for others, it does not. It happens intentionally or accidentally, with positive or negative outcomes. However, which closets are being discussed when we observe the abandonment of this space? Is a closet really being abandoned? Is it just the closet of sexuality? Why is the "opening of the curtains" of this spectacle so relevant to society? Is it really relevant? Is the outside always better than the inside? How important is the place one occupies when coming out?

A search for the term "coming out" on websites like YouTube mostly reveals video compilations about controversial celebrity moments or lists of people who have come out publicly. On the other hand, the same search on Google already points to a redefinition of the term. There, the results page offers a more conceptual slant to the metaphor, presenting information about this key change in the expression in a considerably less sensationalist tone.

Sedgwick (1990) defined sexuality as the most significant human activity in the West and, at the same time, stated that the closet was the main tool of oppression against homosexuals in the 20th century. In view of technological and social transformations, it becomes pertinent to reevaluate whether this metaphor still holds the same power as in the past. It is also necessary to observe it from new lenses, such as the global South, Latin American, Brazilian and, in the specific case of this research, Minas Gerais.

The "closet" is a metaphor for the symbolic space where an individual hides, partially or completely, aspects of his or her sexual or gender identity. It is a powerful representation of this phenomenon because, although other linguistic formulations have been considered, none have achieved the same impact (Sedgwick, 1990).

The *closet*, also called *wardrobe* or *armoire* or closet, wardrobe, or even the Brazilianized "*clôzet*" refers, literally, to the room or piece of furniture used to store and store clothes, shoes and bags. But it was not always like this. In the 17th and 18th centuries, for example, they referred to small private rooms of monarchs and castle dwellers, locked with a key, and represented a sign of the growing wealth of those who frequented them. The desire for the *closet* also referred to the power to exercise individuality, since in it it was possible to do whatever one wanted alone (Bobker, 2020; Faria, 2023).

Architecturally, the spaces required no more than four walls and a door, and due to their simple *design* and adaptability in homes, it became even easier to transform them and mix them

with other devices and interpretations. They could then be joined with a bathtub (*bathing closets, water closets*), books (*studies or libraries*), religious representations (*prayer closets*), and then they were transformed into something more. Something that changed definitively were the possibilities within these spaces, from an individuality lived in secret with solitude at the ends of the palaces to the creation of bonds and exchange of knowledge that physical proximity brought (Bobker, 2020).

The rhetoric of the closet is that *it* needed to come out of a space privileged before anyone could leave *it*. In the 18th century this view changed with the removal of the main features of British cabinets: protection and favoritism. Therefore, the previous physical structure and the analogy made with the closet represent a symbol of social transition, and refer to domesticity and secrecy, being:

Widely recognized as a place where reciprocal feelings could flourish in a setting of rigid status distinctions, the closet revealed not only how exciting but also how uncomfortable the new processes and perspectives of inclusion could be (Bobker, 2020, p. 11, free translation).

In another period, such as the 1990s, the figure of closets was capitalized and publicized as spaces for organizing and storing household belongings – perhaps due to the excess of purchases motivated by the Industrial Revolution (Bobker, 2020). Thus, *closet rooms* were transformed into essential furniture in the domestic environment to eliminate the apparent mess, which gives the resident the ability to choose what is shown and what is hidden, in other words, “a practical solution to a basic domestic problem” (Faria, 2023, p. 30, free translation).

As a result of the existence of something inside, the expression “coming out of the closet” is also valued, which hides a greater discursive meaning than it actually appears in social encounters or anecdotes and is one of the main categories of analysis for this study. This coming out is problematic at a discursive level (Butler, 1991), and for Sedgwick (1990) this act receives a necessary performance imposition for it to happen.

Considering the idea that silence is also a form of discourse, ignorance and knowledge are equally powerful in social relations. Therefore, knowing or not knowing something about someone can give rise to the domain of that person’s subjectivity. “Knowledge, *after all, is not power in itself, but rather the magnetic field of power. Ignorance and opacity collude or compete with knowledge in mobilizing the flows of energy, desire, goods, meanings, people.*” (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 4, free translation).

In theory, “coming out of the closet” would be something like going public, coming out of a space that hides us, that is totally private. But this analogy is flawed. After all, we can be in the closet in relation to family members, but not in relation to friends. In relation to coworkers, but not in relation to family members. We can come out of the closet only to ourselves. We can be completely in the closet, but come out of the closet at a party or two. There are those who need to come out of the closet all the time, and there are those we bring out of a closet that doesn’t even exist (Faria, 2023, p. 37, free translation).

When we put into perspective the assertion of the power of the closet in the 20th century as the most powerful instrument in the oppression of gays and lesbians (Sedgwick, 1990), we also have in the early 21st century the possibility of subverting the closet itself. Butler (1991) broadly questions what the purpose and need for this artifice really is, and the possibility of maintaining it:

Is the “subject” that is “outside” free from its subjection and finally in the clear? Or does the subjection that subjectifies the gay or lesbian subject somehow continue to oppress, or oppress more insidiously, once the “out” is claimed? What or who is “outside,” manifest and fully disclosed, when and if I come out as a lesbian? What is it that is now known, something? What remains permanently hidden by the very linguistic act that offers the promise of a transparent disclosure of sexuality? Can sexuality even continue to be sexuality once it submits to a criterion of transparency and disclosure, or does it perhaps cease to be sexuality precisely when the appearance of full explicitness is achieved? Is sexuality of any kind possible even without that opacity designated by the unconscious, which simply means that the conscious “I” that would reveal its sexuality may be the last to know the meaning of what it says? (Butler, 1991, pp. 308-309, free translation).

There are no fixed answers to these questions, only speculations arising from contemporary reality. The refusal to identify oneself, for example, converges with Foucault's perspective (2005). For the philosopher, the act of a subject labeling himself under a certain category (such as “homosexual” or “transsexual”) can be functional to the discourse of power itself that aims to control bodies through categorization, be it medical or legal. However, naming, although risky, is not always limited to this logic. As Butler (1991) points out, discourse also represents the fine line between submission and resistance. Therefore, naming oneself can be a strategy of insurgency.

Although this is an example from the East, *queer people* in Palestine have consciously rejected the closet as a way of rejecting the language that comes with the weight of *coming out*. Contrary to what Israelis think, this is not about denying one's own identity but using this tool to blur the visible or possibly intelligible so that the State and its organizations are unable to see it. The focus would then be to stimulate activism that creates a limbo between state regulation and freedom, that goes beyond the fulfillment of certain performances, by queer or

non-queer people, with the possibility of being something with bodies and desires (Ritchie, 2010).

Butler's (1991, p. 309) question, “*Is sexuality of any kind possible even without that opacity designated by the unconscious, which simply means that the conscious "I" that would reveal its sexuality is perhaps the last to know the meaning of what it says?*” refers to the binomials inside/outside, visible/invisible and the constant power imposed by the sexuality device in vogue (Sedgwick, 1990). Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that:

There should be no binary division between what is said and what is not said; we must try to determine the different ways of not saying, how those who can and cannot speak are distributed, what type of discourse is authorized or what form of discretion is required of some and others. There is not just one, but many silences, and they are an integral part of the strategies that support and permeate discourses (Foucault, 2005, p. 30, free translation).

Silence and secrecy function as subjective practices of inviolability of binaries, such as public and private, subject and object, inside and outside, hetero/homo, among others. This does not mean that the act of “coming out of the closet” is the act of total collapse of binaries, but simply an attestation of their presence, which makes speech, recognition, and, consequently, understanding possible (Sedgwick, 1990; Costa, 2023). Closets are like ties that bind the social performance of queer people, but are not necessarily exclusive to this group of people, but to everyone's lives, with the crucial difference that they do not exert the same control and influence on cisgender and heterosexual people, and that they do not even have the same potential for harm.

Each encounter with a new class of students, not to mention a new boss, social worker, bank manager, landlord, doctor, constructs new closets whose characteristic laws of optics and physics require, at least on the part of gay people, new surveys, new calculations, new schemes and demands for secrecy or exposure (...) The gay closet is not a feature of the lives of gay people alone. But for many of them it is still the fundamental feature of social life (...) (Sedgwick, 1993, p. 22, free translation).

Therefore, it is understood that closets are less extortionate to the personality and identity of people who conform to heteronormative culture, in addition to being capable of being used by others to control the actions, speeches and behaviors of their peers. In the life of the LGBTQIA+ community, the various forms of violence, whether symbolic, interpersonal or institutional (Carvalho, 2012), the use of closets represents a tool of extortion due to the great potential for harm it has. Especially if this possibility is considered as part of the control process exercised by public security agents in the daily activities they perform (Costa, 2023).

The figure of the closet, or coming out of it, should not be interpreted as something entirely liberating or imprisoning. The concept itself needs to be problematized, as demonstrated by the Palestinian counterposition to Western logic (Ritchie, 2010). Even so, the mobilization of the category “closet” is fundamental for two reasons: first, to identify the presence of this structure as a device for controlling sexuality in the 21st century (Foucault, 2005); second, to analyze the effects of the longevity of this oppression on dissident lives.

The transmutation of the closet has occurred in countless ways: from the physical to the symbolic, from the useful to the useless, from the oppressive to the empowering. Therefore, it is important to identify where these closets are positioned today and who they harm most with their binary and paradoxical logic of “inside/outside.”

When moving the discussion to the organizational sphere, one realizes the ambiguous nature of “closet relationships”. Sedgwick (1990) coined the term to designate the encounters between the known and the unknown, the public and the private, which can take multiple forms depending on interpersonal contact. In this context, analyzing *coming out* in the workplace helps to measure how extortionate the act of exposing one's sexuality can be.

In the North of Minas Gerais, specifically in the municipality of Montes Claros, studies conducted highlight the Christian and conservative character of the region, in which “interviewees complained about repressive aspects of life in the backlands of Minas Gerais, in which religion, patriarchy and work institutions do not appear as separate elements.” (Cardoso Júnior et al., 2022, p. 1927, free translation). Furthermore, the benefits and harms of coming out in a workplace were vehemently highlighted, which helps in the notion that there are losses that arise even before this revelation happens, and emphasizes the various forms and consequences concerning work.

After all, no two people's experiences of the closet are ever the same. Some people never come out of the closet. Some people have never been in a closet in the first place. Some people's closets seem to be made of clear glass, some of stained glass, some of paper, cloth, skin, and bone. Some people's closets have an entry point, an exit point, visibility, light, and more, often on different scales. Some have openings the size of keyholes, windows, cat flaps, others the size of pupils, nasal cavities, mouths, and other orifices. Some closets are more permeable to music, images, words, and scents than other people's closets. Some closets can best be penetrated by the eyes, others by hands, genitals, texts (Edwards, 2009, p. 66, free translation).

Therefore, the blind belief in the idea that knowledge and self-knowledge would be capable of, by themselves, defeating homotransphobia represents one of the modern reflexes that makes invisible the harmful impacts that silence, ignorance and veiled secrets have historically caused to society (Bobker, 2020; Sedgwick, 1990).

The closet metaphor is both harmful and beneficial, but one of its biggest problems lies in its social effect. One example of this is the utopian belief that if every gay, lesbian, bisexual, or trans person suddenly decided to “live their truth” and come out of the closet, intolerance would be defeated. It is undeniable that each epiphany of self-recognition and each act of revelation has political power. The problem, however, is that the result of this thinking transfers all responsibility to individuals, as Bobker (2020, p. 197) criticizes: “queer and trans people could easily defeat intolerance, if only enough of us were brave enough and honest enough with ourselves and others.”

Another relevant point is the “discourse of naturalness,” also discussed by Foucault (2005) and Sedgwick (1990), and popularized by phrases such as “I was born this way, what can I do?”. This discourse can be observed in practice in the song “*Born This Way*” by queer artist and activist Lady Gaga. Although the song has a clear intention of empowerment, the idea of “being born a certain way” can be theoretically problematic. By reducing identity to a biological condition, this argument can end up excluding the complexity of desires and the multiple ways of experiencing sexuality. Although it facilitates the assimilation of gays and lesbians into the heteronormative system (Garcia, 2018), Sedgwick (1990), in response, would probably question the very need to seek a “natural” parameter to validate behavior.

Thinking about closets transcends the subjective and psychological need for individual recognition. The ideology that allows sexual dissidence on billboards, in books and in the media, but represses it in the intimate sphere (“in bed”), is one of the pillars that sustain certain logics of current capitalism. The free circulation of dissident eroticism in traditionally heterosexual institutions (such as sports, the police and politics) worries and destabilizes the fragile concept of “liberal” that accompanies the State (Mieli, 2023).

When we consider the existence of a system that categorizes people based on sex, gender and desire, imposing expectations and demanding constant reaffirmations of social symbols for its perpetuation (Rubin, 1975; Butler, 2010; Preciado, 2022), the closet can be interpreted in an analogous way: an apparatus that is simultaneously oppressive and productive, driven by the continuous performance of what one intends (or does not intend) to present.

It is essential to keep in mind that the closet has moved beyond the realm of slang to become a compelling theoretical perspective. Revealing or not revealing aspects of sexual orientation or gender identity does not diminish the existence of these elements in the individual’s subjectivity; however, in multiple ways, it can protect or harm their social experience. The central question I seek to discuss is not whether the closet is inherently “good”



or “bad”, because it can be both, but rather how this complex reality is manipulated to produce discourses and practices that harm a certain group of people.

### 3.2. Double-binding systems

As previously highlighted, the closet is an ambivalent tool, present in everyone’s lives. However, its harmful nature is accentuated in relation to queer people, for whom it creates spaces of secrecy and vulnerability to extortion. In order to apply the contributions of the Epistemology of the Closet to *Queer Criminology*, this topic will present two fronts of analysis: first, a theoretical category related to crimes and legislation, the “double binding system”; and second, some binaries raised by Eve Sedgwick as structuring Western thought <sup>2</sup>, in addition to heterosexuality/homosexuality. In conversation with the police officers, these categories were identified (see Chapter 5).

Binaries represent relationships between two opposing terms, in which one is hierarchically superior to the other. For this reason, they deserve special attention, since it is necessary to think beyond just two fixed positions when it comes to the expression of sexuality.

But, before moving on to the binaries themselves, I present an important concept to proceed with this analysis: “*double binding system*”. This is what the judicial and legislative systems are called in the original version of the 1990 book, with the translation in the 2007 Brazilian review as “*sistema de duplos vínculos*”. I believe that a more critical and faithful translation would be to call it “*sistema de duplas amarras*”, given the potential for crossroads that these spaces have.<sup>3</sup>

It can be argued that bonds also represent ties and that changing the term is useless, but I consider the significance presented in the work, in which this title refers to spaces of law control that provide dubious or controversial answers when sought by queer people, in which the arguments are often offensive and even violent regarding people's identities and behaviors (Sedgwick, 1990).

One of the examples given by the author helps to illustrate how this double-binding system: Acanfora, a science teacher from the United States, was transferred to a non-teaching

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<sup>2</sup> As a literary critic, the author analyzes the relationships between terms using works of English literature from the 18th and 19th centuries, such as “Billy Budd” by Herman Melville, “The Picture of Dorian Gray” by Oscar Wilde, and “In Search of Lost Time” by Michel Proust. I do not intend to expose the details of the works analyzed, but rather the contributions arising from the observation of the discourses of the time.

<sup>3</sup> Although I use a different translation for the double-binding system in Portuguese, I preferred to maintain the use of the original term in this English version to maintain.

position as soon as the fact that he was *gay* became known to the school board. When he went to the media to reveal his situation, the school denied him a contract. The teacher sued, and the first legal response was that the appeal to the media brought too much attention to his sexuality. A higher court considered the exposure protected by the right to freedom of expression, but did not allow him to return to teaching on the grounds that he had concealed in his application for the position that he had participated in a homosexual student organization during high school – something they later admitted would have prevented him from being hired in the first place (Sedgwick, 1990).

How can we formulate plausible arguments after these judicial responses? Who can we turn to? Certainly, when thinking about Brazilian and international justice, there are several mechanisms of appeal and alternatives to seek, but in this case it is clear how cornered these people are. One can reflect on what Acanfora could have done, strategically, in relation to his own sexual orientation, but by coming out of the closet, would he have been hired? By remaining in the closet (as he did at the beginning) was there any guarantee that he would be able to teach? Unfortunately, both answers are negative.

In Brazil, I will cite a case that provides an opportunity to visualize the constraints. During the “Sluts March” in Rio de Janeiro, Indianarae Siqueira, a transgender activist, was arrested by police officers for committing the crime of “obscene acts in public” while walking around with her breasts exposed. In an argument with the police officer, she argued that she was a “man” for the law, as her documents showed. However, the officer disagreed, and she was taken to a police station, refused to sign the police report, and was arrested for contempt of court, but released on bail. A trial should have been held, but it never happened due to the absence of the police officer in court at the hearing, in other words, the state’s silence (Luckmann; Nardi, 2017).

Indianarae herself acknowledges the creation of a dilemma in the justice system in which the conviction would result in the legal recognition of the female gender and not that which is stated in the documents, and consequently, the establishment of a precedent to be used by other trans people. Or in the case of recognition of the male identity, according to the documents, it would allow her to walk around with her breasts exposed, just like men, and would further say that men and women do not have the same rights. Luckmann and Nardi (2017) understand that the case is a challenge to regulatory standards, in which the answer may also be none.

Another case of observation of the constraints on Public Security is the Stonewall Riots of June 28, 1969, a historic and remarkable event that intersects deviance and police interaction.

Considered the motivator of the first LGBTQIA+ parades in history and an initial milestone in the modern fight for the rights of this community, it has a plot intrinsically related to the control of queer bodies and the connection with the police force. In a simplistic way, the Stonewall Inn bar was a meeting place considered safe for deviant bodies, given that the owners of the establishment were also involved with the Italian mafia and paid the police to avoid the place during inspections – which would certainly incriminate the bar for its unsafe and unhygienic facilities. However, on that date, the police arrested some of the employees and performers on site for violating the Dressing Room Ordinance, legislation that predetermined the need for people to wear at least three items of clothing that reflected their 'natural' sex (Dwyer; Ball; Crofts, 2016). What later became a pitched battle lasting six days, with demands and protests, today marks the origin of parades that take place all over the world.

In Latin America, there is the case of Azul Rojas Marín before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, with a sentence from 2020. This was an arbitrary, violent and unfounded arrest against Azul, due to her gender expression and sexual orientation, in addition to having been raped during detention. The victim was approached at night, while walking home, by police officers who beat her and used homophobic terms. The investigation was not properly carried out in the first instances appealed, which eventually took the case to the international court, which considered the abuses to be a case of torture, violation of personal integrity, and privacy, and condemned the State of Peru for what happened (IACHR, 2020).

At these and other times, the police represented the main instrument of legislative control for the administration of bodies and practices, with violent and corrupt actions, which gave rise to discrimination and constant tension between public security agents and LGBTQIA+ people.

However, policing cannot be considered only as an instrument of power, but must also be interpreted as one of its producers, since it plays an essential role in the constant maintenance and reconstitution of a heteronormative society (Dwyer; Colvin, 2022; Russel, 2020). State institutions, as a whole, form a tangle of spaces that significantly contribute to the perpetuation of violence against queer people, and the idea of policing as a set of surveillance, intervention, and coercion techniques for the sake of security reinforces a male hegemony that not only excludes and invisibilizes LGBTQIA+ people, but also produces notions of deviance, danger, and criminality (Russel, 2020).

Foucault (2005) understands that power itself is intertwined with the discourse of knowledge, with epistemologies. Rather than prohibiting sexuality or sex, power produces it, such as the names, labels and identities that are attributed by the subjects themselves and that

are interconnected with the current control regimes. In this sense, Eve argues that the homo/hetero categories guide how others will be defined, and consequently, disciplinary power itself (Garcia, 2018; Sedgwick, 1990).

Although the notion of a double-binding system refers directly to legal spheres, two of the chapters of *Epistemology of the Closet* focus precisely on the binarisms (*Some Binarisms I, II*) that arise from and/or influence the understanding of sexuality in modern society and can be interpreted as foundations that link and guide the discourse.

Binaries may seem to be just an unpretentious relationship established between two terms, but they receive greater attention when the connection they propose hierarchizes one position over the other. While one of them is correct, the other is wrong. These are the main expressions analyzed in the book: knowledge/ignorance; natural/artificial; urban/provincial; innocence/initiation; man/boy; cognition/paranoia; secret/revelation; discipline/terrorism; majority/minority; impartiality/partiality; public/private; sincerity/sentimentality; health/illness; totality/decadence; utopia/apocalypse; Greek/Christian; sentimental/anti-sentimental; direct/vicarious; art/kitsch; same/different; homo/hetero; abstraction/figuration; invention/recognition; completeness/decadence; voluntarism/vice; cosmopolitan/national; health/disease, among others (Sedgwick, 1990).

Considering that my objective is to use some categories to observe institutional closets in police discourses to understand the impacts on the treatment of crimes involving LGBTQIA+, I selected some of these binaries that help in this task, and I will address them below, while others will be addressed in more pertinent topics. The first of them: *normal/artificial*.

Foucault (2005), when tracing the history of sexuality, observed how discourses on sex were controlled and the multiple forms it took, one of which was criminal justice. The power relations established by this area focused on crimes related to libertinism and unnaturalness, but which, later in the 19th century, were considered of little relevance – but, leaving a mark on where the danger lay, and the need to speak and control.

As in the Portuguese Penal Code of 1852, which considered the “practice of vices against nature”, one term stands out in the definition of crimes related to sexuality in the 18th century: “unnatural”, in which acts *contrary* to nature were defined by the great oppressive systems of the time, namely canon law, Christian pastoral care and civil law. Several acts were placed under the same classification of deviation and exceeded the limits of what was lawful, as was the case of sodomy – whose dual character as a crime and grave sin was equal to bestiality or marriage without parental consent (Foucault, 2005).

Prohibitions concerning sex were fundamentally of a legal nature. The "nature" on which they were sometimes based was still a kind of law. For a long time, hermaphrodites were considered criminals, or children of crime, since their anatomical disposition, their very being, hampered the law that distinguished the sexes and prescribed their conjunction (Foucault, 2005, p. 38, free translation).

Just like the interpretation of sex, gender, sexuality and race, the various acts considered as sodomy change according to the places, cultures and intentions of those who call them (Lee, 2011). However, it is possible to group them under all acts of sex without the intention of procreation, this includes men, women, animals, and considers sodomites as beings with insatiable desires who do not care about the quantity, gender or species that satisfies them. In other words, same-sex relations, oral sex, use of contraceptive methods, masturbation of oneself and others, and sex with other species (Edwards, 2009).

Conceptually, the term has biblical origins and refers to a sin and a crime, since, in addition to suffering from God's wrath, sodomites were also subject to legal and moral reprobation. In the eyes of the law, this was a deviation that was difficult to prove, especially considering the variety of faces that sodomy could take (Edwards, 2009). Thus, crime and desire are primarily intertwined.

Sodomy, despite not being considered an identity, did not cease to be practiced. The popularization of oral sex in the 19th century and masturbation in the 18th century lost some of the negative connotation they had after a while, but sexual practice with beings of another species and between people of the same sex received the same interpretation (Edwards, 2009).

Under the designation of sexual practices as reproductive, recreational, sinful, among other names, those who had power penetrated phallically and ideally those with less or no power (Edwards, 2009; Preciado, 2014). In Classical Antiquity, men penetrated women, adolescent boys and slaves, regardless of gender – and these acts were not distinguished in any way. However, men were not encouraged to be penetrated (Edwards, 2009). With this example, the *hetero/homo binomial* had not yet been established, but the interpretations of identities varied according to the gender, class, age and ethnicity of those involved, that is, men should build bonds that differentiated themselves in these requirements – the problem was not the relationship between equal sexes, but the submission of one man to another (Lee, 2011).

The natural, also considered normal, environmental, divine, is placed above the artificial, also called unnatural, forged, false, and associates heteronormativity with the former and everything that remains with the latter. In a philosophical and critical analysis of the work of Nietzsche and Herman Melville, Sedgwick (1990) observes this relationship, and how it

leads to the *binomial of completeness and decadence*. While the former refers to a complete health of the body and soul, the latter indicates the stress and anguish of those who have some kind of open secret (as is the case with sexuality, when not transposed to the public space). It is interpreted as something that ruminates under the skin and consumes its guests.

The *open secret* represents a gap that can be filled and interpreted in different ways from someone else's perspective, that is, if I do not verbally and physically assume a certain sexuality or gender, it can be attributed to me without any confirmation or consent. This act is what we popularly know as *gaydar* (Neves Júnior, 2022).

To better understand this term, two concepts are important: performativity and the device (of sexuality). The first refers to the repeated forms, actions and behaviors that are inscribed in a body and that produce the appearance that someone is “something”, as is the case with the attribution of gender to bodies, a discursively constructed category that needs to be repeated in order to be interpreted (Butler, 2018). The concept of device meets a social, disciplinary and domination demand of individuals, is multiform and is established as a network of discourses, performances and traditions, as is the case with everyday conversations or legislative norms (Neves Júnior, 2022; Foucault, 2005). To be more specific, there is also the sexuality device, which “(...) has as its raison to be, not to reproduce, but to proliferate, innovate, annex, invent, penetrate bodies in an increasingly detailed manner and control populations in an increasingly global manner” (Foucault, 2005, p. 100, free translation).

With this, *gaydar* can be described as one of the power techniques of the sexuality device, and

(...) it becomes a performative device of sexualities: it does not confirm anything, but performs by trying to describe, through some index, the subject's homosexuality, and places compulsory heterosexuality in constant doubt. It is an instrument that acts in accordance with the norms that regulate subjects, their bodies and desires; it is of the heterosexual matrix, as it points out someone who should have been assumed to be heterosexual, but who has some indication of not being so; it is a discursive operator that aims, through acts of denotational function, such as certain mannerisms, to point out or make explicit a referential sexuality in a supposedly unequivocal way (Neves Júnior, 2022, p. 1040, free translation).

Therefore, the decadence that opposes completeness in Sedgwick's writing (1990) represents the fear caused by this device, or rather, by the interpretative possibility that it may have. However, it is essential to highlight that, like gender, sexualities are not merely natural, but represent a historical-discursive process constructed at the core of identities to meet the demand of a period (Foucault, 2005). Furthermore, desire itself is constructed in a similar way, being “mobile and inconstant”, which places *gaydar* as an attempt to guarantee a constitutive

matrix of individuals, “it does not point to identity, but to difference, the 'opposite', the Otherness, that which escapes the heteronormative matrix” (Neves Júnior, 2022, p. 1040, *free translation*).

Other 19th century taxonomies, such as the “addict” and the “homosexual,” also bring together some problematic aspects of thought, such as the anti-sodomy stance that defended nature and repudiated everything that was unnatural; and the emergence of the opposition between natural substances considered necessary, such as food, and artificial ones, such as drugs (Sedgwick, 1990). In short, unnecessary desires were vices, and therefore, in the 20th century, people began to question the naturalness of all desire.

Desires were questioned and responded to with silence, prohibition and non-existence, thus, Foucault (2005) identified the “pleasure economy”: a tendency in which sex should be restricted only to marriage with reproductive intent, while all those who were not in these conditions should save their sexual energies and transform them into the driving force of profitable relationships.

Sedgwick (1990, p. 76) relates closets and *coming outs* to the idea that: “The revelation of identity in the space of intimate love effortlessly overturns an entire public system of the natural and the unnatural, the pure and the impure.” While from another perspective, Paul Preciado (2022) presents “countersexuality” as a denial of the natural and an adaptation to the technologies of the body and substances. These are not necessarily opposing views, but they present possibilities for thinking about a future of recognition that does not involve the risks of the artificial, but that encompasses them as accepted paths in the face of limitations.

Current phenomena such as the use of hormones and medications for performative gender adaptation, the use of narcotics during sexual relations (*chemsex*), and high rates of psychosocial suffering among LGBTQIA+ people, as described in Paul Preciado's experience in “Testo Junkie” (2018), lead to the perception of the presence of this link of artificiality with this social group.

Observing together the concepts of pharmacopornography (Preciado, 2018) and the relationships established by the natural/artificial binomial (Sedgwick, 1990), under the evolution of punishments and the history of sexuality addressed by Foucault (2005; 2014) can represent an alternative on the path to identifying the social stigmatization of LGBTQIA+ people, whether by medicine or law, as well as promoting a critical discussion on the elaboration of public policies.

The idea that artificial substances, objects and technologies are assimilated to queer people derives from the idea that everything that comes from nature also comes from God and

is therefore correct. Under the same logic, that which is created artificially is placed in an unnatural position, as if it represented an idea of opposition to what is divine (Sedgwick, 1990). Some examples arising from this relationship are in the statements we hear in everyday life such as “if you were born that way, it’s okay” or “it’s an abomination of nature”.

There is also another interpretation of decadence, this time linked to the *utopia/apocalypse binomial*. The death of the queer character in one of the books analyzed leads Sedgwick (1990) to the perception of the tragic formation of a modern homosexual identity – I expand this interpretation to transsexual and queer people as a whole, especially when considering the association of these groups of people.

The identity, considered emerging at the time, represented a level of individual fatality that was inherently associated with queerness, something that Sedgwick (1990) considered as the culmination of the suicidal routines and car crashes represented in cinema and in reality. Furthermore, she thought that the *aftermath* would be even worse – utopia or apocalypse.

The book called “*The Celluloid Closet*” by Vito Russo (1987) inspired the theorist in this fatalistic look at the decadent reality of the period. The work observes the main cinematic productions about the representation of people who diverge from cisheteronormativity until the year of release, and concludes that mainstream films are not for gays, they are for the majority. The problem was never visibility, but the way these people were portrayed was offensive, and did not cooperate with the change in the social interpretation of this minority, and others, such as those cited by Russo (1987) women, Chinese people and black people.

Cinema was just one of the influences on this thinking. The biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah, for example, contributed significantly to the Western discourse that “the end” would be with genocide and death (Sedgwick, 1990). These are exemplary punishments, exemplary, violent and tortuous deaths, which take the form of fire, chemicals, hunting, concentration camps, beatings and, on the other hand, the maintenance of the topos of queer association with fatality (Sedgwick, 1990). Thus, fear and paranoia about the future are perpetuated: of these people; of those who surround them; and of those who fear being interpreted in this way.

(...) one of the few areas of agreement among Marxist, Nazi, and modern liberal capitalist ideologies is that there is a peculiarly close, though never precisely defined, affinity between same-sex desire and some historical condition of moribundity, called “decadence,” to which not individuals or minorities but entire civilizations are subject. Bloodletting on a scale more massive by orders of magnitude than any gay minority presence in the culture is the “cure,” if there is one, for the deadly disease of decadence (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 128, free translation).



In a broad and superficial way, there are significant changes in this thinking, however, it is not as expressive as one would like.

Mozdzinski (2019) presents a contemporary and more positive view of a phenomenon called “*Outvertising*”, which refers to advertising’s attempt to reverse the stigmas and negative views that have historically been assimilated into the LGBTQIA+ community through deconstructionist and representative advertisements. This advertising movement adopts an activist discourse in favor of social minorities, bringing them to the screen to the detriment of hegemonic content.

Among the advertisements analyzed by Mozdzinski (2019), one stands out in my eyes and in this study, mainly due to its link between the transsexual body and crime. Here is a brief description:

In the ad, a black woman is seen from behind, standing up and urinating in a urinal in a dark men's bathroom. She is wearing a tight, short black strapless dress that reveals the lace details on the hem of her 7/8 stockings. With one hand, the girl is leaning against the wall and, with the other, she is supposedly holding her penis. In the verbal linguistic segment of the advertisement, the campaign's slogan is prominently displayed in large yellow letters: “Piracy is a CRIME!” The statement consists of an exclamatory sentence with a categorical, assertive, and admonishing tone. In addition, the phrase mobilizes our discursive memory (Courtine, 2009) about campaigns against the trade of pirated CDs and DVDs, that is, non-original, non-genuine ones (Mozdzinski, 2019, p. 199, free translation).

This is a demonstration of the phenomenon called “transcriminalization,” in which people are led to believe that transgender identity is criminal, either by breaking with a hegemonic physical and performative standard (as firm as the law) or by inciting the criminal association of trans people (Mozdzinski, 2019). This was also observed by Serra (2017) in rulings by the Court of Justice of São Paulo, in which a transvestite is considered a “person prone to crime” with her narrative ignored to the detriment of two police officers who did not even witness the facts analyzed. It should also be noted that in both the advertising and judicial examples, the authors highlight the markers of class and race identified in the studies; in the first, semiotics can be seen, and in the second, murder and violence (Mozdzinski, 2019; Serra, 2017).

The attempt at *Outvertising* is valid, but the interests behind the screens are capitalist and must be questioned in their own way. Certainly, there is still much to discuss and improve regarding representation and the discursive effects it has, but it is important to clarify that criticism must still extend to concepts of pink money, pinkwashing, sanitized assimilation of queer people and brandification (Mozdzinski, 2019). Phenomena like this are important

because, as elucidated by Preciado (2018, p. 47, free translation), “the individual body functions as an extension of global communication technologies”.

These relationships and attempts from various theoretical areas influence the critical questioning of binaries, especially in Brazil, whose colonial heritage reflects European problems rewritten with regional markers. This is what Masseno (2023) argues:

Regarding gender issues and, mainly, sexuality in Brazil, the discursive articulation of binary pairs has become a "fine suit" for the demarcation of sexes, gender identities and sexual practices, as well as their respective transit and expressiveness in our social sphere. Therefore, in Brazilian society the linguistic mark of the slash (/) has become present - a graphic symbol that reinforces polarities and limits in the transition between one pole and the other. At the heart of homosexual activism, for example, which began to take shape in Brazil in the 1960s, the graphic-discursive demarcation of the slash became present through the constant use of the verb "to assume", which was not without resonance of the idea of coming out, present in the North American gay and lesbian movements. This political attitude of enunciating sexuality or, if we prefer, of the homosexual subject's "coming out of the closet", resulted in greater visibility of the dichotomies public/private, family life/secret life, heterosexuality/homosexuality. Interestingly, this policy is paradoxical in view of the history of sexual practices and manifestations of desire and gender in Brazilian society, establishing a "critical customs" (in which the slash is a mandatory symbol) that previously did not exist in the national territory, since the limits between homosexuality and heterosexuality, for example, and especially in the working classes, were an ambiguous and generalized frontier (Masseno, 2023, p. 75, free translation).

With these positions, the “weight of the bar” highlights the internal difficulties suffered by those who deal with closets. Although these may be more positive experiences, the social atmosphere is full of examples of decadence, fatalism and violence against queer people, so inserting oneself into an institutional arrangement that understands these aspects and does not reproduce them becomes a complicated task.

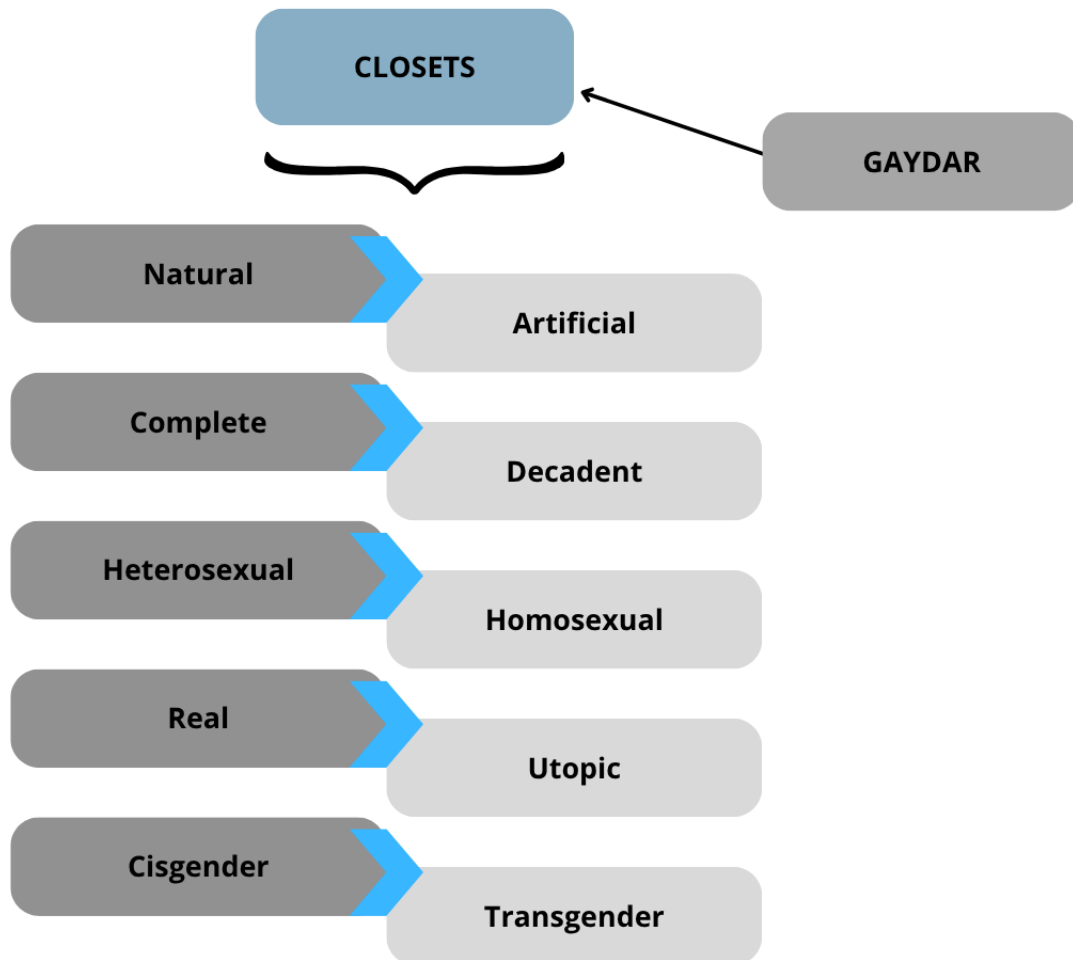
In the family, at school, in the hospital, in the police, binaries grow as the representation of “being one thing” and the impossibility of being another. Or even the denial of the construction of desires (or the absence thereof), and the orientation of sexual and romantic practices, such as the limitation of partners and the need for assimilation. Within organizations, in addition to the topics described, there is still the possibility of financial and moral harm, and the opportunity for the reproduction of equally harmful behaviors.

Understanding binarisms, or what cinema and advertising represent, or *gaydar* may seem to be somewhat distant from the object of study presented here, but despite not being directly connected, they are essential tools for interpreting the phenomenon of the closet. A system that shortcuts certain types of people due to the way they appear needs instruments such as sexuality devices (closets and *gaydar*) so that a clear message of aversion and intolerance is transmitted. Furthermore, playing with the notions of what is natural, complete, real,

heterosexual, cisgender in contrast to another single opposing and inferior vision of artificial, decadent, utopian, homosexual or transsexual is one of the ways in which the discourse is socially transmitted.

The schematic of how these concepts work can be seen in the following image:

**Figure 1- Social Transmission of Discourse on Closets**



Source: Own authorship.

In this representation, the arrow and the bracket represent the discourses, while the “greater than” signs show the hierarchy between one concept and another. The discourse arising from *gaydar* focuses on the closet, whatever it may be, with a view of the Other on the subject. In turn, the closet interpreted through the eyes of others gives rise to binarisms, opposing ideas that establish a relationship of superiority of the first term over the second.

In terms of discursive diffusion, traditional institutions, such as family, church and marriage would already be sufficient, but modernization also adapts to a system of restraints to

criminalize bodies and demarcate a line that defines the limits for *queer people*. Whether it is life, safety, access to rights, sexual or bodily practices, but, above all, maintaining a constant reminder that *the rope always breaks on the weakest side* – and that this can happen at any moment and where least expected – this is what the categories of panic and paranoia represent and that I speak of now.

### 3.3. Panic and Paranoia

As presented, binaries function as discursive visualizations of two opposing views in a hierarchical position, used to the detriment of sexual dissidence, which is in this still misunderstood social limbo. I propose that we think about the personal and relational repercussions that closets cause. I discuss here the binarism of sentimentality and anti-sentimentality, and two more concepts developed by Eve Sedgwick, which will help in understanding the effects of the control of sexuality highlighted in the previous session: panic and paranoia.

The sentimental aspect is extensively elaborated by Eve in her works, and the author is one of the main creators of the so-called Affect Theories, especially with the seminal work “*Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy , Performativity*” (2003), in which she dealt with affects and the complex relationships in which they appear, such as identity, literature and politics. Her contributions stand out with regard to the materiality of affects and the effects they have on society.

At this point, one of the most important points in Eve's theoretical contributions refers to the intense manifestation of affections regarding the formation of individual and collective identities in the face of sexuality and gender identities. Affections therefore constitute subversive structures that produce the subjectivities of subjects and can have repercussions on politics or on the conformation of norms of the social body (Sedgwick, 2003). To reinforce this approach, I bring a speech from a video in which Judith Butler was a speaker – presented to me in Galuppo 's autobiography (2019), in which she quotes:

Love is not part of all alliances; sometimes we are allied with those we love, sometimes we are not. Sometimes we ally in order to establish the right to love and to live free from harm, to defend and preserve spaces of desire in both public and private settings (Butler, 2015a, transcript).

It is important to highlight the power that these sentimental manifestations have in a positive way, before it is necessary to delve into the negative side of the binomial formed between sentimental and anti-sentimental. In Adriana Galuppo's study (2019) on the right to the city of dissident people, she highlights the erotic and political connection that these feelings have in building unified spaces and subjects, even if it is not through love, but through empathy arising from necessity.

That's how I see popular phrases that refer to expressions of sexuality and gender as merely transmuted into "love". A quick internet search can provide an example, but one example is the *hashtag Love Wins*, which, despite being emotional, productive and strategic, does not encompass all aspects of non-sentimental desire to be discussed. These are themes that are relevant to academia and represent the power that affections have in the construction of social reality. The expression cited even refers to the love that exists between *queer people*, images of sapphic and Aquileian couples surrounded by rainbow colors, with the aim of helping to achieve political and civil rights for LGBTQIA+ people.

In the interim of *Epistemology*, there are several mentions of sentimentality, initially referring to the differentiation between people and the exercise of each person's sexuality. When dealing specifically with coming out, it is important to consider that the advantage of an individual's revelation is limited, but that it can exert collective and institutional influence in the face of existing oppressions. Sedgwick (1990) recognizes the disproportionality between acts of coming out and the limited effects they have, such as mere classification in a given space, such as "coming out of the political closet" or "coming out of the family closet", but she highlights the disruptive power they have. However, "in the theatrical presentation of an already institutionalized ignorance there is no transformative potential to be sought" (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 78).

The theorist shows that it is the possibilities that define the structures of an epistemology of the closet, since thinking exhaustively about what can happen and acting on these thoughts represents a driving force for social change.

The first binary in which the relationship between sentimentality is established is in contrast with sincerity. But how does being sincere mean not being sentimental or vice versa? And how does this impact the relationships of the closet in institutions? In this case, sincerity is placed in a position of non-sentimentality, a moment in which it is possible to observe the limits between public and private and the forced effects of the need to fit one of these instances into the other.

For this discussion, it is useful to think of sentimentality as one of the facets of the subject that must be put aside in order to make a difficult decision, while it must be presented subtly so as not to make an exaggerated statement about the weight of the choice made (Sedgwick, 1990). Similarly, the decision of a police officer who has to deal with people he resembles (by sexuality, for example) in the face of a crime, but who, at the same time, must fulfill organizational functions that do not harm him or put him in a closet.

Furthermore, the suffering that becomes public, in its own measure, is not necessarily pretense. It must be recognized that there may be a space, perhaps even a physical one, in which the individual can truly demonstrate his or her true affections – perhaps a closet, as in the initial sense that Bobker (2020) brings in the royal courts. Or that Sedgwick (1990, p. 119, free translation) positions: “(...) not just in the closet of a small cabin, but in the closet of a subjunctive grammar whose preteritive effect is to highlight the sacred/taboo importance of the single embrace, investing it with the maximally liminal ontological and epistemological position”.

In this sense, the binomial of sincerity/sentimentality differs from sentimentality/anti-sentimentality, mainly due to the way in which the term common to both relationships is interpreted.

It is common in the literature on the subject to state that there is not just one type of sexuality, nor is there a single way to deal with it, having multiple manifestations in different spaces (Sedgwick, 1990; Foucault, 2005; Lee, 2011; Butler, 2018). From the 18th century onwards, the family environment was of great importance for the “birth of sexuality” and for the four major strategies of control, which are the devices of hysterization of the woman's body, the pedagogization of the child's sex, the socialization of procreative behaviors, and the psychiatrization of perverse pleasure (Foucault, 2005).

Each of these power devices has its own ways of acting and controlling, mainly through institutional discourses in the family, medical, religious and legal spheres. However, what is relevant at this point in observing these strategic sets is the extent to which the role of women has been stigmatized and transformed into a target of “knowledge” (Foucault, 2005).

Both hysterization, socialization and psychiatrization represented a way of ensuring that the socialization of subjects would be carried out with a view to reproduction, family maintenance, and the mitigation of female (hyper)sexuality. In this movement of imprisoning sex and sexuality to the marital bedroom and to sexual practices of vaginal penetration aimed at fertilization, a woman's functions were defined as mother and wife (Foucault, 2005). In other words, the main guarantor that the family space would be functional and adequate.

This “system of marriage, of establishing and developing kinships, of transmitting names and goods” constitutes what Foucault (2005, p. 99, free translation) calls the “alliance device”. The attempt to overcome it came with the “sexuality device”, discussed previously, but which, in a certain way, establishes a binary relationship with the previous one, and can be distinguished in the following way:

The alliance device is structured around a system of rules that defines what is permitted and what is prohibited, what is prescribed and what is illicit; the sexuality device functions according to mobile, polymorphic and conjunctural techniques of power. The alliance device counts, among its main objectives, that of reproducing the web of relationships and maintaining the law that governs them; the sexuality device engenders, in return, a permanent extension of the domains and forms of control. For the first, what is relevant is the bond between partners with a defined status; for the second, it is the sensations of the body, the quality of pleasures, the nature of impressions, however tenuous or imperceptible they may be. Finally, if the alliance device is strongly linked to the economy due to the role it can play in the transmission or circulation of wealth, the sexuality device is linked to the economy through numerous and subtle articulations, the main one being the body - the body that produces and consumes. In short, the alliance device is ordered towards a homeostasis of the social body, which it is its function to maintain; hence its privileged link with law; hence, also, the fact that the decisive moment, for it, is "reproduction". The device of sexuality has, as its *raison d'être*, not to reproduce, but to proliferate, innovate, annex, invent, penetrate bodies in an increasingly detailed manner and control populations in an increasingly global manner (Foucault, 2005, p. 100, free translation).

Thus, it is possible to understand at this time the assimilation of sexuality to the female body, which in turn was considered as the conductor of the sentimentality of the loving wife and caring mother. In the transition from the device of alliance to that of sexuality, the family established itself as a representative of this moment, with the ability to transport discursive arguments of religion and law to the private space (Foucault, 2005).

Feminist theories of the 19th century focused their efforts on understanding these roles attributed to women, and among them, a key notion for this study is the visualization of sentimentality as inherent to women, that is, everything that is affectionate also refers to other “female characteristics” (Sedgwick, 1990).

Foucault (2005) considers that in this combination of the devices of alliance and sexuality, many other problems arose, which led to the assistance of specialists and the development of these instruments of control in a similar way to the technologies of flesh in classical Christianity. Sedgwick (1990) follows this religious relational logic to express how much of the male and female image was constructed in observation of Christian images, and how this phenomenon affects the interpretation of contemporary sexuality.

According to Sedgwick (1990), 19th-century feminism strongly criticized the category “sentimental” as a negative characteristic whose meaning referred to domesticity, crying, reproduction, and the fragilities and concerns arising from hysteria, pregnancy, and illness. The very devaluation of sentimentality led to other stigmatized understandings of women, such as: the lack of connection with work and the economy, the inherent presence of a vocation for care, and the predisposition to degrading illnesses.

A similar relationship is proposed in the observation of effeminate men, masculine women, trans people, or individuals (regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity) who subvert the performative appearance of the gender they were assigned at birth. When femininities appear outside the body of a cisgender woman, they are considered wrong, and the same interpretation occurs when masculinities appear outside the bodies of cisgender men. These manifestations occur in a different way to what the feminist approach presents, despite being similar.

A key concept in the closet theory regarding feelings is the observation of the phenomenon of “male self-pity,” which helps to understand the explicit incoherence present in sex-gender systems. One of the main points of Sedgwick’s work (1990) is the construction of homosexuality as relational to heterosexuality, as interdependent on each other. This is what can be observed in the manifestations of this self-pity, belonging only to cisgender men who do not have sexual relationships with other men, who, “blessed” by feminism, received the gift of sentimentality, and the position of social victims of female empowerment – men can also be sentimental.

Obviously, the manifestation of sentiment is not a problem in itself, but the use of this male self-pity constitutes a heterosexual regime with the potential to be interpreted as an open secret (similar to that of queer people in the closet), and which, eventually, victimizes other social groups to the detriment of one's own sentimentality (Sedgwick, 1990).

The sacred tear of the heterosexual man: a rare and precious liquor whose properties, we are led to believe, are rivaled only by the *lacrimae Christi*, whose secretion is so great a specialty of religious kitsch. What charm, compared to this chrism of the gratuitous, can reside in the predictable tears of women, of gay men, of people with something to cry about? (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 146, free translation)

In short, *'the devil hears the cry of a faggot'* or *'the cry of a whore, God doesn't hear'* - popular phrases<sup>4</sup> with a comical intent present on social media that carry exactly the concept

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<sup>4</sup> In Brazilian Portuguese, these sentences constitute rhymes which cause humorous impact in social media.



brought by Eve. Even the presence of the figures of God and the Devil in the rhymes refer to the religious discourse present in the mixture of the devices of alliance and sexuality brought by Foucault (2005). After all, who will listen to the demands and sentimentalities of those who only know how to complain or ask for more rights? The same ones who cry all the time?

This male body is not named as the site or topos of sentimentalism, the way the home, the female body, and women's reproductive labor had been in the mid-nineteenth century. Instead, the relations of figuration and perception that circulate around it, including antisentimentalism, can be said to enact sentimentalism as a trope (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 146, free translation).

Sentimentality is devalued because of its similarity to the feminine, while anti-sentimentality is preferable, since it brings with it the firm position of heterosexual, centered, and neutral men – capable of performing paternal and protective functions. The characteristics necessary for good soldiers (Foucault, 2014; Huntington, 2016).

This movement of intersection between affections, gender roles and open secrets generates a reflection theorized by Eve in some of her works, which are: panic and paranoia. Important categories in closet theory, and which will be used as theoretical classifications in the research method presented in subtopic 2.2.

In Renaissance England, important movements took place that made it possible to observe the policing of sexual expressions; this is what Bray (1982) sees, who reports the non-existence of exact hostility towards homosexuality, but rather a reaction to the idea of hostility. This was due to the slow and subtle creation of a *queer subculture* that led to the interpretation of some clothing, gestures, language and spaces as full of homosexual connotations.

There were spaces in 18th century London called “*molly houses*”, which were meeting places for groups of men with effeminate characteristics and sexual interests among themselves (Bateman, 2015). The word *molly* referred to a type of female prostitute, and which was later used to describe the patrons of these places, who were not necessarily what we would consider today as just homosexual, but also transsexuals and *drag queens*. Norton (2016) argues that the evidence from these places was one of the most important ways to recognize the act of cross-dressing in the past, with men tending to subvert for the purpose of expressing desire or identity, while most women cross-dressed to demand treatment similar to that which men received in society – it was not a rule, but it was the majority.

They resemble the architectural cabinets that Bobker (2020) presents in European courts, being taverns or private rooms where meetings took place. At some time, *molly houses* became spaces of surveillance by agents of the so-called “Society for the Reform of Morals”,

which sought to cleanse the city of prostitutes, sodomites and those who disrespected the *Sabbath* – the biblical seventh-day rest (Bateman, 2015).

Then followed a series of persecutions, arrests, and trials, which even led to hanging for sodomy (Bateman, 2015; Norton, 2016). An interesting fact about the period was that the *mollies* referred to the sexual act as “marrying”, in irony to the sexual economy of reproduction, highlighted by Foucault (1999).

Legal persecutions were disproportionate to the identity that was fixed around a different sexuality. At this time, *molly houses* begin to represent institutions for the socialization of these people (Sedgwick, 1985; 1990) and the constitution of an identity subculture (Bray, 1982).

*Molly houses* had an “obvious” and vulnerable character and were not difficult to find. What is surprising is the contradiction in being prohibited and, at the same time, seeming to be encouraged. In reality, the meeting spaces were tolerated and constituted a tense sphere on alert to violence. The author suggests that they served a dual purpose of ensuring that homosexuality did not spread, but that it continued to exist (Bray, 1982).

The “homosexual” that I speak of at this moment in history was still a poorly developed category, and interpreted strongly under religious, medical and legal discourses, and it represented the possible difference between the behaviors that were permitted among men and fell within the classification of “deviant” (Bray, 1982; Sedgwick, 1985).

As Sedgwick (1985) argues, the bonds formed between men (not just those of desire) are reflected in the relationships of/with women, and in the ways in which these bonds are defined, controlled and manipulated. Thus, the creation of a “homosexual” category does not only mean that there is a regulation of a desire or of a minority of subjects, but it does imply the existence of a certain possibility of privilege above other relationships between men that are not named.

What is the name given when a man has great admiration for another who is not a family member or brother? And what about when there are very close gym buddies? Or when a religious man gives advice to another man? These questions are not unanswerable riddles, since we could respond with admiration, friendship, and respect, respectively. But what I want to show is how none of these relationships are named from the perspective of desire and therefore are privileged over those that are.

In dialogue between the writings of Sedgwick (1985) and Bray (1982), it is clear that interpreting homophobia as an instrument of behavioral regulation of a group that one wishes to oppress may be more productive than creating another category to control other groups. In

other words, the existence of a regime of violence against LGBTQIA+ people is also used to control heterosexual and cisgender people, so no one will dare to subjugate themselves to a vulnerable category because they know in advance that the response will not be positive, even if it costs their own subjectivity.

Here is a practical example: a straight man, out of fear of being interpreted as gay and going through what he knows these people suffer, is also controlled by the idea that homophobia can also affect him. In this way, both gay and bisexual men fear homophobia as much as straight men. The same case can be thought of with other genders and identities.

With this constant fear about relationships, there is the notion of panic, which is similar to that of genocide and terrorism, insofar as they present themselves in a relationship of mechanism and result, means to an end. These European observations also fit the Brazilian reality in many aspects, but, in this specific case, Sedgwick (1985, p. 88, free translation) shows that genocide (as an intentional tool) was not a possibility in the South American territory, given that the regional difficulty was the control of power over labor: "(...) only the specifically disproportionate effect of terrorism, made possible by the randomness of violence, gave the necessary advantage without destroying the body on which it was supposed to work" (*sic*).

This is not a denial of the mass death of black and enslaved people in the territory of colonial Brazil, but an observation regarding the instruments of violence as theoretical categories. Since the *demand* was over the bodies of these people and the labor that would be extracted from them, they could not be completely destroyed, only punished and terrorized in other ways, such as panic and terrorism, in constant forms with punishments that could happen at any time for any reason.

This is what constitutes the randomness of violence as one of the points explained by Sedgwick (1990) as one of the motivators of male panic as a whole. We cannot just talk about homosexual panic, because the fear was not only of them, but of any person who did not perform masculinity/femininity to the "correct" extent, and these are patterns that persist (Butler, 2010; Lee, 2011). In this way, the experiences of *molly houses* and other persecutions incited a fear that persisted in people with dissident sexuality, but also in those who did not have it, since punitive violence could happen at any time, and was subject to the gaze of others. Therefore, the company of other men, regardless of the relationship between them, could be interpreted as sexual and therefore punished (Sedgwick, 1990).

The randomness of violence is also evident in the differences between the European and South American realities. In Europe, it was not necessary to have a different "*queer*" category to exercise power over bodies, but it was necessary to ensure that there was a substantial

difference in the bonds between men. Therefore, to maintain this disproportionate relationship, the power demonstrated had to be random, unpredictable, and related to the idea of “crime,” which would obviously be regulated and repudiated by society as a whole (Sedgwick, 1990; 1985). In the case of South America, the lynchings of black men exemplify this logic, in which approximately one third of these men were accused of rape as a way of legitimizing the terror inflicted on bodies (Sedgwick, 1985).

With the mobilization of terror and panic, subjects gave in to the paranoia of thinking that at any moment they could be accused of deviant acts. The categories of sexuality nomination served this purpose: some individuals really should fear because it is their own subjectivity, while others should fear being confused with the first group and suffering for it. It is at this point that *gaydar* can be extremely dangerous when “used” by state agents.

Currently, the themes of the right to the city, such as in Galuppo (2019) and Faria (2023), which specifically analyze the city of Belo Horizonte – Minas Gerais, help in understanding how some spaces are designated to exclude or intimidate the presence of queer people, as is the case with bathrooms, parks and shopping centers. The random violence that could previously be witnessed in *molly houses* or in bars like the Stonewall Inn, it transforms into these environments in the cities, but also into everyday life in which a mere crossing of legs or gestures can represent “something”.

Therefore, panic and paranoia intertwine as tools that affect not only queer people, but everyone. Healthy and standardized social behavior is guaranteed under a simple logic: no one wants to be violated. In this way, both in the past and in the present:

molly house harassments were of a pogrom nature<sup>5</sup>, that the overtly homosexual man would not know whether or not to expect to be the object of legalized violence. But a more subtle and responsive strategy, complementary to this, was also needed to consolidate control over the ties of men who were not part of the overtly homosexual subculture. Not only should homosexual men be unable to determine whether they should be the object of “random” homophobic violence, but no man should be able to verify that he is not (that his ties are not) homosexual. Thus, a relatively small effort of physical or legal compulsion potentially governs large ranges of behavior and affiliation” (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 89, free translation).

What remains of the European experience in Brazil, for example, is the residual structure of a potential for terror, of an extortion of secrets that ensure that homophobia and transphobia perpetuate in the West, since masculinity must be assured and legitimized at all times

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<sup>5</sup>“Pogroms” were violent persecutions involving destruction of property and religious character, commonly against Jews. Alan Bray (1982) calls them “legalized pogroms” when practiced against groups of men with a supposed homosexual identity in the late 17th century, and with the consent of the authorities.

(Sedgwick, 1985). Especially within spaces where distancing between subjects is necessary - as is the case with the military, who must distance themselves from civilians (Huntington, 2016).

The so-called "homosexual" is the most private, psychologized way in which many twentieth-century Western men experience their vulnerability to the social pressure of homophobic blackmail; even for them, however, this is only one avenue of control, complementary to the public sanctions through the institutions described by Foucault and others as defining and regulating the amorphous territory of the "sexual" (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 89, free translation).

It is interesting to think about how tenuous the line between homosocial and homosexual becomes, especially regarding relationships of masculinity between men. The comparison that the author makes is between football and gyms, where relationships between men are firmly expressed, but which are not considered punishable, while same-sex marriages are still highly reprehensible, even though they are legal. This is another double-binding system, as exemplified by Sedgwick (1985) with women in cases of rape: "capitalist society" asks them to dress in an attractive and feminine way, but when they behave in this way and are raped, they are accused of being too attractive, or that they "asked for it".

It must be assumed that the panic theorized in the 18th century is not the same as that experienced in the 21st century, especially with the evolution of laws and public policies in terms of 'diversity and inclusion'. But, at the same time, it is also possible to perceive the invisible rope that separates 'our' side from the other side. And I suppose (from a heterosexual and cisgender perspective) that it is also possible to perceive this difference between sides, since there is a blur that opaquifies what is homo, hetero, bi, trans, lesbian, pan...

These were observations made in Eve's work "*Between Men*", which preceded *Epistemology*, but which uses the same method of literary criticism, but observing homosocial relationships and their consequences for women. With this, the author considers that some classic (gothic) works touch on this theme, in which one or more men are persecuted by others, or consider themselves visible and vulnerable to the compulsion of another man – this is paranoia. To complement, in reading Freud, Sedgwick (1985, p. 91) points out that the renowned author considers that "*paranoia is the psychosis that makes the mechanism of homophobia graphic*".

In terms more focused on the Epistemology of the closet applied in Criminology, and from a perspective related to masculinity and its effects on society, Sedgwick (1990, p. 186, free translation) argues:

If compulsory relationships such as male friendship, mentorship, identification admiration, bureaucratic subordination, and heterosexual rivalry involve forms of investment that force men into the arbitrarily mapped, self-contradictory, and anathema-ridden quicksands of the middle distance of male homosocial desire, then it seems that men enter adult male entitlement only through their acceptance of the permanent threat that the small space they have carved out for themselves on this terrain can always, just as arbitrarily and with just as much justification, be foreclosed. The result of men's adherence to this double bind is, first, the acute manipulability, through fear of their own "homosexuality," of acculturated men; and second, a reservoir of potential for violence caused by the self-ignorance that this regime constitutively imposes. The historical emphasis on the enforcement of homophobic rules in the military, for example, in England and the United States supports this analysis. In these institutions, where men's manipulability and potential for violence are at their highest, the prescription of the most intimate male bond and the proscription of (notably cognate) "homosexuality" are stronger than in civil society—they are, in fact, absolute strengths.

With this, the legal argument cited above called “homosexual panic” is a reduction of what this category can represent, and the best term to describe it would be “male panic” (Sedgwick, 1990), or simply “panic”, since it is a phenomenon that adapts to the gender and identity of the subject who manifests it. However, what is most relevant at this moment for understanding the consequences of these effects is the idea that “everyone is in a panic”. The paranoia of open secrets placed together in social bodies, in the face of performative evolutions and hasty interpretations (see *gaydar*) opens a potential for violence that is inscribed in discourses and organizations.

Like other categories presented, the relationship between sentimentality/anti-sentimentality, panic and paranoia with crime is close, especially regarding crime repression. Public security activity values what is considered masculine and distances itself from what is sentimental, which, in a context of sexuality, can be interpreted as weakness or incompetence, therefore, closets become necessary for self-protection.

It is to be expected that a person would not want to be understood as something they are not for a variety of reasons. However, the constant search to try not to be understood within the queer landscape causes people to manifest a certain level of paranoia out of fear of what might happen. Panic, in turn, is mobilized to cause this fear, so that everyone feels repressed.

By reflecting these categories within *Queer* criminology, especially among crime repression agents, we can see the influence that these topics arising from closets can have on the treatment. Thus, police officers within their institutions can both replicate the notion of anti-sentimentality and suffer because of it, in addition to reinforcing notions of panic in the social body, since, when dealing with a reality considered “correct” and healthy, this must be constantly reiterated to ensure that everyone fears being victimized in some way.

Having explained the most relevant categories of the Epistemology of the Closet for this study, along with some of my own contributions on the contemporary *queer criminological reality*, I now move on to the next section of this study. I will deal, in general terms, with *queer criminology* as an area of incipient but extremely necessary studies, considering the contemporary reality and the history of the study of crime. I will highlight here the role of the State as a major and influential force in the way crimes are dealt with, as well as, within policing as one of the important groups of study for the *queer* criminological strand, with the presentation of some data and an overview of the influences of the union between Closet Theory and Criminology.

## 4. QUEER CRIMINOLOGY: INTERPERSONAL EFFECTS OF CONTROL

### 4.1. Crime and sexuality before the State and the need for a Queer Criminology

The State is observed in various disciplines and in different ways. However, this word is seen as representing a monolithic, unique agent responsible for some actions. In Political Science and General Theory of the State, for example, it is possible to distinguish that it is an entity that constitutes the governmental representation of countries, but what is ignored is that for the gears of this system to function, numerous servants are necessary, each with a specific position and function in the functioning of what concerns everyone.

The behaviors practiced within the social body characterized by specific behaviors of determined subjects are multiple and have countless possibilities of observation, classification and reflections, however, those that conflict with the institutionalized way of understanding phenomena receive different meanings, whether by law, by the guaranteeing agents and/or participants in social coexistence (Zaffaroni; Pierangeli, 2021).

It should also be considered that, from this perspective, the characterization of offenses and crimes is carried out through legislation and the actions of public servants – called by Zaffaroni and Pierangeli (2021) as an “institutionalized common mode”. With this notion in place, there is the latent presence and essential role of the State in defining actions and behaviors as criminal or innocent, as well as in the protection and sanction of subjects.

The evolution of the State's role in controlling activities considered criminal went through historical moments that helped in the choice of instruments to mitigate and suppress behaviors that were not consistent with the order imposed by the highest power, in addition to being possible to identify that the most impactful damages caused to a greater number of people were not caused by people considered “criminals” (Foucault, 2005; Zaffaroni; Pierangeli, 2021).

The history of conflicts is diverse, with varied solutions and sanctions, depending on the region and cultural influences, which is why I highlight the existence of a process of choosing people who can be labeled as “delinquents”, or in disagreement, there is a process of choosing behaviors that are thus classified. Examples include homosexuality (or, analogously, witchcraft), which, despite still representing a conflict, has undergone a sophistication of punishments: from death and mutilation to prejudice and police arbitrariness (Zaffaroni; Pierangeli, 2021).



It is at this tangency that Criminal Law and Criminology meet, which differ but intertwine. While the former observes the commission and omission behaviors provided for by law and loaded with typicality and other predicates, the latter is at a disadvantage due to its own area of study: the interpretation of crime is highly diverse, with distinct epistemologies and fragmented and discordant ramifications. This point also elucidates the unlimited variety of research, phenomena and interpretations through the criminological perspective (Carvalho, 2012; Shecaira, 2020).

Sociology and psychology, for example, have become some of the main perspectives for observing criminal phenomena and their respective agents, given the interdisciplinary nature of Criminology (Shecaira, 2020). Lyra Filho (1972) recognizes that the number of pioneers in the criminological field linked to naturalism and positivism gave the study a biological nature. Thus, some concepts and inferences possible with the dialectical movement of discourses became minor concerns, since the view was polarized or merely unilateral. He cites Lombroso's biologism or Durkheim's sociologism as primary exponents.

These currents are mentioned as major influences in the study of crime and in the constitution of bodies as adequate or deviant (Lyra Filho, 1972; Groombridge, 1999).

Biologism is not exactly the main path in criminological studies today, but one can still perceive the reflections of the constitution of this study. As an example, the argument that the cause of criminality is anomalous chromosomes (Lyra Filho, 1972).

Therefore, conceptualizing Criminology involves the presence of many agents, whether state or intellectual, but broadly speaking, it is a study that aims to explain legal infractions and deviations, the ways (formal and informal) in which society deals with deviant acts, the characterization and nature of the victims and perpetrators involved in the facts (Shecaira, 2020).

Furthermore, to guarantee the social and internal coexistence of the members of a social body, disciplinary mechanisms are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of the objectives common to the group. This set can be called social control, and tends to subject individuals to the norms of the community in which they are registered, which can be: informal, when it comes to civil society institutions, such as family, school and work; or formal, when it comes to state institutions, such as Justice, Police, Penitentiaries, among others (Shecaira, 2020).

In short, the organization of society is the central parameter for defining what constitutes "aberration", and this concept involves the values and structure that are considered appropriate by the dominant classes (Lyra Filho, 1972). As a result, not all criminal offenses are considered legitimate by the population (see piracy); furthermore, principles such as due process of law

adequately protect those who are able to use it to their advantage, which further distances what is called "access to justice".

Criminological discourse did not begin peacefully, and has not yet reached this moment (Zaffaroni, 2021; Lyra Filho, 1972), given the number of instances and knowledge that seek to take it for themselves. After all, "no one underestimated the power of criminological discourse and the fight has always been tough, because it is a fight for power, no joke" (Zaffaroni, 2012, p. 59, free translation).

In short, there is a constant dispute for the hegemony of discourse (whatever it may be), but in this case, I will focus on the criminological one. Thus, there are multiple discourses that arise from spaces called by Zaffaroni (2012) "professional corporations", composed of subjects with specific training, a determined hierarchical organization, and with behaviors aimed at exercising power that pleases their interests.

It is in the face of these institutions that we see contradictions in the discourses given. A doctor will not interpret a phenomenon in the same way as a philosopher, or even, as exemplified by Zaffaroni (2012), a *wise* criminologist will not explain a criminal act like a *naive* criminologist. Thus, each professional corporation had its dose of discourses, created for internal control of individuals and for external power, both focused on automatic reproduction among social members.

This is knowledge for power, which derives from the notion that the more knowledge one has about nature, the more one can dominate it, and gave rise to the practices of violent inquisition in deviant cases even in the Middle Ages. The one who knows is the inquisitor, and "is always on a higher plane than the object or being interrogated, has God on his side, is an envoy of God to know, it is the Lord who asks in order to be able" (Zaffaroni, 2012, p. 65, free translation).

With this notion in mind, I put into perspective thinking about the interpretation of the open secret in a heteronormative society, such as the Western one. The instrument of *gaydar*, previously explained as a device for controlling sexuality (Neves Júnior, 2022; Foucault, 2005), represents in a practical way how knowledge and ignorance are just two sides of the same coin.

*Knowledge/Ignorance*, in the binary format, represents the hierarchy that the relations of knowledge and ignorance establish between subjects (Sedgwick, 1990). As previously highlighted, knowledge represents the magnetic field of power, and ignorance, manifested by silencing or opacity, disputes this energetic space of popular control.

Insofar as ignorance is ignorance of knowledge - knowledge that can, needless to say, be seen as true or false under some other regime of truth - these ignorances, far from being bits of the original darkness, are produced by and correspond to particular knowledges and circulate as part of particular regimes of truth (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 8, free translation).

Based on Sedgwick's (1990) first axiom that *all people are different* and the distinction of sexual manifestations, as listed in the Introduction of this study, it can be considered that self-knowledge is a privilege in the face of the ignorance of closets. This statement is made under a logic that Ross (2005) and Weiner (2021) would call “white *queer theories*”, because they only observe these experiences, but I believe that the opposite statement complements it: *the ignorance of closets can also be a privilege*.

Both ideas can be tangential to a violent panorama of assumptions of knowledge about someone regarding the open secrets they have, or even the repeated need to hide an essential part of their own subjectivity (closet). Sexuality, as the ultimate representative of intimacy, identity and knowledge, leaves a gap through which subtle violence can enter. The institutional effects and potential of this relationship presuppose a withdrawal of power from the Other (Sedgwick, 1990).

For those who do not understand this weight of the closet, I emphasize: even an “assumed” *queer person* (lesbian, trans, bi, gay, among others) needs to have enough knowledge about themselves to avoid physical and psychological violations. Or, a person who recognizes their orientation and identity as different from the cisheteronormative standard needs to perform a lack of enough knowledge (ignorance) to not be interpreted in a dangerous way in a hostile environment – see deepening/tuning the voice, controlling ways to ‘*not to dismantle*’, to get involved with people of the same sex (as ironic as it may be), among other countless ways of getting to know each other, making a secret known/unknown.

Furthermore, I extend this notion to the ideas of intersex or asexual people, which may be interpreted in ways that do not even match the way they identify. Or there are some people who have never identified as being in the closet in the way it is presented here, either because of the difference in the work they do or the community in which they grew up. As Ross (2005) and Mary Ross (2021) point out, there are black (and other) experiences that do not fit into this panorama, including some that preceded the Stonewall movement.

Thus, the relationships of the closet function through discourses and silencing, in the same way that Criminology is metamorphosed, which, in the terms of Zaffaroni (2012, p. 62, free translation): “more than progress, there is an accumulation: no discourse disappears, but rather they are repeated and, sometimes, a new one is added or two or more of the existing ones

are combined. It seems like a forest whose trees are immortal, which limit themselves to entwining themselves and changing their foliage.”

But if there is such a variety of subjects, experiences, crimes and behaviors, to what extent is it really productive to have a Criminology that focuses only on LGBTQIA+ people? Wouldn't this just be another postmodern tendency, as criticized by Elbert (2010), of taking a study in the direction of the researchers' own will? Or would it perhaps be a way of achieving privileges beyond those already achieved?

I present some cases, mainly taken from the studies of Lee (2011), who carried out intensive research in five countries to contemplate how they exercise control over sexuality within their own lands. The intention in presenting these cases is to elucidate reasons that are often hidden in the human trajectory and make critical discussion about the need for specific studies impossible.

Some examples of state control over sexuality can be found in history, such as Nazi Germany. In addition to the country's Aryan requirement, the natural German sex-gender system of the 1930s was that women's role would be merely maternal in order to save the country from decline, and men would serve as judges, soldiers or politicians. Hitler himself spoke out in repudiation of same-sex relations, arguing that moral restraints needed to be exercised so that the country's masculinity would not degenerate (Lee, 2011). Thus, kissing, eye contact and anal sex between men were criminalized by the German government.

A similar example is that of Italy under Mussolini's rule, one of the differences being the greater concern with femininity in men than homosexuality itself, with heterosexuals with these characteristics also perverting national pride (Lee, 2011).

Furthermore, the fight against racial, sexual and moral degeneration that came from deviants sought to reinvigorate masculinity, with the presence of firm, aggressive and authoritarian men, while the deviants were just ridiculed caricatures (Lee, 2011; Russo, 1987).

As previously highlighted, masculinity is the goal for men in heteronormativity. The problem focuses mainly on being effeminate, therefore, a submissive man is considered dishonorable or "equal to a woman" (Lee, 2011). This is something discussed by Sedgwick (1990) when he observes the sentimentality/anti-sentimental binomial, and which will be better addressed later.

Colonialism also significantly interfered in sexual relations between subjects, especially with regard to class and race. Colonial regulation affected the control of these relations given the sexual asymmetry that was formed in relation to the other powers used to subjugate others, for example, if a man married a slave, this would presuppose that they had equal roles and rights

in society, in addition to subjugating the man to marital and paternal virtue (if it were to occur) (Lee, 2011). And, in this situation, Brazil is included.

The rights discourses of native and culturally diverse people are important in observing the policing of sexuality, given the influence that religion has on a people and how this can effectively impact those who relate to the *cosmos* in different ways. Lee (2011) considers that religious institutions and culture, especially those that exercise a position of superiority, as is the case with Christianity, should be considered as “languages”, since they cross borders, are used imperceptibly, but have the potential to hinder conversation between subjects.

It is important to highlight that understanding religious discourses from a political perspective, especially regarding the usefulness of arguments and social impacts, cannot encompass all aspects of a problem, much less the only solution. Therefore, I do not consider that, theoretically, it is essential to seek final resolutions in these spaces, but rather contributions to understanding the discursive effects they have.

Cardoso Júnior and Couto (2018) highlight three main reasons why people keep their sexuality a secret: *fear of moral violence, loss of credibility and power at work, and recommendation from colleagues in the workplace*. One of the interviewees in this study highlighted how he felt discomfort in relation to his coworkers, who, with conservative characteristics and an extremely religious lifestyle, supposedly began to boycott projects within the company. In addition, coercion, “advice” and embarrassment were also mentioned.

Lee (2011) acknowledges something similar to Sedgwick's (1990) hypothesis when considering that a large portion of the Western imagination considers it as a source of degeneration and sexual immorality, whose set of symptoms include identity problems, social recognition, treatment of women and non-normative treatment of sexuality, especially of men. Furthermore, religion and urbanization are cited by the author as major influences on the socio-spatial consideration of trans people, especially due to the supposed obviousness of the performances.

From the perspective of urbanization, Faria (2023) observed in a similar way in the city of Belo Horizonte, the capital of Minas Gerais, where bathroom spaces, squares and communities exclude these people in a categorical and varied way. In this same sense, the capital is studied (in autobiographical format) by Galuppo (2019) and how it can constitute a *queer city*, in how dissident bodies come to have the right to the city and when they are spat upon by it.

When asked why states want to police citizens' sexuality, Lee (2011) points to numerous factors as an answer, but shows that it is impossible to isolate just one single cause. However,

there are some possible and more common reasons for these acts, such as: problems with the national identity of the subjects, religious and cultural impact, economic repercussions, among others.

As disappointing as these examples may be for a conscious society, they do not represent new phenomena, but merely constant reinterpretations of some of the defense mechanisms of masculinity. Some of these instruments are constantly being remade, turned around, and even created, as is the case with *gaydar*, which allows others to interpret whatever they want, legislative mechanisms, budget cuts, or everyday things.

I recently saw a video on social media in which a guy in a car was repeatedly hit by paintballs by another guy. The caption explained the context: the first guy had said that the other was "cute", and then the second felt the need to defend himself against the compliment. Another video showed a man climbing stairs rubbing himself against the railing, because the steps were painted with the colors of the LGBT flag. These may seem like silly and funny videos (to some people), but they highlight the contrasting identities and subjects in contemporary society.

This first case of the paintball shooting resembles what Sedgwick (1990) sees in the double-binding systems themselves, the "*homosexual panic*" argument:

In court, a defense (...) for a person (typically a man) accused of violence against gays implies that his responsibility for the crime was diminished by a pathological psychological condition, perhaps brought on by an unwanted sexual advance from the man he then attacked (Sedgwick, 1990, p. 19, free translation).

These cases highlight the stigma of promiscuity attributed to *queer people*, and legitimize the argument that beating someone is okay, as long as it is in response to unwanted flirting. Sedgwick (1990) notes that the acceptance of this rationale shows how hated this group is, and how widespread it is in the public sphere, especially in comparison to the possibility of arguments such as *race panic* or *gender panic*, which do not receive the same acceptance.

So, what these possibilities of sexuality control bring to the fore is the need to identify and mitigate these forms of violence. When talking about a Queer Criminology and the existence of one, there is no shortage of arguments for or against it, however, at the center of this debate is the character of the foreign term itself. The criticism is made in the English language itself by theorists such as Ball (2014) and in the Brazilian context by Berenice Bento (2017) and Martins (2022), who uses the term "*transviado*" with the same subversive purpose, or even, *Travesti Criminology*, as proposed by Serra (2017).

There are multiple possibilities, all aiming to encompass as much as possible all the initial aspects proposed in the construction of theories that were intended to enter the academic space, but not simply adhere to their characteristics in their entirety (Dwyer; Ball; Crofts, 2016). In general, with the specificities of each sex-gender system, adaptations are necessary:

First, by recognizing that, even with the visibility that queer studies have been gaining, this term remains very much linked to restricted sectors of academia, not being shared by social movements and by various sectors of Brazilian society, so that *transviado* can be more easily communicated in our language beyond specific academic niches. Second, the use of *transviado* seeks to bring a minimum of blushing to the faces of those who read this text, by using a term that is close to the practical categories of insult in Portuguese. In the American context, after all, the academic appropriation of the term *queer* generated discomfort when reading in academic texts an insult for *bichas* and *dykes* - an effect not produced by the use of this foreignism in academic texts in Portuguese. Thirdly, *transviado* seeks to maintain the antinormative idea of *queer*, which refers not only to non-normative sexualities and genders, but to practices and existences constructed as dissident, abject, and deviant (Martins, 2022, p. 697, free translation).

Thus, Queer criminology is constructed as a theoretical and practical approach that envisions the stigmatization, criminalization and rejection of people from the queer community, whether they are victims or perpetrators of crimes, before society or the legal system, or experiences of professionals who work in the very systems that subjugate them (Buist; Lenning, 2023). Studies of crimes involving LGBTQIA+ people rescue these people from the margins to the center, and observe the challenges, advances and oppressions that permeate these experiences.

Groombridge (1999) believes that *queerness* should be made central to criminological studies so that it can provide new perspectives for general study, and not just as a sub-area, since in the broad scope of the area, only young people or black people are criminals – and, normatively, treated as heterosexuals. Martins (2022) disagrees with this possibility because he sees the sociological and criminological problems that emerge from this union, and considers that in the Brazilian reality, studies should expand, not adapt. That is what I believe.

Despite the existence of studies that relate crime studies to sexuality and its effects, there is still a certain defense of the need for a Criminology that is specifically queer or deviant. This is due to what was previously presented, there is a contrast between subjects and identities, as in opposing and excluding poles. Therefore, presenting the ways in which States use this discourse to control subjects is essential.

Furthermore, considering that individuals themselves mobilize discourses and behaviors that reflect the historically and politically promoted exclusion in their own professions and

relationships, it is important that the analysis encompasses large spaces such as Western thought on sexuality, but also smaller spaces, such as police forces and families. Regarding the observation of officers' discourses on closets, there is a benefit in knowing the different perspectives that permeate the interdiscourse and intradiscourse in the statements, so that political, military, historical, moral and personal elements are present that must be considered. To this end, the next topic deals with the aspects of policing that must be observed, such as masculinity.

#### **4.2. Institutionalized masculinity and policing**

In a queer analysis of organizations, it is necessary to understand the hegemonic identities in an institution so that it is possible to offer alternatives that encompass a greater multiplicity of subjects (Souza; Carrieri, 2010; Souza, 2017). Therefore, I understand that, in this case, observing policing systems requires more than just observing the hierarchical structure and training necessary to achieve the profession in public security. I focus, therefore, on observing the discourses that permeate the construction of policing that concern the sexuality of subjects (inside and outside the corporations), some of which could be represented by the theory of the closet, such as panic, paranoia, anti-sentimentality and the closet itself.

However, there are characteristics of institutions and of militarization itself that constitute essential mechanisms in the production of sexuality, as in the cases of the “prohibition” of *molly houses* that ended up influencing the frequency of *mollies* (Bateman, 2015) or in the Middle East, where the violation of subjects allowed them to implement closets as a self-protection technique (Ritchie, 2010). This production refers both to dissident sexuality itself, but also to the stipulation of sexual orientation and gender superior to another, and to socioeconomic systems (Russel, 2020).

Social institutions, as a focus of observation, are interpreted in different ways and constitute one of the fundamental drivers in the identification of subjects in society. Berger and Luckmann (2004) argue that the development of man as a being, and self-understanding as part of the environment, occurs in the interaction with it itself, that is, the biological, cultural and environmental order are the composers of the way in which a subject identifies himself.

The social construction of masculinity is no different. The very formation of modern states significantly influenced the behavioral structure of individuals, who had to be extremely masculine in order to maintain the autonomy and sovereignty of nations, with the main form of



demonstration being armies (Oliveira, 2004). Furthermore, agents in the military structure have their behaviors coordinated by a set of regulations and customs that make up the culture of corporations, while before society, the State is the one that approves the use of skills for its own purposes (Huntington, 2016).

The noblest cause that could be had was the defense of the homeland, the greatest representative of a man's devotion, virility and courage. And with the training of soldiers (in Europe, mainly), Oliveira (2004) highlights that there was no class distinction, therefore, the masculine ideals of bravery and nationalism expanded through the military institution.

Masculinity was directly related to sacrifice, to an asceticism that led to personal purification. The basis of this was the connection, the close intertwining between it and elevated societal ideals translated as freedom, sovereignty, capacity for resistance, power, among many others, all revolving around a glorification of the *socius* identified with the homeland, the native land, the nation (Oliveira, 2004, p. 31, free translation).

The habit of discourses of militarization and nationalism linked to the physical and psychological characteristics of individuals created a habit – which, according to Berger and Luckmann (2004), is formed through repetition, through economy of effort, becoming a pattern. Thus, the process of institutionalization begins: “whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitual actions by types of actors” (p. 79).

The internalization of these behaviors can be exemplified by the idea of sports and physical training as legitimizers of virile masculinity in modernity: the repetition of activities that kept the body athletic and disciplined, similar to that of warriors, disciplined the body and made it fit for survival (Oliveira, 2004). This process of subjectivation was anchored in individuals, who repeated them daily, ensuring control over their body and mind (Foucault, 2014).

Typifications are shared among subjects and are available to the social body; with this, institutions also typify the members that compose them according to the activities they perform (Berger; Luckmann, 2004).

Specific military literature, such as that of Samuel Huntington (2016), a famous author in conservative circles who developed a political theory of the relationship between civilians and the military, highlights patterns of professionalism and “military mentality” that distinguish the organization. In the terms of Berger and Luckmann (2004), these would be constituent elements in the roles of subjects during the secondary socialization process.

The current officer is marked by professionalism, which distinguishes him from warriors in the past, and can therefore be considered a participant in a functional group that performs specific roles in a given environment and endowed with specialized characteristics (Huntington, 2016). It is in this professional character that the author considers the “problem” of contemporary civil-military relations to lie.

This military professionalism is characterized by specialization, responsibility and corporativity. Specialization refers to the skills held and taught to agents so that they qualify according to the institution's objectives; responsibility refers to the understanding that professional reward is greater than monetary and is expressed in a commitment to society; and finally, corporativity is the common bond of work that creates the feeling of organic and self-conscious unity of the community, distinguishing them from others (Huntington, 2016).

On the other hand, “Military Mentality” is the term used by Huntington (2016) to define a specific way of understanding how the military’s way of thinking works, whether through individual aspects or aspects inherent to the role. Three forms of analysis stand out, namely: “capacity or quality, its attributes or characteristics and its attitudes or substances” (p. 81).

The first of these refers to the capabilities and qualities of the military mind in being offensive and hasty, to the point of defining that the intelligence and creativity of the professional are inferior – especially when compared to lawyers or politicians. There is no scientific verification that can prove a certain assumption that relegates an entire institution to mediocrity, and this is a criticism that is also made by Russel (2020). One of the arguments used is that the organization discourages intellectual activity – something that can be contradicted by the incentive that has been given to the creation of specialization programs and courses to improve agents<sup>6</sup>.

The proposition to analyze the components of the military mentality as “attitude, values, opinions and vision (...)” (Huntington, 2016, p. 82), in turn, is subdivided into the initial inquiry into the content and source of thought. The first assumes the description of the substance of the military environment and its respective values as general attitudes and behaviors, such as authoritarianism – which, even if verified in one instance, cannot be attributed to all. While the second refers to the source of values, which “is equivalent to admitting that every expression of military attitude and value coming from a military source reflects the military mentality” (Huntington, 2016, p. 83) – this being a moment of decontextualization of the subject.

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<sup>6</sup>The State University of Montes Claros – UNIMONTES, for example, created in 2023, in partnership with the Military Police of Minas Gerais, the professional Master's degree in “Police Sciences and Innovative Technologies” as a way of influencing agents in the academic field.

To effectively achieve this last statement, individual verification of the agent's past would be necessary, and it cannot be said that a statement made by a military officer is a parallel reflection of the military environment. Furthermore, the *metaphorical statement* could also be a reflection of childhood upbringing, economic, religious and political conditions (Huntington, 2016).

Another aspect supports the characteristic analysis of the military, as an observation of the identity constitution of this person. One piece of information that Huntington (2016) presents is the unanimity in the affirmation of researchers regarding the discipline, logic, and authoritarianism present in military behavior, to the detriment of intuitive and emotional skills. However, a problem arises when making such an affirmation: it is not possible to define a group without analyzing specific personality traits of each individual.

The social construction of reality does not allow the definition of a subject without the proper understanding of the social and political context in which he/she developed (primary socialization) before entering a profession and playing a predetermined role (secondary socialization) (Bergman; Luckmann, 2004).

Although it is not considered a good analytical approach for the contemporary relationship between civilians and the military (Huntington, 2016), this perspective provides a highly fruitful perspective for the discursive analysis of the institution, especially regarding the various ways of “inducing” the military mentality in individuals, or rather, the construction of professional military ethics.

People who act the same way over a long period of time tend to develop characteristic and persistent habits of thought. Their unique relationship to the world gives them a peculiar perspective on it, leading them to rationalize their own behavior and role (Huntington, 2016, p. 83, free translation).

What can be inferred is that the more a profession becomes defined, with clearly defined parameters and values, the presence of intensity of action and differentiation from other human activities, the more a professional mentality is created (Huntington, 2016).

One of the processes of internalizing a specific way of thinking, acting and behaving according to the profession is that which refers to anti-sentimentality, which represents the assimilation of the feminine to the sentimental and the difficulty of performing functions, which, consequently, is transposed to those who manifest femininity. It is highlighted by Huntington (2016) that the military needs to become stronger to remedy the weaknesses that he

sees in civilians, therefore, those who are closest to practices that are considered external to the corporation are weak, such as, for example, all those who are close in some way to the domestic.

The historical and sociocultural effects permeate this mortification, as bureaucracy reduces individual freedom, institutional values become personal and family-oriented, time and work are authoritarian, physical insecurity is high, and the effects of globalization make this process relentless, after all, surveillance can be exercised more broadly, temporally and spatially (Martins, 2017).

With this, I do not intend to constitute what Eve Sedgwick (1990) called *male self-pity* here when presenting the aspects that hinder the training of public security agents, especially considering the type of work they perform. It is necessary to highlight this internalization of organizational values so that we can understand how the discourses of an institution are taught and reproduced in the social body.

Furthermore, establishing the identity of the military police officer as a subject “trapped” between two worlds (institutional and family) represents an essential approach in understanding the other conflict that is created between the identity of the *queer police officer* before the institution and society. Martins (2017, p. 62, free translation) considers that this internal conflict: “(...) can have a direct impact on the action considered deviant by the institutional reality, which projects significant effects in terms of administrative punishment” - which is precisely what I have been presenting when I brought up institutional closets.

It is worth highlighting that some aspects of the construction of the police officer as a professional in a specific organizational culture are permeated by the neoconservative (Huntington, 2016) and masculinized (Oliveira, 2004) discourse of protection of the “normal” and repression of the deviant. Furthermore, due to the sociocultural and religious constitution of Brazil, in addition to the colonial heritage, the family and social vision of the subjects is constructed by these discourses, being highlighted by Alves and Rosa (2022) as one of the main explanations for LGBT+ police officers in the country having the unique perception of cisgender, heterosexuality, marriage and reproduction as the correct cycle of life.

Thus, the masculinity that permeates policing activities was consolidated with the various cultural, religious, medical and capitalist discourses that promoted an economy of public affection, the transposition of care to the private and merely instrumental sphere, and the limitation of subjectivities as an individual manifestation (Alves; Rosa, 2022).

On the other hand, although military policing systems are not present throughout the world, where they are in force, they represent the main gateway to the criminal system, due to the high level of policing and the disproportionate harm to vulnerable populations, in addition

to fear (Dwyer; Colvin, 2022; Cardia, 1997). One of the factors considered to influence this way of working is the strongly valued masculine, heterosexual and orthodox system (Dwyer, 2020; Alves; Rosa, 2022).

In Brazil, it is interesting to think of the period of the Military Dictatorship as one of the closets that the entire country went through – which expands the metaphorical notion of the meaning of the term – and how militarization played a role in this historical phenomenon. While the mere presentation of documents could be harmless, it also represented a potential for terrible harm, since there were no criteria defined by the police to determine whether they were faced with useful information, an enemy or a citizen who posed no danger. In addition, one can also think of the control of the speeches that could be uttered, the symbolisms that were allowed to be performed, and the readings that could be had, like prisoners in Ray Bradbury's dystopian fiction “*Fahrenheit 451*”. The result was fear, censorship and control (Cardia, 1997).

Fear of the police in Brazil is interpreted by Cardia (1997) as resulting from this period of total military control, but that, at a later stage, it remained and adapted to new realities. The favelas or communities were ignored, even when seeking help at police stations, which led to the logical notion that the police would not protect anyone who was there. But nothing would stop them from entering those spaces in search of those responsible for any illegal acts. The dual nature of non-protection and blaming of the residents of the outskirts spread a 'sense of abandonment by the State' that allowed violence to be linked to the police (Cardia, 1997, p. 251).

One of Cardia's (1977, p. 263, free translation) conclusions in her quest to understand the fear of the police in Brazil is that “fear is also present in the police”. The author highlights the dangers to which they are exposed and social rejection as the building blocks of a feeling of constant vulnerability. However, another conclusion stands out: “the capacity to generate fear and the arbitrariness of those who wield the force of coercion not only continues to prevail but has gained ground and flourished” (Cardia, 1997, p. 1997, free translation).

Unlike the joke, the world is not simply divided into “cops and robbers”, after all, this would be a binary exactly like the ones Eve had an aversion to. We must observe racial, regional, sexual, economic and many other markers before defining subjects as good or bad, especially within organizations.

No individual or group, of course, will adhere to all the constituent elements of military ethics, since there is no individual or group that is always motivated by exclusively military considerations. Officers, whatever they may be, will only adhere to ethics to the extent that they are professional, that is, to the extent that they are

shaped more by functional imperatives than by societal ones (Huntington, 2016, p. 84, free translation).

Furthermore, thinking of this institution in merely masculine and heterosexual terms excludes a large number of subjects that comprise it, such as cis women, evidenced by Araújo (2022) and Oliveira (2020), and trans people, as observed by Panter (2018), or even those considered *dangerous classes*, highlighted by Alves and Rosa (2022) as those victimized by the Brazilian eugenics movements in the 19th century.

After all, an organization is a structure of conflict, a mirror of society, and which also builds it through a discursive debate of power and knowledge about the subjects (Almeida; Souza; Nascimento, 2018; Zaffaroni; Pierangeli, 2021). As Berger and Luckmann (2004) explain, man has impulses, but these are not vectorized enough to be ordered like other beings, but everything that 'he' has is undertaken in activities that end up constituting him as a being before the environment.

Policing is not simply about ensuring the interests of the State and the safety of people, as Huntington (2016) considers, but expands beyond an authoritarian activity that only works with repression and exclusion. The police are intrinsically connected to the modes of social production and compose a space in which the reproduction of notions of deviance, illness and crime against queers reverberates in the rest of the community, since they operate on a method of protection and recognition that defines which behaviors and people are respectable and safe (Russel, 2020).

What we see is a traditional and slow-changing institution. However, evidence of legislative changes and the influence of academic and scientific studies within the Military Police itself gives hope. It is an old and long-lasting institution, but capable of constant adaptation and expansion, which, with the adaptation of queer criticism, can produce another type of organizational and social reality with the discourses it values (Russel, 2020). Ultimately, this current dynamism allows the maintenance of power, but delays institutional maturity, especially if we consider the image of fear (Cardia, 1997), masculinity (Oliveira, 2004), and homophobic violence (Alves; Rosa, 2022) that permeates the social vision, constantly supported by headlines and investigative processes. With this aim, Russel (2020) proposes that the violent histories and hegemonic identities of the police be used as antagonistic parameters and shameful examples to be avoided, not excluded, but revisited from a more mature institutional perspective.

#### 4.2.1. Key evidence of the interaction between policing and sexuality

The idea of crime that I have brought up in this work is not the specific one defined in the Brazilian Penal Code, but a broader notion that involves deviation and prejudice. I do not have access to scientific data or reflections of reality that show me, for example, that bisexual people are the most likely to commit kidnapping crimes, or that trans women are the most affected by environmental crimes.

However, this is a characteristic that needs to be highlighted in Criminology. The study can focus on a specific criminal type, as is the case of Sutherland and the study of white-collar crimes, or McDonald (2022) on the effects of heteronormativity on the study of child sexual abuse. But it can also focus on abstract concepts, such as “crime” itself. Even though it is not possible (or necessary) to define which deviations we are dealing with:

It is possible to argue that the scientific constitution of criminology is homophobic [...]. This process of identification, labeling and annulment of identity, typical of scientific positivism, produces the essentialization of deviant identities” (Carvalho, 2012, p. 157, free translation).

In this statement by Carvalho (2012), we are not only talking about LGBTQIA+ people who are victimized in phobic cases, but also about those who carry these identities into the institutions in which they are placed. This is the case of police officers, who have become one of the most important elements of analysis in Queer Criminology due to the doubly contradictory role of dealing with crime (Dwyer; Colvin, 2022; Russel, 2020).

Evidence is important, especially in academic and police settings, to prove a point and lend certainty to one's argument. To this end, I will present the results of some of the main research involving the topics discussed here.

A first piece of data that I believe is important in this discussion is the number of suicides among military police officers in Brazil, more specifically in Minas Gerais. The data is from the Brazilian Public Security Forum - FBSP (2023) and shows the state as having the highest number of self-exterminations among officers, tied with São Paulo at 16.

Information about suicides among military police officers may seem isolated in this discussion, but this phenomenon has an interesting connection with the treatment of the closets. Across the country, there were 98 suicides among military personnel and civilians, a significant number that is subdivided into the main work conditions that motivate self-extermination, which are: “a. moral harassment; b. the acceptance of the role of “hero police officer”; c.

physical and mental exhaustion due to continued contact with dangerous situations; d. institutional pressure to meet goals; e. indebtedness; and f. legal uncertainty.” (FBSP, 2023).

I will focus on the first two. Moral harassment is one of the many types of complaints that plague contemporary organizations, and in the Police, there are some profiles that stand out, such as: the victim, the one who is silenced (whether or not they witness the incident), the one who sees it as part of the institution, and the one who speaks out and suffers retaliation. The other main motivator is the character of the hero police officer, who must give up any vulnerability and emotion to help with the problems that are presented to him.

I focus on these two, but I see how they are interconnected in the organizational culture of policing itself. However, harassment and the role of the hero cop reaffirm the violence of the mortifications constantly reiterated in the corporations, and of anti-sentimentality as a principle. A saying from the police environment cited in the 17th Public Security Yearbook (FBSP, 2023) is that “*There are several ways to skin a cat without it meowing.*”

Another characteristic that relates to the problem of LGBTQIA+ statistics is that problems are not counted and are therefore considered non-existent. In this same sense, institutions are not held accountable for the policies they adopt to ensure that “institutional interests prevail over the minimum physical and mental health conditions of the worker responsible for carrying out the activities planned by the institution” (FBSP, 2023, p. 55, free translation). Furthermore, the number of illnesses that precede suicides is less counted than the attempts on one’s life.

With a study of the violence suffered by LGBT+ police officers during their time on the force, Alves and Rosa (2022), both public security agents, argue that self-recognition of the closet and the confrontation of this category on a personal level (crossed by the culture of the society in which they live) is a painful process, especially with regard to police officers who “die in the sense of trying to erase their natural powers and become mentally ill because they believe that they are 'sick' for being who they are” (p. 149, free translation).

With data and headlines that highlight this violence, one must question why queer people still seek to enter police careers, and the answers are diverse. From an international perspective, Colvin (2012) highlights the multiplicity of reasons why gays and lesbians choose the profession, with emphasis on good career opportunities and job security. Other reasons also include the need that these people feel to play an active civic role, or even in an attempt to bring greater diversity to police stations, this being a justification given mainly by women and racialized people.



In the case of trans people, Panter (2017) shows that more individuals who are in the closet regarding their gender identity tend to seek police careers due to the extremely masculinized environment, as a way to avoid gender transition. In addition, both trans men and women (non-transitioned) seek these professional spaces as a refuge from dysphoria conflicts, and while trans men seek to embrace masculinity, women fight against dysphoria by trying to prove it.

Most of those interviewed by Colvin (2012) reported social isolation and homophobia in the workplace, especially when considering factors such as race and gender. The study was conducted in the US and the UK, so the groups most affected are women, blacks and Latinos. One behavior that stands out is constant homophobic talk, especially if sexual orientation (different from the norm) is not known, or if no gay or lesbian person is present.

On the other hand, there is a scaling of discrimination by markers when it comes to women, which contradicts part of what Colvin (2012) presents. At this point, I give special emphasis to the studies by Araújo (2022) and Oliveira (2020), both PhDs in Social Development who studied gender relations in military institutions in the North of Minas Gerais, and who highlighted the separation that exists in corporations regarding activities of a male and female nature, especially in the initial moments of training and in attempts at career promotion.

When looking at what can be learned from the ideas of masculinity, men and crime, Newburn and Stanko (1994) value the understanding of these terms from an institutional perspective. The starting point of their considerations is that one of the most discussed points about crime is that most of it is almost always committed by men, however, when it comes to academic discussion, it is common for “gender” to refer only to women.

It is worth noting that both sociologists and criminologists tend to attribute the problem of dominant male models as “machismo” and ignore the expansion of masculinities (Newburn; Stanko, 1994). It is important to use the plural “masculinities” both to avoid the reification of a single, fixed masculinity and to move away from the essentialism of considering only the biological character attributed to men. This allows us to think about power and the processes of social identification and internalization of values resulting from “masculinized” practices.

Considering the police study and the internalization of a masculinized culture, a distinction must be made between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities. The first refers to the questioning of specific groups of men who occupy positions of power and prosperity, and how they legitimize and perpetuate the dominance they exercise, while the second refers to those who are devalued, who remain in a state of submission to the first group and are

delegitimized or oppressed, such as effeminate men or homosexuals - this is what Newburn and Stanko (1994) elucidate in a reinterpretation of Bob Connell .

Therefore, the debate between crime and masculinities becomes inseparable, especially when it comes to policing, whose culture is also marked by this element (Colvin, 2012), as limited and questioned by Huntington (2016, p. 22) “What kind of man is the officer?” Thus, it must also be considered that the police system has as a social parameter:

(...) attention to ‘practice’: that masculinity (and femininity) is not an essence but simply a way of living a type of relationship. It provides a tool with which to begin the task of unravelling why certain boys/men engage in one type of activity rather than another, and how, if it is deemed important to do so, they can be persuaded to stop. The task, then, is to use the developing understanding of male identities to understand male over-involvement and female under-involvement in criminal activity. (...) Not all men engage in a succession of criminal activities, many avoid violence, and yet it is clear that in modern Western patriarchal culture the dominant or hegemonic male form is aggressive and misogynistic (Newburn; Stanko, 1994, p. 4, free translation).

Although not widely disseminated in Brazil, studies concerning the intersection between sexuality and agents of criminal processing systems are considered by Dwyer and Colvin (2022) as the main focus within the themes of *queer lives*, considering a segment of gay and lesbian police officers. The seminal studies by Leinen (1993) and Burke (1993) reinforce this statement. As a reference for “advancement”, Panter (2017; 2018) focused on studying transgender police officers. However, I emphasize that specific studies on non-binary, asexual, and intersex people within police forces are few, considering the number of these people in these spaces, but also due to the difficulty that the closets themselves impose.

To reinforce this point, Panter (2018) highlights having managed to interview only one intersex officer for the work “*Transgender Cops*”, but who declared himself to be a trans man.

In these studies, one of the main elements that can be inferred is the repeated discrimination in this area, which is commonly agreed upon in all the literature on the subject (Leinen, 1993; Burke, 1993; Colvin, 2012; Dwyer; Ball; Crofts, 2016; Panter, 2018). Agents are systematically and substantially violated, whether by colleagues, hierarchical superiors or parties involved in the processes for which they are responsible (Dwyer; Colvin, 2022). The result is often a specific behavioral conditioning that contributes negatively to the treatment of the crime.

As ways of reproducing these internal behaviors in society, as argued by Russel (2020), Alves and Rosa (2022) and Martins (2017), there are violations against the LGBTQIA+ population, with a fatal emphasis on violence suffered by transvestites. It is common in the

literature on the subject of the presence of police abuse in relation to this group of people, with Kulick (1998) highlighting the multiple tortures that occurred in the 1990s, mainly in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Bahia.

The transposition of an organizational problem to society is part of the logic of *queer analytics* highlighted in this work (Souza; Carrieri, 2010; Irigaray, 2008), in which the understanding of the institutionalized common mode formed by Public Administration employees defines on its own the tropes of interpretation of groups and social problems (Zafaroni; Pierangeli, 2021).

Still from an administrative perspective, research shows progress in this regard, such as bringing Queer Theories to study public and private institutions. However, the experiences of police officers with dissident sexuality are still ignored as victims of inequality and exclusion, both by their coworkers and by the public they deal with (Dwyer; Colvin, 2022). This is, therefore, a subject of vital importance to Brazilian social development, both due to the origin and the repercussions of the problem.

## 5. MIRRORING VIEW: POLICE PERCEPTIONS OF CLOSETS

### 5.1. The spectacle of the closet

This chapter specifically deals with interviews conducted with 10 military police officers from the state of Minas Gerais, who agreed to participate in an interview, answering questions about closets, sexuality, and police work. The officers were nominated by snowball sampling, and participation was voluntary and conditional on each individual's consent.

In this section I present Discourse Analysis focused on elements that represent what is seen by the agents, whether in the form of a complaint, corroboration or simply facts of the dealings with the crime itself. In other words, how interdiscourses manifest themselves in relation to what is identified by them.

I reiterate that the military police officers interviewed do not have a theoretical focus in this study, but rather a methodological one, that is, they are the ones who provide the data for the analysis. In addition, I would like to highlight the importance of my position as a researcher outside the military environment. This externality, combined with my analytical capacity, proved to be fundamental for conducting the work, which is illustrated by the following quote. It belongs to one of the officers who, although is a scholar, revealed that he did not feel comfortable publishing his research in order to “avoid headaches”:

It's the same, I have a research project that I developed in my postgraduate studies (...), which basically has the following theme, right? [excerpt hidden to avoid identification]. I'm interested in publishing it, but I won't publish it until I retire, so as not to have a headache. Because my research is very critical. So, there are many things that we want to do. It's interesting that they are defenders of freedom of expression, but freedom of expression only pleases their interests and discourse. So I think that this makes a lot of people reclusive, a lot of people closed off, and not speak out. That's my opinion. (PM6, 2025, free translation).

The data analysis presented below was organized to facilitate understanding and avoid overlapping concepts. To this end, the following subtopics were named according to the theoretical categories of the Epistemology of the Closet. In some cases, different categories were grouped together in the same section due to the proximity of their contents and the similarity of their effects.

### 5.1.1. Self-disclosure and self-naming

One of the main elements to consider when thinking about the ideas of coming out and staying in the closet, whatever it may be, is the ability and power to nominate oneself and choose a specific moment to reveal to society what may have once been considered a secret. These are issues involving self-disclosure and self-nomination, in which neglect creates a gap in sexuality that can be filled by another person, and this can generate violent effects that significantly influence the moment (which may or may not exist) of revelation.

The dynamics of revealing and naming do not only involve the social body, but a space of personal safety and recognition that, despite depending on other people, does not require the knowledge of others. Therefore, these categories speak about self-knowledge and the subject's choice to do with it as he or she pleases, that is, they involve choices of: coming out or not to oneself, to family or coworkers, creating a moment to reveal some aspect of one's sexual identity, making oneself known in any way one understands, among others.

Thus, by relating the idea of self-disclosure and self-nomination to a workspace, such as that of the Police, and in this case with the relationship that exists with other people of dissident sexuality, it can generate important effects for the observation of the treatment of crime. This is what I can see in the possibility that the treatment that is given to the agent in the corporation can vary according to the way in which he relates to these categories, or even, the way of dealing with and recording a certain fact can be influenced by the way in which a person understands him/herself and presents him/herself to the agent at the time of the encounter.

The interview script contains some questions directed at these categories, which does not mean that this is/was the only time they revealed themselves. The questions were: “How do you identify? Was assuming this identity a smooth process for you? And within your work, do people know about your sexual orientation? What was it like telling them? If they don’t know, why?”

All interviewees were asked about these moments with the intention of getting them to talk about the relationship between sexuality and their personal lives, and later with work. It was a way of offering the person the possibility of naming themselves or revealing themselves, or of doing neither of these things, in a calm and pressure-free manner, which already gave a different tone to the interview and motivated trust in me as the interviewer.

According to Table 1, all interviewees either named themselves or expressed a desire not to name themselves, which was not questioned but was also interpreted. I would like to draw attention to the fact that some asked other questions before answering, as if in an attempt

to *gain time* to calm down and answer, while others felt the need to say that they were fine with it, such as the following:

In terms of gender identification? Would it be? (...) No, no problem, I identify as gay and I'm completely resolved about that. (PM2, 2025, free translation).

About this sexual issue, about sexuality? Gay! Homosexual in this case. (PM6, 2025, free translation).

Today? Ah, I don't have a definitive definition, not today. (PM3, 2025, free translation).

The use of the word “homosexual” to refer to oneself has also been observed in some cases, in which the words “gay” or “lesbian” take on, in themselves, a negative self-designation character. However, when referring to others, the use of these words is common, as in the previous quote, in which PM6 immediately corrected himself when calling himself *gay*. Or in other moments when he makes long pauses or stutters before saying the word:

When a person declares himself... he is... he is... homosexual, he is... (PM6, 2025, free translation).

There was also a manifestation of fear in responding, which revealed the duality of personal and professional life that some of the agents expressed at some point, in addition to the rigidity of the closet within the police, a kind of denial and preterition within the interpretation that can come from the work space:

Within the police? As for the police, I don't have that identification. There, it's professional treatment. I don't have any ties there to have that issue of identification there. (...) In life, today I've had a relationship with a woman, I've been married. So, today... I'll try to explain it like this. Because today I'm dating a man. But if I weren't dating, let's say I was single. Then I would be bisexual, both women and men. Okay? (PM4, 2025, free translation).

This quote represents an example of what Huntington (2016) called military identity, or what Berger and Luckmann (2004) considered to be the relationship that a person develops when coming into contact with a cultural and social order with certain characteristics, that is, which is mediated by the function that they perform in a certain institution of society. There is no tone of conflict or doubt in the speech, only a sedimented thought that there is a separation regarding *identification*, but what is noted behind what is said is that there is a confrontation between the police person and the *queer person*, as if they could not or should not coexist. In a certain way, the interdiscourse here intertwines the reproduction of an institutional behavior

(not naming/revealing oneself within the workplace) and the personal naming itself in a private life.

I note that there is a kind of contemporary difficulty regarding naming and the “politically correct” possibility of questioning someone’s sexual identity. And at this point there is a significant influence on police work and the interaction of people with crimes, which can be seen in the speech of PM1, who, in general, was quite indignant with the institution’s ways of dealing with LGBTQIA+ people. In the excerpt there is an interesting manifestation of what we call the “double binding system” that deserves further analysis:

That's when you're going to go to... Every police report has to ask the person this question. Nobody asks this question. If I ask it too, people will make fun of me, and I think it's also a bit invasive to go up to the person and say, "What's your gender, what's your sexual orientation?" Now, if I notice... that it's important for the person during the incident, depending on the type of incident, then I'll put it there. When someone gives me a man's ID, but in front of me is a woman, she hasn't changed her name yet. Then, of course, I'll go up and ask, what's the social name to put in the incident, so that I can be treated like that, right? But it's something that, for the military, this... If you have a man's ID, you'll be treated like a man." (PM1, 2024, free translation)

There are three points to be discussed about this quote: the positioning; the corporation's response; and the officer's perspective. First, PM1 understands that asking about someone else's sexual orientation is invasive, so he prefers not to do so. However, the act of asking will also make him "mockery" by other coworkers, and in this case, for a person who is not out, there is a significant implication. As stated by the officer in "if I notice", there is a condition for him to fill in the fields related to sexual identity: it must be noticeable. And, at this point, the conduct of the process in relation to the crime already receives a connotation and a possibility of treatment that is taken as preterition and exclusion.

This is another manifestation of the *Mirror-violence* category, a reflected violence, in which PM1 himself reports not being out, not being able to associate with other queer people for fear of internal reprisals, and yet, being induced to put other subjects in a closet – all of these facts as a result of the profession. For Criminology, it is important to think that the power of a single person's gaze and interpretation is enough for one crime to be interpreted as another, or even for revictimization and underreporting to occur.

When observing the conditions self-imposed by the interviewees for self-disclosure and self-nomination within the workspace, I realize that those who have not “completely” come out choose people who they also identify as having dissident sexuality to confide in.

Very few. As a rule, those who know are also of a different orientation from the dominant one, so to speak. (PM2, 2025)

In another case, for example, there is a new manifestation of a certain *disregard* and distance from one of the interviewees towards another police officer who confided in him about his sexuality – I notice a manifestation of the *mirror-violence category*, especially when observing the use of the expression “(...) for me? It doesn't matter much”.

Or a colleague of mine came up to me. He's also gay, and he came up to me and said, "You know I'm gay, right?" I said, "Oh, brother, regardless of why you're gay, stop being gay. I'm glad you opened up to me, but come on, it doesn't matter to me." People's sexuality is only their business, it doesn't matter to anyone else, and I'm more concerned about knowing if my colleague is okay than knowing who he's sleeping with or stopped sleeping with, you know? (PM3, 2025, free translation).

It is clear that this is not a case of violence as serious as physical aggression or prejudiced comments, but the very act of indifference of one of *their own* towards the sexuality of others demonstrates a reproduction of prejudiced behavior masked by an idea of superiority, as in “people's sexuality is only their concern” or “I am more concerned about knowing if my colleague is okay”.

As highlighted by the literature on Queer Criminology, the question of sexuality ends up being reduced to the heterosexual and homosexual binary, and consequently, so does research on these topics. In other words, some experiences lived by those who identify beyond these definitions remain unknown or only partially understood, especially due to unpopular or uncommon terminologies, categories or expressions, and as Dwyer, Ball and Crofts (2016) highlight, this results in marginalization.

In general, the interviewees' statements about their own sexual identities were calm, but with the presence of discursive elements of the institutional police culture, such as repression or prejudice towards themselves. Their views regarding themselves were almost always from a heteronormative place, even if they were dissidents.

### 5.1.2. Double-binding system

As explained previously, the double-binding system represents the legal and security spaces in which opposing arguments are granted to queer people in which no possibility or positive resolution to the problem in question is seen. At first, I imagined that this phenomenon would be difficult to identify and that, when seen, it would only appear on a macro level, such



as in cases of large courts of justice, as exemplified previously. However, it was possible to infer from the postures and reports that there is an impasse in the daily and professional experience of the agents, since, despite understanding the identities they have as queer people, there are still behaviors, bureaucracies and relationships that impede the safe exercise of sexuality and the full and correct execution of the service to be performed.

Thinking about this concept of an entire system that limits attitudes and behaviors through constraints, such as closets or arguments, can be an abstract task, but when asked about how they felt about crimes involving LGBTQIA+ people and the role they played in recording and dealing with them, some statements stood out:

“Oh, I feel like my hands are tied, I want to do something, but I'm going to say something that the guy is superior to me, and then it's going to start spreading to the whole company. Then I'm screwed, and then people start doing it... Then I'm going to be labeled in a pejorative way too...” (PM1, 2024, free translation).

“I'm... I'm stuck between a rock and a hard place, right? Literally between a rock and a hard place. So, it's complicated for me to try to help on one side, and it's complicated because if I help on one side, people will massacre you on the other. You're on that tightrope.” (PM3, 2025, free translation).

The expressions used such as “hand tied”, “faggot thing”, “between a rock and a hard place” and “tightrope” are some ways of exemplifying ties, that is, the way of behaving and acting in a situation involving a person of different sexuality or gender identity. And the answers in question were given in an indignant and even somewhat embarrassed manner, with some pauses, and finally a quite acceptable justification that, if “something” is done, they will also suffer the consequences in their own experience.

With an intellectual and explanatory speech of what really happens, PM2 explains how he sees the negotiations involving LGBT(QIA+) people, while PM1 corroborates the existing difference, and adds by demonstrating how this affects him:

Ah, I think there is a general insensitivity to these issues when they are incidents where the police have to intervene. If they realize that the person involved is a person who belongs to the LGBT community, it is... I believe, and I have seen these situations. The case is treated as of minor importance. “Oh no, that's nothing. It's a gay thing.” I have heard that expression, by the way. So the incidents end up gaining a connotation of inferiority or not receiving all the attention they need due to who the individual involved is. If he is an individual from the community like that, his incident will certainly tend to be inferior in relation to others. Even though they are identical cases, if the victim is straight, perhaps the incident will receive more attention than when the victim or the person involved is a gay person. (PM2, 2025, free translation).

Yes, it's different. The way they treat things is very different. I've been to an incident, I've seen the difference. I didn't think it was cool. That's why I don't like working on

the street. That's when I get anxious, uncomfortable. It's different. (PM1, 2024, free translation).

It's possible to perceive that queer people who are involved in a crime will probably receive insensitive treatment regardless of the police officer's sexuality – interviewee PM2 does not highlight this element but explains how there is indifference in certain cases. In other words, there is a type of constraint in this system that means that, even if a person is a victim of a crime, they can be revictimized, or even, if they are a perpetrator of the crime, they will not receive treatment similar to that which a straight person would receive. Meanwhile, as in the studies by Dwyer, Ball and Crofts (2016), agents involved in repression also suffer from this movement, since they are not able to completely dissociate the sexuality with which they identify while working.

The constraints or impediments, or ambiguous arguments can be questioned and the victim's positioning in relation to these elements can also be questioned, however the reaction itself is conditioned by issues involving other types of damage and losses. Some of the interviewees tried to explain why people who are victims, not only of crimes outside the workplace, but also within it, do not take a position or react, and reported the following:

So, I think that those who are victims don't do anything because they feel isolated and afraid of reprisals, because when you feel... (...) It's worked into these people's minds that they are weak and a minority, so it's because they are weak and a minority that they don't want to join, so I imagine that this happens in that sense too. And even though we know that there are people everywhere, they feel alone. So, they don't react. That's what I think. I also think that if I were in the situation where I was a victim, I also think that I wouldn't react because of that. Now, those who practice it, do it because of this culture that favors it. You see that if you make fun of them, you'll be praised more than those who defend them. So, those who make fun of them, who joke around, have more applause *emotions* than those who defend them. Those who defend them, if they mess up, are also called "Oh, you're a faggot too", you know? And, institutionally, the superiors don't take action because if they do, they'll be looked down upon. So there is this culture of turning a blind eye, pretending that it is not happening, but it is happening, because if you take action you will look bad. Those who are victims do nothing because they feel vulnerable. (PM6, 2025, free translation).

The problem is that it may happen, but the setbacks, the headache it causes, the aftermath, you let it happen, you prefer to leave it alone. (PM3, 2025, free translation).

PM6's interdiscourse is marked by political discourse and social activism, in addition to an intellectuality that stems from his own education, and here he criticizes the fact that it "pays" more to be a person who jokes and offends others than to have another position. However, what I draw attention to in this excerpt is how much this system expands to niches outside the corporation. In the expression "there are more clapping emotions than those who defend", for

example, the agent refers to the space of social networks when mentioning *emojis* that function as reactions, or in “the superiors do not take action because if they do take action it will be considered bad” in which situations occur within the institution itself that remain unresolved for fear of how they will be seen.

PM3, in turn, already talks about the “headache”, that is, the use of a metaphor for the difficulty that the person who decided to stand up against what happens would have.

Fear and self-protection, which were questioned in the interviews as some of the possibilities for not coming out (both for the interviewees and from their perception of those they know) are justifications for a closet, but they also represent constraints in which both elements appear. As in:

It's out of fear, and exactly to protect myself. Because it's something I don't know... It's a fight I really wanted to have, but I have such a routine... that I'm like, "ah, I'm so worn out, I'll just leave it alone." (PM1, 2025, free translation)

Therefore, there is a stagnation that comes before indignation. If there is fear, there will be no action; if it is to protect oneself from something that may or may not happen, there will also be no action. It is at this point that the police attitude closes in relation to certain movements that occur in society. Here, *queer issues are brought into vogue*, but it serves as an argument, or at least a hypothesis, for what happens to the black, poor, peripheral, female population, among other groups that have been historically violated. The interviewee's speech at this moment was said with regret and indignation (this is the immediate context of the speech), but with a self-justification in the modulated speech of “ah, I'm so worn out, I'll just leave it alone” (which is the broader context of the speech). Therefore, it is worth highlighting that PM1 is not out in the workplace, he has already been harmed, suffered prejudiced actions from colleagues and witnessed other violence without being able to speak out, that is, the moment in which he speaks activates his own memory and makes the intertext here refer to other experiences he has gone through and that limit him up to the time of producing this quoted speech. This is not an interdiscourse, since the violence suffered and witnessed is reported and remembered by the interviewee.

A system, in one of its definitions, is a “methodical set of interdependent principles, on which a doctrine, belief or theory is established.”, according to the Brazilian Dictionary of the Portuguese Language (SISTEMA, 2025), and the mere presentation of some examples may give the slight impression that they may be isolated cases, but according to PM8's explanation, there are some points that provide a better view of how the ties can happen:

There is no institutional policy to turn a blind eye to any type of discrimination or to allow any type of thing. The problem in this regard is that the police are divided between enlisted personnel and officers, and sometimes there is an internal saying that goes like this: “You win, but you don’t take”. If there is a situation of discrimination, for example, you can prove it by a superior against you. If it is between peers, it is investigated, you are penalized and you die there and then. But if it is a superior discriminating against a subordinate, which is probably the most common thing when it happens. The procedure will go ahead, the superior will be penalized, but then tomorrow you are sent to work 600 km away from where you were working. And that’s not why they won’t write that they are moving you because you opened the procedure. But this type of retaliation exists, you know? So, I think that even beyond discrimination in any other type of situation, I see that enlisted personnel are very restricted from taking action. Even sometimes, when it comes to labor rights, which go beyond one sphere, it’s not even personal, it’s against the institution. I see everyone very afraid of having to go to work far away, of having to work on a shift they don’t want. That happens a lot there. But, I don’t see any institutional movement to accept any type of discrimination, no. When it goes down in writing, action is taken, yes. (PM8, 2025, free translation).

The first point highlighted, and quite vehemently, was that there are no policies or rules within the Police to ensure that discrimination goes unpunished – in other words, there is no concrete element. One of the factors highlighted by Orlandi (2016) as a condition for producing discourse is the mechanism of anticipation, and, despite seeing it happen in all interviews for a variety of reasons, in this excerpt I highlight the need that PM8 felt to make it very clear that discrimination is not inherent to the structure of the institution, both at the beginning of the speech and again at the end. However, among these *disclaimers* about there being no institutional policy of “turning a blind eye” or there being no institutional movement to accept discrimination, there is a report that presents the elements that make up the double-binding system in the Police.

This is an institutionalized culture, which can be observed in the presence of a saying considered internal, “you win, but you don’t take”, which represents the fact exemplified below, that regardless of how the situation is resolved, the victim will still be the most harmed. The use of the word “tomorrow” highlights the speed with which reprisals return to the lives of these people – the choice of this expression instead of “after a while”, “a month”, “a week” or any other is unconscious, but it gives context to the system.

Finally, what I observe in this anticipation mechanism is the defense of an institution and an existing ideology. Because, despite being able to describe violence, injustices and errors in the performance of the profession, whether against themselves or against others, there is a reproduction of the military discourse of righteousness and discipline, which can be seen even in the structuring of the response: a layer of superficial defense, another layer of detailed

violence with elements, examples, justifications and feelings, and finally, a layer of defense “When it goes to paper, action is taken, yes”.

Another quote from the same agent with the same structure is as follows:

I think I mentioned it a little earlier, because the police don't just turn a blind eye, contrary to what many people think, if a situation like this comes to light, the person will be punished and, depending on the repercussions, will be excluded from the police force. So I think that because of this fear, they are very respectful in personal contact with the person. Similar to what happens to me, which I mentioned. With me it's normal, but they talk about others. So, they talk about me to others, it's in that sense. With the person, I've never noticed or heard of a police officer having any homophobic behavior. (PM8, 2025, free translation).

The mechanism of anticipation here is reflected in the way the officer wanted to introduce himself to me and how he chose to introduce the police and his colleagues. When he states the certainty of punishment for the person who discriminated or the “normal” way in which they treat him, or even the acceptance that his life is being commented on, but he does not care about it, because he considers it “normal” and accepts it, there is an attempt to convey the same vision of righteousness and justice. In addition, there is a specific mention of “homophobic behavior”, but there is no mention of transphobia, which is an element present in the literature and in other interviews as a type of latent violence in this space.

On another note, one can observe the difference and similarity that gender produces in this system, as in the following statement. The interviewee had been asked about possible situations in which she would be overlooked:

I know things like that, I can't remember specific things, because I've been in contact with people I've worked with for about 7 years at that company I'm at. So everyone knows me. I may have suffered, but in a hidden way, you know? I don't think I haven't suffered, I think I may have suffered. But in the police force, there's a lot of prejudice from male police officers towards female police officers, of not wanting to work with female police officers in general. And not in terms of sexuality. But I think I must have suffered from asking not to work with me, because the person has a certain prejudice and such, but it was never exposed to me, as far as I can remember. But as for being a woman, it's been many, many times and such. And there were military men who I think because they thought I was a lesbian and I have the same attitude, the same taste as him, there's a police officer there who didn't like working with female police officers, but he agreed to work with me. You see, he thinks I'm a comrade because I'm a butch lesbian, you know? But the guy was such a jerk that he peed on the wheel of the police car while I was there. Did he think I was totally masculine? But he's a guy who doesn't have it, he's not normal, you know? He's a guy with a mental problem, everyone knows that. I don't even know how a guy is a police sub-lieutenant, but that's what we have: pain everywhere. (PM7, 2025, free translation)

This excerpt highlights the gender perspective within the Military Police, as previously highlighted by Oliveira's (2021) research regarding gender differences in the Minas Gerais Military Police, which, in itself, would be enough to consider how many constraints there are regarding this marker. However, I draw attention to lesbianism and the treatment given to it, in which PM7 is outraged by the abusive way in which she is viewed, as in the example of the colleague who urinated in her presence. The use of the term “female police officers” in the masculine form of the word also represents how men present themselves as hierarchically superior to women in these spaces and how the discourse is reproduced in the same way<sup>7</sup>. However, since it is the third use in this excerpt, I notice that when she begins to refer to herself as a “masculinized lesbian” the term changes from feminine to masculine. Next, the agent herself recognizes her acceptance in the male environment and questions the fact that she is seen as a “comrade” or the thought that she must act like the other men in the corporation because she is a lesbian.

Something interesting about this speech and others from the women interviewed is the way the stories are told, in which the majority of the characters present are men, while women appear only superficially or at a distance. The double-binding system is manifested here by the duality of acceptance of *fems* lesbians due to assimilation with the masculine and the understanding (by men) that they should act like them completely. Acceptance can be seen as a benefit in the institution, as it mitigates discrimination that would come from gender, but this comes with the disadvantage of being interpreted as other men – see genital exposure. In reality, there is a constraint in which the choice is: to be treated as an equal or to be looked down upon – and neither option is entirely positive.

An example mentioned by one of the interviewees that was close to the example given by Sedgwick (1990) of Professor Acanfora, explained earlier, was that of a question in which the “extortion” of sexuality was addressed as one of the ways of obtaining control or causing harm to people. In this case, they were asked about anyone they might know, not only in the police force, but also in the judiciary or other people involved in a case:

Oh, I know of a situation, but in the academic environment, where a professor was pressured to abandon a subject so as not to be exposed, and then it was like this: “Oh, so-and-so, or do you leave the subject?...” Which, as a rule, would be the same as leaving the course because he was a master's professor “...Or I'll expose you to the dean?” (PM2, 2025, free translation)

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<sup>7</sup> In Brazilian Portuguese, there's a gender difference in the word “feminine”, and in this case, the female police officer described herself and other female colleagues using the masculine option.

This is a representation of one of the harmful elements that has an open secret within a system that does not understand and seeks to harm what is not necessarily said. As has been said before, closets are present in everyone's lives, but in the lives of queer people there is a harmful and extortionist potential that traps individuals in decisions that should not be made, such as choosing between coming out of the closet and keeping their job. This example is external to the Police, but it is just another way of demonstrating how extortion happens and how a web of *impossible decisions is created* for those who prefer not to come out.

Let's be clear, this is not an incentive for people to come out in some kind of identity because they believe it will be better because there will be no extortion or harm. It is explicitly the opposite of this; there is no guarantee that an out person will be free from this so-called system. And as demonstrated by the statements of the interviewees, this is true: queer people, even in the closet, are subject to the violence that the gaze of another can cause them, especially if aligned with another type of preconceived thought, such as the idea of delinquency inherent to diverse sexuality and gender identity.

Therefore, there is a double-binding system in force in this space, which considers gender, sexuality and hierarchical position only as forms of prevalence in the military environment. In this way, it is possible to see how complicated it is to find a solution to a given problem, since it enters the institution and constitutes a set of standards, elements, behaviors and impositions that ensure that there are no complaints, and if they do occur, that they become irrelevant in the face of the real punishment that will come quickly.

I would like to point out that, although the examples in this category are concentrated on this topic, there are other cases in which it is possible to verify the same points presented here, but which were categorized in another way at the same time. It is important to emphasize this point methodologically, but also theoretically, since there is a close relationship between other issues such as violent and exemplary discipline or in the closet itself and in closet relationships.

In terms of Criminology, a system that is structured in this way in an institutional space whose function is to assist in the repression of crimes and provide security to society, and which is imperceptibly moved (at least consciously) to produce and reproduce prejudices and bureaucratic difficulties and behavior, makes the internal relationship problematic and transposes it to society. This is the case of incomplete or erroneous records, or refusal to assist in certain criminal occurrences.

No. I realize that a lot of people change, especially the course, because of this repressive bias that I mentioned. A lot of people leave there kind of wanting to reproduce that with other people at work. But I did some mental work to abstain from that, to understand that that was a course policy and everything, that it shouldn't dictate how I relate to the person who is receiving the work on the street. (PM8, 2025, free translation).

As an example of this reproduction, PM8's speech about the training course and the behaviors that changed after it ended. The "that" mentioned refers to the degrading and psychologically difficult situations that they face during training and when they initially join the corporation. In addition, there is the use of the term "course policy and everything", in which it seems to be common, almost institutionalized, the (negative) way in which agents should relate to civilians. This is a contradiction to what PM8 previously said about the lack of institutional policies to ignore what happens and needs attention.

Thus, there are some areas that make the internal life of queer police officers difficult, regardless of gender, and that teach them to act, react and reproduce the same behaviors that bind them. It is clear that there is no need to talk about an institutional policy for discrimination as if there were some documents from the corporation that ordered discrimination, but we can talk about a discriminatory institutional culture. Violence happens, it is assimilated in silence, if it is manifested, new violence will happen, if it is assimilated and reproduced, other violence will also happen, and this time, with the public on the street – we are faced with a cyclical and violent system of restraints that reproduce themselves.

### **5.1.3. Antisentimentality/Sentimentality**

Sentimentality and anti-sentimentality are presented as opposites, a binary in which the absence of emotional expression is overvalued over its presence. This is due to the assimilation of sentimental demonstration to the feminine and domestic, that there is a certain gender role regarding people's emotions and behaviors that is directly linked to their genitals and all the social interpretation that comes with it.

The Military Police, as demonstrated by other authors such as Huntington (2016), Araújo (2022) and Oliveira (2020), has a sexist culture that diminishes, belittles and hinders the presence of women in the force and in command positions. This has significantly influenced, over the years, the entry of female police officers and the maintenance of a healthy presence within the institution. It is clear that this has undergone a change, but not enough to end harassment and unequal treatment.



Despite the name, these categories do not refer only to a sentimental issue, but to how this influences the difference in treatment and discourse in relation to the presence of people who do not perform what is expected and imposed on them, for example, women who are not effeminate and men who are not extremely masculine. It is also a moment of observation of a *glass closet*, which is transparent and does not always allow subjects to hide aspects of their personality – which may not even be related to a dissident sexuality.

To obtain answers on these topics, the questions asked were about the manifestation of negative and positive feelings within corporations, how they were accepted by other colleagues, how they expressed themselves, however, as in other cases, these topics appeared in other statements.

The position of gay, lesbian and bisexual military agents, as in this research, is delicate and involves an (im)possibility of self-revelation and self-nomination, after all, the other's gaze is also capable of interpretation. This is what I discussed previously about the sexuality device commonly known as *gaydar* (Neves Júnior, 2022). In other words, the impact that this can have within and outside corporations is extremely important in this analysis, especially considering the context in which the statements are produced.

Well, people tell me a lot that sometimes it's hard to identify who I am. But considering the police standards there, I end up standing out a lot in this world, because I don't hide my feelings very much. The girls who work there, the female police officers, I'm very affectionate with them and stuff. I stop to talk, you know? Sometimes I say 'good morning', I laugh, and there they are more serious, right? So, they say I'm very nice. For them, that's already a reason. Do you understand? (...) Yes, you being nice means you being homosexual. (PM1, 2024, free translation).

Here, PM1's enunciative position is quite passive in relation to other moments in the speech, and there is a demarcation between the "I" who is enunciating and the "they" who are the other heterosexual police officers in the force. In addition to these, another presence in this statement is that of the female police officers, who, from what can be observed, the mere cordial and affectionate relationship may indicate "something". Since this subject is not out, the place from which he speaks is marked by a level of paranoia (another category) and panic itself, however, in this case, it is not a male panic of getting together with other men and being seen as homosexual/bisexual, but the fear of associating with the women in the force and being seen in this way. The statement also brings the element of "police standard" and the statement that the demonstration of feelings is outside of it, after all, this standard does not include being homosexual and/or "nice", as the officer said.

Other interviewees denied having suffered discrimination due to their expressions when they were first questioned about it, seeking to produce an imaginary formation through a mechanism of anticipation in the discourse that the space was calm and safe. However, at a later moment they ended up talking about some situation or admitted to having been discriminated against due to the way they acted or some other factor of their personalities. As in this case in which the statements are intertwined, in which one interviewee talks about his perspective (PM5) while another interviewee talks about her own, but giving the first one's point of view:

Man, when I was discriminated against, I don't know if they noticed because only I noticed. Of course. But it's like this, I've never been one to express myself that much about it. Apart from once with the psychologist, I talked about it. But I didn't expose these things. To anyone in the troop. So I don't know what his position is on this. (PM5, 2025, free translation)

I admit that I live with him every day, and I've worked with him, it's only PM5. I know that PM5, before he took office, suffered a lot of prejudice, I think, from what people say, even he suffered some prejudice. Of course, PM5 is an extremely imposing human being, with a deep voice, he's a big guy and all. Some comments, when he's distant, when he's not in the room, happen. The stupid jokes, you know? But I don't feel like I have any more comments directly with him. But other military personnel, for example, not that they're out, or that I know they've come out to someone, but that have mannerisms, for example, a man with effeminate mannerisms, or with some things like that that for them is gay, I see that they create a certain amount of annoyance, you know? I don't feel the prejudice with me. Because women, what I notice, are always put in a sexual idea and such. So guys always make jokes about me and make jokes about other women, stuff like that. But I don't absorb it. (PM7, 2025, free translation)

In these cases, the questions were about other people's perceptions of discrimination and about colleagues who came out and were harmed, respectively. It is clear that there is a discursive relationship between the two statements, but there are also some important differences, starting with self-perception. PM5 reproduces in his statement a subjectivity highly influenced by the corporation and military thinking, with an anti-sentimentality highlighted by his detachment from others and an absence of expression, except with the professional psychologist, therefore he does not even know how others position themselves in relation to sexuality, even though he was suffering discrimination.

On the other hand, PM7 gives us an insight into PM5 himself as one of the people who came out in the workplace and was harmed by it and highlights his colleague as “an extremely imposing human being, with a deep voice, he’s a big guy and all that”. This description gives context to the fact that, even though there is no expression of feelings and emotions, a male

body marked by a deep voice, size and imposingness, and an adaptation to military culture, PM5 was also violated in the workplace.

In another aspect, PM7 talks about other officers who are described as “men with effeminate mannerisms or things like that” and reports that there is also “*implicância*” (implication) – a euphemism used to describe discriminatory acts. Comparing these two situations, it can be seen that sentimentality and anti-sentimentality are seen as mere constraints imposed at the pleasure of those who are in the “police standard”, since having mannerisms or not having them generates the same effect. Another example:

We have some colleagues who are just like them, I know them, they are not my friends, how can I say that? The way he moves around, let's put it this way... When he walks, it generates jokes, people make jokes, you know? The guy who is more extroverted and gestures more to be able to talk, and believe it or not, and in this case, he is not even gay, just to give you an idea, as far as I know, right? But he is very extroverted, he communicates a lot, he sways, he gestures a lot, people make jokes. (PM6, 2025, free translation)

In this excerpt, one can even observe the difficult tone of speaking about another person with effeminate mannerisms: many pauses, many questions (“how can I speak?” “do you understand?” “right?”). There is a distancing from the person being spoken about, as if the interviewee were merely a police officer and dissociated himself from his sexuality to speak about this individual mentioned – which shows an interdiscourse with what the institution itself says. But in this case, mannerisms and violence are also present.

Observation from a gender perspective also provides a particular view of the situation. Given the military perspective and the consideration of women as sentimental and domestic, it would be expected that a female police officer would report discrimination in this regard, but this is not the case. PM7 describes playing with herself and other women, highlighting the sexual idealization of lesbian experience from the male perspective, but claims not to feel prejudiced. And on this point, there are other discursive relationships that can be observed.

Oh, great. The “guys” say “that one!”, she’s thrilled, right? “That one works well, she’s not weak like other women who are, sometimes, a little more delicate”. Because they see her as a rough woman. There’s the stereotype of a rough woman and so they like her, the woman who thrills, who likes to go out, who likes to hit and I don’t know what else... (PM1, 2024, free translation)

PM1's view of "rough" women as a gay police officer is that there is a certain benefit and better acceptance than that of effeminate men, or men who express themselves

sentimentally, like himself. "They", again, appears here as a pronoun for the straight police officers who seem to oppose the others, in such a way that they make up one of the main characters in the speeches of all the speakers analyzed here, as if "they" personified what the Military Police represents, and what deviates from this notion is the opposite.

In this speech, it is possible to see signs that there is a difference in treatment between queer men and queer women. And here it is possible to trust the speaker, especially since he has already described his good relationship with women in the force, so he is only presenting his point of view. Regarding this element, the view of one of the female police officers, PM7, brings an interesting position of enunciation to be observed:

No, just the usual stupid questions. At some point, I realize that the person is being derogatory - and that's happened, I think, since I've been there, to at most two people. One, in particular, I remember well, because I thought it was very unnecessary. But that's because he's not a normal person either (...).

And what he said wasn't anything too serious either. He just kept asking me questions... And then he started doing some really stupid things - one in particular, which I won't even talk about because I think it's really, really gross. But it has nothing to do with my sexuality. Sometimes he would try to get me to go out with a friend of his, a married woman! Like... you can see how weird it is. Guys also confront women... for God's sake! And that's how they are.

Dude, I'm super cool, I have my values, I don't mess with women like that. And then the guy comes to me with these ridiculous ideas ... And there was a moment when I saw that he was kind of pejorative: "When are you going to grow your mustache?" But the way he said it, I could already tell. I saw that it was like: dude, you wanted to ask, you saw that I'm open to answering - and many could, I don't know, have a block, something to not allow this access.

Because, man, if it's to inform and the person has a deconstruction with what I'm going to say, I won't mind talking. I gave that freedom to guy come - and he started with some pejorative questions. So, I already started to be a person who cuts.

But, like, I think - it was what you said before - that a lot of what a person experiences as a result of being gay, and how they are treated, depends a lot on how they also make things known to others, or even not make them known. It's the way they deal with things.

Because I've had military personnel come up to me, more than one, and say: "It's really good to talk to you. I had a certain problem with that." So, by spending time with me, they learned a lot. There were people who admitted that they were prejudiced, that if their son went there, there would be a problem ... But then they started to say openly that they didn't know, that they weren't that open, and that, getting to know me, seeing how I am and so on - because I'm a very reserved person about some things (I talk a lot, but I'm reserved) - they realized that it wasn't quite like that.

I'm not one for fussing. I've always been very reserved about everything in my life (...). So, I've never been into that crazy thing, promiscuity and stuff. I've always been very reserved - even when I was only with men, I've never been any other way.

So, I see a lot of people watching how I deal with this - and even knowing my parents, some of whom have met - and seeing that I have complete family support. They see that... "Man, I never would have guessed that *the gay* was like this and all." But it's not.

"I was seeing a girl here who is super calm, who seems sensible, honest and everything." So, I've had people come up to me to thank me for the time they spent with me - so they could see *the gay*, you know? (PM7, 2025, free translation)

The very articulation of the statement makes a movement of exposure and concealment, so that sentimental vulnerability is placed as lesser in comparison to a rational anti-sentimentality, which is not thoughtless, but strategic. In other words, the two categories coexist with each other, and this complex place is where the agent is inserted.

There are reports of experiences of symbolic violence, such as “when are you going to grow your mustache?” and situations that PM7 prefers not to present, in addition to invasive questions that are permeated by negative feelings. However, this negativity is mitigated by the use of a euphemism such as “what he said wasn’t anything too serious either, he just kept asking me questions”. The act of not speaking up, of ignoring the actions that took place or simply recognizing them as “very serious”, represents a self-inflicted silencing that indicates a feeling of protection from hostile people, relationships and environments. Another indication of this anti-sentimentality manifested in a coexistence strategy is the repetition of “I am reserved” in paraphrased ways.

A movement of deconstruction of the sentimental aspect present in PM7 can be observed in its pedagogical position of answering questions, even if they are irrational or pejorative. In a way, it is the use of an opportunity that is aggressive and discriminatory to disconnect and teach, “if it is to inform... I won't mind talking”. However, at the same time, this position has a performative content of normativity, which is described by the speech. Excerpts in which there is a mention of common sense, honesty and family support seem to seek to construct an image of the “normal” and “controlled”, and directly oppose the stereotypes of promiscuity, madness and deviance associated with dissident sexuality, as in “I'm not into the fussing”. This movement can be interpreted as an anti-sentimental reaction to the performance of desire and an interdiscursive reproduction of the assimilationist hegemony that queer people should behave and aspire to experiences similar to those of heterosexual and cisgender people.

The repetition of “I am reserved” itself represents a discursive closet, a tool that protects and controls the exposure of sexuality to mitigate harmful risks. In a way, it functions as a management of visibility, especially considering that this police officer presents herself with short hair and uses a communication style more associated with the male environment.

Furthermore, there is the mention of gay people, as if referring to an existing and not understood entity, with the presence of the article “the” that gives the strange impression of dealing with something very specific and separate from the whole. In excerpts such as “Man, I never would have guessed that *the gay* was like this and all” or in the reproduction by PM7 “So, I’ve had people come up to me to thank me for the time they spent with me - so they could see *the gay*, you know?” there is the revelation that there is tolerance towards *gay people*, but in a

conditional way. Diverse sexuality is accepted, but as long as it is assimilated with hegemonic values of family, introspection, and adaptation to heteronormativity. These are ideas that permeated the minds of those legislators a few decades ago who assimilated “fuss” with a moral crime, which harmed the image of the country – as in the Brazilian dictatorship and its institutional acts to preserve the state’s integrity (Quinalha, 2021).

The hyperbolic elements of being “super cool” or “into this crazy thing” lend an exaggeration to the intended normative performance, while the paradox of “I am a very reserved person about some things” and “I talk a lot, but I am reserved” lends the tone of conflict and tension of visibility and self-protection, characteristic of social closets. As reinforcement to what has been said, there are still other manifestations of violence and the manifest anti-sentimental indifference that PM7 developed:

Well, I always have those pejorative jokes. I don't know why men always have to make stupid jokes, still aimed at fifth grade, which are those lines "Oh, give me a chance, I'll make you go back to the factory settings. Oh, you've never experienced men, oh, this, that". So, I have those situations there, but I don't care about any of that, seriously. But I don't notice any different treatment, no. I know they are afraid, I believe, and they, at least with me and some other women, they may be afraid, because the reprisal for this is seen in the media, and prejudice is very big today. Thank God. So, treatment, like that... No, I don't notice it, no. I have situations that other people thought could be prejudice, but I myself, from what I already know about what it's like to live with prejudice, I didn't think it was. (PM7, 2025, free translation)

In her intra-discourse, there are examples of symbolic violence, harassment, strategic anti-sentimentality from a closet, and an attempt to ignore discriminatory acts as if they did not exist. Furthermore, the statement here conveys an idea of security and protection granted by the same expansion described previously of the double-binding system: the media. Therefore, there is a certain feeling of invulnerability and a thought of the possibility of resolution (if she identifies a prejudice) in PM7's speech, but at the same time, she reports from a personal place that knows what it is like to experience situations of prejudice, and compares them with what happens within the corporation, and does not see them as such.

In a comparative tone of the visibility of police officers, PM9 is an effeminate lesbian woman who presents herself with long hair, salutes and *passes* as heterosexual, as detailed:

I haven't changed anything about my appearance, nothing like you said. There are some people, some women who are perhaps a little more masculine, dress more... Or maybe they have some way. So much so that, like I said, most of the time I tell people, "I'm a lesbian, I'm dating a woman and so on." People don't believe me, because they don't see it. But like I said, I always make it clear. So I think the clearest way for

people to identify me is when I say that I am, because I never hide it. But I think that a physical characteristic or way, I don't know, I could identify it (PM9, 2025, free translation).

At this point in the interview, she was asked if there was any characteristic or personality trait that allowed other people to identify her as a lesbian. The statement that people do not believe in her identification as a lesbian is not said in a regretful tone of social denial, but as a certain skill, a benefit. On the other hand, there is a firm and hyperbolic position of “I always make it clear” and “I never hide it”, associated with a rejection of stereotypes in which she states a certain shift in the discussion about the body to the discourse itself “the clearest way is my speech”. In a certain way, there is a privilege given to what is said above what is socially expected.

PM9's speech and language are more important in her own experience, which leads me to believe that her words are trusted by her colleagues or that she uses them as a way to stay out of the closet and ensure respect – there is a repetition of “it's like I said”. It is worth noting that here we are dealing with a person with physical features that are socially read as feminine, so the enunciative position comes from an expository but safe place, since it does not necessarily challenge the binary categories of masculine/feminine or heterosexual/homosexual. The mobilization of speech as a strategy helps to destabilize the idea that she adheres to a heteronormative logic, and transforms the closet into a malleable tool, albeit in a space of military ideological reproduction, and she even refers to my words as a point of safety “just like you said”.

Still regarding the visibility of lesbians among female police officers, PM10 responded about the difference in the relationship between her heterosexual colleagues and her:

I notice. But it's a positive difference. Because... I notice, but it's a positive difference, because they talk to me like they talk to their normal colleagues. I see that when there are other *fems* around, the straight *fems* ... They don't talk about the same subjects. So they treat me as an equal. So, in that sense, they don't hesitate to say anything around me, I come over and they don't stop talking. If other women come over, they immediately change the subject. When they pick up on them like that without realizing it, they get disconcerted. So, from that point of view, I think it's very positive for me. (PM10, 2025, free translation).

PM10 presents herself as a lesbian woman and describes herself as masculine, which provides a different perspective from PM9 and closer to PM7. She reports equal treatment from her colleagues (which is a positive difference in relation to other heterosexual female officers),

which is similar to PM7's experience of being seen as one of the male "partners," and corroborates PM1 regarding the way lesbian officers are viewed.

One thing that PM10 expresses is a sense of victory in relation to the respect she has earned, to equal treatment, as she reports at other times experiences of confrontation with other male officers. In excerpts such as "they don't have the squeamishness to say anything around me" and "they treat me as an equal" she reflects this feeling, and it is not a criticism of the system or the experiences of other lesbian police officers, but simply a personal triumph. This is something that also came up in PM5's speech regarding his bisexuality.

The way in which PM10 states her acceptance among her male colleagues concerns her position of not threatening heteronormativity, since her lesbianism is not placed in a sexualized position due to the traits commonly associated with masculinity that she possesses. It is functional, since it accesses environments that are not accessed by heterosexual women. It functions as a category of *mirror violence*, a violence that occurs against someone who resembles it, since it does not challenge the dynamics of silencing conversations. Something that also demonstrates who has control over the discourses that circulate in these spaces, and who can have access to them.

The acceptance and complicity in relation to discourses of assimilation demonstrate that in the police environment there is a difference in terms of breaking with gender norms. For example, effeminate women are treated inferiorly to those who are masculine, a logic that inverts the treatment that normally occurs in society. In a way, lesbian female police officers become *token*<sup>8</sup> for demonstrating a discourse of acceptance and equal treatment for women in general, and a search for the denial of misogyny and machismo that is involved in the corporate space.

This is not a criticism of the position of these police officers, since there is a double negotiation in the situation of balancing the desire to belong with the reproduction of oppressions. Thus, sentimentality and anti-sentimentality also appear as a need for validation and a sense of victory through illusory equality, respectively. It is an example of how closet figures and performances can be symbols of resistance and assimilation, since they can be oppressive, but can also be strategically instrumentalized for protection and benefits.

On the other hand, I return to how femininity in men, which challenges a gender norm, is seen differently than in women:

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<sup>8</sup>A *token* represents an attempt at inclusion that is minimal or superficial, so that minority groups are only seen by some of their individuals. In this case, a lesbian agent is used as a symbol that there is inclusion of the entire LGBTQIA+ community and women with equality.



This case of coming out and being harmed... I know two people who had what I said before happen to them, in the sense that they were very harmed in their careers, they were not promoted, one even retired and was unable to get another promotion, because he came out as gay. I don't even know if it was a question of coming out, but because he was more effeminate and it showed. And this certainly had an impact on the fact that he was not promoted. I know another person who did come out, he told his coworkers in the department that he was gay and everything, that he was going to marry another guy and so on. He has had to deal with very bitter issues throughout his career until today; in fact, he had to ask to be removed from the workplace where he came out, because the situation became unbearable and, as a rule, it was unbearable for one person specifically, who was very conservative and because of the mockery and jokes that two evangelicals made about him. (PM2, 2025, free translation)

Here PM2 presents narratives of suffering when describing cases of people who had problems with the exposure of sentimentality. His speech is specific, with the presentation of facts, few opinions, and without dramatizing the situations, which places him in an external position, as another analyst. His own intellectuality allows him to make considerations about the research, in which he highlights femininity as a possible cause of exclusion but also brings visibility to “coming out” as another possibility.

At this point, visibility in coming out or marriage, or gender non-conformity, leads to punishment by the military institution. There is a power mechanism that punishes these elements by not granting promotion, compulsory retirement, and career losses, in general.

The religious element should be highlighted here, since PM2 felt the need to use the word “evangelicals” when he could have simply referred to “religious” or something along those lines. This highlights how religious values are intertwined in institutional culture, which helps maintain a dominant conservative morality. In other words, the discourses mobilized in the military institution are part of an interdiscursive network that involves morality, religion, sexism, family, and other elements.

The antithesis raised between the “coming out” of an “effeminate man who appeared to be transparent” brings back the possibility of self-revelation and self-naming, but at the same time brings the gaze of others that falls on the queer without self-affirmation. There is a denunciation being made in the statement, despite a neutrality in speech. Therefore, the discursive position of a gay and intellectual police officer makes this individual position himself in yet another complex marker, in which he knows the discriminatory panorama of the place he is in, is able to think about it critically, but avoids direct confrontation.

There are signs of a motivation or tendency towards anti-sentimental positions and the reproduction of previous patterns in the police when we observe the training given to agents:

Look, at first you become a very closed person. They say that we become very emotionless, in fact. Many times you seem like a person without feelings. At first you deal with so many situations, so many facts in other people's lives, that you become a hard person, as if you were an iceman, as they say. Because you arrive, for example, you have a mother crying over the death of a son. At that moment, the person there is the professional. So you have to look at that situation, you have to pass on information to the person, without what? Without getting involved in the fact. So, sometimes, it's that feeling, you start to have no feelings, let's say. I don't know if you can understand. (PM4, 2025, free translation).

Ah, during the training process, I realized that I became more aggressive, in a way, for a long time. (...). So I think I needed to go through a period of great deprivation of coexistence with the ideology that I didn't even understand in order to return to being who I was, and today I try to make a difference by showing, through my coexistence, my classes, that it is possible to be different within the institution, which doesn't want to see the different. (PM2, 2025, free translation)

I think that... I think that... I think that it's not paranoia, because paranoia is a thing, a disease, actually. And distrust, yes, because as I say, we end up becoming a little insensitive, but because otherwise we don't work, because if we're like that, we say "take it to heart". If we take everything to heart, that we see, that we're there talking about, we don't work, we don't talk about our work. So it really becomes a little more, I don't know if the word is insensitive, you know, because I personally feel, I feel the pain of a mother who sees her son being arrested for drug trafficking, or I see the pain, you know, I've seen, a daughter whose mother committed suicide, so I feel all of that, but it turns out that we have to stay strong, we have to make an effort, actually, to stay strong, to be able to work, but I don't think, and yes, there is a bit of distrust, because in our environment I say that we know a lot of bad people, we know a lot of bad people (...) (PM9, 2025, free translation).

When asked about the changes they noticed in themselves after training, so that it could be understood whether anti-sentimentality and military ideological views began at that moment, most of the answers started from the same position of difficulty and suffering, but with a positive result in the end. I highlight the mentions of sleep deprivation, extensive study and physical training routines, psychological pressure, and mentions of symbolic violence.

The use of the metaphors “iceman” and “tough guy” demonstrate the impact on the subjectivities of individuals during and after training, in which anti-sentimentality begins to appear. And there is also the mention that “they talk”, which shows a reproduction of an expression that is already commonly used to describe this moment in which the subject becomes “without feelings”.

The example of a mother's suffering was mentioned several times, especially as a counterpoint to the idea that the officers are completely insensitive and aggressive. Furthermore, it is possible to note that it takes effort on the part of the officers to not remain as they were when they first started their duties, something that comes with time – some described

years of psychological support and personal reassessment. PM2, for example, details an effort to try to show “that it is possible to be different within the institution, which does not want to see what is different”, which indicates how much the issue of emotional expression is linked to the expression of sexuality and gender in these spaces.

Of course, training for a profession that deals with security and crime must be updated as crimes are updated; there is a need for firm teaching for it to be effective. However, understanding that from this moment on, subjects already begin to understand how the institution works (in the face of dissident sexualities, which is the focus) is important to find a starting point for a possible modification of discriminatory practices and reproduction of behaviors.

There is a clear impact on the lives and ways in which these people live after training and joining the Police, which is not always reported as something negative. However, regarding this very important moment in the internalization of the institution's discourses and ideologies in these individuals, I present a statement by PM4 about how these effects occur in society:

No, that's what I like to say, because when we start a career, we start to look up to others, right? I mean, oh, what's it like? Because you don't know, it's all new, right? So, what's new to you, you... "No, that's how it is, no, you have to deal with it." But over time, you start to realize that each situation ... Situation... Each fact is a fact, which is different from you catching a criminal who has just, let's say, stabbed someone and you attending to something where the mother is there looking at the body of the son of his, hers. So, you have to have discernment, I think, to know how to distinguish these differences. Of course you won't get involved, but you also won't fail to say a word to that mother who is there at that moment. So, you start to see these differences over time. (PM4, 2025, free translation)

There is no direct and obvious connection with the theme of this research in this statement, but what I seek to demonstrate with this discursive formation is that institutions have power over subjects, including to shape them and teach them to act in a certain way, even if it is outside of work hours. There is a very positive and balanced manifestation of PM4 in the recognition that it requires discernment to deal with differences in crimes, however the previous structuring of the statement brings the mirroring of actions as a starting point for the execution of the function, that is, through mimicry the agents lead each other. The reflection at this point is in the question: *how does the mirroring of the practices of a sexist and homophobic institution work in the treatment of crime in society?*

Finally, a different view on the position of lesbian women in the institution is brought by PM2, with a valuable observation on how the rules and arguments constantly change in order to select who has access to significant discursive spaces:

Every time a person is a little more effeminate, they suffer more. Yes, I have noticed this very strongly. And in the case of lesbian women, this is much worse because, in theory, there is no effeminate presence in women, right? On the contrary, we see a slightly more masculine behavior in some of them. When this masculine behavior stands out in a lesbian woman, then she suffers prejudice, is the target of ridicule, jokes, is left in the background when there is some benefit that she could be offered, but she is overlooked because she is a lesbian. This happens much more with women, in fact, than with effeminate guys. The effeminate guy, if he is a guy, as they say, who stands out at work, even if he is gay, sometimes he manages to get these benefits. Sometimes, not always, but women, they are almost always excluded, they do not have this access. Women suffer more when they clearly identify themselves, come out of the closet or let it be known that they are lesbians. (PM2, 2025, free translation)

Despite the difference compared to what was reported by other officers, this does not mean that this quote invalidates the previous ones but rather provides another view of something that also happens. I would like to point out that the officers are from different corporations, with some exceptions, which provides a greater variety of experiences.

In this quote from PM2, I notice something quite particular in the intradiscourse, but which also appears in a context of comparison with the other interviewees. Here, sentimentalism and anti-sentimentalism manifest themselves as theoretical categories that differ according to the gender of the person expressing them. Initially, it was noted that effeminate or sentimental police officers were more disadvantaged, while the feminine identity that presented itself with a certain anti-sentimentalism or "masculine behavior" was more accepted among their peers. However, here, both sentimental and anti-sentimental are presented as negative, which gives rise to the category of a double bind system. There is no need to say that there is an ideal standard beyond the normative gender standard, so there are cases of effeminate and masculine women who receive different treatment, regardless of their sexuality.

However, there are mentions of female police officers who indicate a contrary act, in which they are benefited by acting in a way closer to what the men in the force expect, that is, greater masculinity, see PM7 and PM10.

The double-binding system between male and female police officers with dissident sexualities and performances that defy gender norms within the police force can be summarized as a result of constant harm, regardless of the combination that may be made. This is a

hypothesis that requires more in-depth studies, preferably with an empirical perspective. Below is a simple diagram to guide and exemplify this question:

- gay/bi man + effeminate + police officer = harm
- gay/bi man + masculine + police officer = harm
- straight man or man without sexual identification + effeminate + police officer = harm
- lesbian/bi woman + masculine + police officer = harm
- lesbian/bi woman + effeminate + police officer = harm
- straight woman or woman without sexual identification + masculinized + police officer = harm

This is a binary gender modulation due to the interviewees' identifications (which adds to the need for further investigations), but there are reports of trans people in the Police who also suffered similar problems - unfortunately they could not be interviewed because they did not fit the scope, since they had to leave their positions due to suffering with their gender identity, according to the statements. But the representation serves as a starting point to consider the hypothesis that in a new schematization involving transsexual and non-binary people, the result would also be harmful.

Otherwise, queer people have a “standard” of respect or treatment that changes when it comes to them. This problem does not only affect these people but also extends to the point of affecting heterosexual and cisgender people who may simply not reproduce the gender roles that are socially and institutionally expected of them. With this, it can be noted that thinking about Queer Criminology or Queer Theories, in general, not only benefits the LGBTQIA+ community, but also other subjects who are affected by unconventional elements in relation to their own sexual identity. And, considering gender as a social construct, no one is immune.

#### **5.1.4. Violent and exemplary discipline and *Mirror-violence***

Continuing what was discussed about training and what an anti-sentimental stance can represent in the police institution, and consequently, in the treatment of crime, I address discipline as one of the subverted forms of controlling the sexuality of agents and society. In the same vein, I present analyses of the category of *mirror-violence*, a mirrored violence that can occur with the use of open secrecy seen in others as a form of control or the return of the individual's own violence suffered to those in whom he sees his own reflection.

Violent and exemplary discipline represents the multiple violent ways in which a person or group can be determined to behave in a certain way, so that others who see or live with them also understand and reproduce the same behavior. The reason for imitating the disciplined other is in the observation of violence with a sense of fear and self-preservation, in which one seeks to avoid the harm that primarily affected that disciplined other.

In this category, we can talk about punishments, humiliation, degrading treatment, jokes, questions, bureaucracy, harassment, lockers, speeches, among other possibilities. All of these examples should be interpreted here within a context of aversion to diverse sexual orientation or gender identity, although the interviewees reported experiences of different types of violence, such as against gender, height, family formation, intellectuality, among others.

On the other hand, *mirror violence* can be seen as a consequence of an environment permeated by a discipline that seeks to set an example of what is or is not permitted through punishable situations and behaviors. Alternatively, it could be represented by an officer, whether in the closet or not, who sees his own sexuality reflected in a criminal perpetrator and changes his behavior because of it, or an officer who does not see all aspects of his sexual expression in another *queer person* and becomes insensitive or *violent* as a result. In the statements analyzed, the violent manifestations were symbolic or unconscious, so that those officers who behave in a more reserved manner see sexuality experienced differently as wrong or harmful.

PM1, in particular, had his speech interspersed several times with the category “violent and exemplary discipline”. From the outset, I would like to highlight the officer’s concern and anguish at being 5 minutes late when meeting me for the interview, something he later reported having learned in the Military Police: not to be late. I will return to a quote from him in which he talks about not engaging in *fights* against prejudice within the force. It is as follows:

It's out of fear, and exactly to protect myself. Because it's something I don't know... It's a fight I really wanted to have, but I have such a routine... that I'm like, "ah, I'm so worn out, I'll just leave it alone." (PM1, 2024)

The previously discussed points of fear and self-protection in relation to the closet serve as a starting point for us to address the effects that a highly disciplined work regime can have on people. It is clear that here we are dealing with a high-risk profession involved with a type of high-risk experience, as Criminology itself points out (Siegel, 2011), which requires effective training to help protect the agents themselves and society, as we can see from the ways in which crimes themselves reinvent themselves in every possible context in order to avoid any identification. There is a difficulty reported by the interviewees regarding training in general,

with the exception of one interviewee (PM10), but I will not focus on the general aspects, only on those that concern the problem of this study: closets.

Let us briefly return to the training, which is the moment when the discipline begins. Here the agent had been asked about what changes he had noticed in himself after and during the training to join the Police:

Wow , a lot of things. A lot of things indeed. Because it's a very, very difficult training, because they mold you a lot. They're supposed to make you enter the military, to make you adapt to the military. Not to make you adapt! To force you to adapt to the military. So they put a lot of pressure on you about schedules, routines, waking up early, not being able to rest, or the constant stress of them demanding "Do this, do that", and everything is very fast, immediate. And everything has to be done very well. So this training itself is very complicated. Both the physical and psychological part, and the studies too. And after the training is over, I realized that I never slept the same way again. My sleep isn't the same. When I go out to a bar, I can't sit with my back to the street, for example. I get anxious because they put so much stuff in your head and it really ends up being dangerous. The things that I used to live peacefully, that I never noticed, never noticed... I couldn't be that way anymore, you know? Sleep, peace, everything. I've had depression, I've had... I have anxiety, I've been through a lot of bad things within the institution. So, it's a very complicated thing, I've never been the same again. And I think that if I leave... When I leave, God willing, He'll help me. When I leave, I also think I won't continue to be the same as I was before. But there are a lot of good things too. I was very shy, today I can speak naturally in public, I give lectures to a lot of people, I teach at PROERD to a lot of students. It helped me financially, stability, health insurance, right? Which I needed a lot. But it took me a long time to see that that's not the only way, right? (PM1, 2024, free translation).

There were two classmates, and we learned [inaudible]. He said: "The police don't admit two things: thieves and faggots." Like that. So that sentence... [pause] That was in 2002. Thieves and faggots ... Then everyone went silent, no one said anything in the room. And then he acted naturally, because it was normal, it was natural for the guy ... He was trained that way. Then in the middle of the course came Human Rights, a lecture and such. Then never again. (...) Wow. I was getting in, it was my dream to get in. Do you understand? (PM10, 2025, free translation).

The description of PM1 is that it is a training focused on molding previous habits, such as the aforementioned topics of sleep, vigilance and attention – skills necessary for a Public Security agent. But in addition, there are techniques for docilizing the body, with an exacerbated demand for perfection, stress in the routine and an annulment of individuality – something that interests me.

On the other hand, PM10, who was the only one of the interviewees who reported having enjoyed the training and, after criticizing how it was currently carried out, reported one of the most painful phrases I heard during the research process: "The police do not tolerate two things: thieves and gays." A phrase she heard while she was practicing to join the Military Police, which she dreamed of. This moment summarizes something quite valuable in this research, which is the equating of (homo) sexuality with criminality, and in this specific topic, the limit that was

imposed from the very beginning on what was tolerated within the police force. It is not a written rule, not even a law, but it works as such, and is naturalized as a maxim to be followed, since PM10 has 23 years of experience in the institution.

Something that several interviewees mentioned was the Human Rights course that is taught during the training. When asked about a specific type of training on sexuality, they mentioned this course, some with a speech defending the Police that there is indeed specific training, while others with a speech recognizing that it is insufficient. I noticed that the Human Rights course, in itself, works as a closet practice on the subject, since it unifies several agendas into one and does not address the particularities of each one. For example:

Also, there is a lot of training. Both LGBT, elderly, and women. A more vulnerable group. (PM5, 2025, free translation).

PM5 talks about *a lot of* training and even mentions a recent talk with a *drag queen* in the corporation – which I see as progress. But this is not the case for the other interviewees. At this point, I identify it as a general institutional problem, and not just related to sexuality and gender, as there is the inclusion of other issues such as the elderly, people with disabilities, black people, sex workers, among others. However, the others disagree.

Still regarding a question about the training course, one of the interviewees responded by highlighting the issue of sexuality, even though he was not asked exactly about that:

I don't remember ever bringing up this subject with anyone there, because the training course has a very penalizing policy. If you're late, you're penalized, whatever the situation, you're penalized. And when I started, I had this external bias from the police that, "oh no, it's a homophobic environment, I don't know what", I said, yeah, I'm going to stay quiet here so I don't get in trouble. In the course, I didn't actually bring up this subject. But there's so much demand, there's so much that we do that you kind of don't have time to talk much about your personal life. (PM8, 2025, free translation).

The statement is marked by the closet, even though PM8 declares himself as having come out to the corporation at the time, in which the speaking position has a preventive silencing, in which, by a mechanism of anticipation of the course time, he preferred to be preterited in the face of possible hostility. It is a place of vulnerability, which I observe mainly in the focus of the silencing on sexuality, even though he only questions about the training in general. There is an anaphoric repetition of the term “penalized”, which intensifies the notion of constant surveillance and control over how people should act.

The euphemism “quietinho” (quietly) – seen at other times, such as in PM1’s speech – is a way of reducing or at least trying to present the situation of his resignation for institutional



survival as mild and less serious. Furthermore, paraphrasing and preterition, as categories of the Epistemology of the closet and DA, show another emptying of what could be said in “I don’t know what”, which, despite being a repetition of someone else’s speech, still seems to hide some kind of prejudiced episode that could lead the speech in another direction. Or even in the attribution to the high demand for the absence of manifestation of personal life.

Next: joining the Military Police. Apparently, the first moment individuals enter the institutional space makes them immediately encounter another mentality and experience, and consequently, follow the established behavioral pattern.

Unfortunately, within the military environment there is machismo, a very strong patriarchy, a very deep-rooted conservatism that makes it difficult and difficult for those who come out. The whole professional issue, from the work itself, because there may be people who come out... “Oh, I won’t work with so-and-so because he’s gay”, “I won’t work with so-and-so because she’s a lesbian”, things like that, it happens, it happens. And it’s not uncommon, on the contrary. And other issues may arise, even if veiled, right? Because as an institution, this will never be assumed in the sense of harming career advancement or professional recognition, the granting of a reward and things like that. This happens and it’s not uncommon either (PM2, 2025, free translation).

It was actually very easy for me... it's the same as my transition, it was very easy. I was bullied a lot in the police force when I wasn't out. After I came out, it was like, I'm gay and that's it, it's over. I didn't get bullied anymore, nowadays it's really easy, people respect me. (...) They would see little notes, they would write on my locker, "I know you're gay", they would put transvestite magazines in my locker, stuff like that. (...) No, it doesn't make any difference to me. That was before I came out. Nowadays, people just say I'm gay. It's not a problem. (PM5, 2025, free translation)

PM2, as mentioned elsewhere, is also an academic and demonstrates structural knowledge of the institution, with a distance from the space in his speech to point out practices of machismo, patriarchy, and conservatism. The speech is that of a participant observer, as is that of PM6, who is also involved in the Academy. An important observation regarding violent and exemplary discipline is brought up in the speech with cases of refusal to work with colleagues due to sexuality, which, even though it is not an official act, informally functions as a punishment and exclusion within the corporation.

In this case, the neglect is the responsibility of the institution itself, which remains silent in the face of discriminatory practices, does not “acknowledge” them, and formalizes what was once commonplace. The repetition of “it happens, it happens” and “it is not a small thing” is emphatic in demonstrating the level of occurrences and normalization, in addition to the fact that PM2 lists the types of reprisals that occur.

On the other hand, from the interviewee PM5’s speech, it is possible to notice a narrative of mitigation of violence, but with a transition from suffering to acceptance. In this statement,

mirror violence is strong in the strategic acts of colleagues in making the agent see himself reflected in the writings in his locker and in the magazines with transvestites. It is an extortionate mirror, in which colleagues “tell a secret” to the individual who has not even spoken about it. It is a double recognition, which identifies, but also subjugates.

It is possible to see that violence still exists, but that he does not pay attention to it. A clear manifestation of anti-sentimentality is the minimization of the impacts of bullying, as in “it doesn’t make a difference”, “it’s no problem” and “it’s okay”. In fact, the repetition of calmness in the transition and in the current environment sounds like a form of mutual persuasion, to me as the interviewer and to the subject himself. Furthermore, the specific mention of violence ending with “those things” is an intentional omission to avoid mentioning other types of acts.

These cases demonstrate everyday attitudes and discriminatory expressions that occur as a result of the very coexistence between police officers. A manifestation of a homophobic interdiscourse that is common within the structure of the institution, although not formalized. Another aspect of discipline occurs when superiors and/or professionals in charge themselves practice:

I've been asked about this before. Mainly by a psychologist at the unit. So, I was going through a certain problem and everything. He asked, "Are you married?" "No" "Do you have children" "No". "Ah, that's not normal." This thing bothered me for a long time (...) (PM3, 2025, free translation).

It is worth noting here that the comment "this is not normal" was made by the unit's psychologist, which contributes to a violent and exemplary discipline in which a professional focused on the psychological and mental health of agents induces this type of thinking. Furthermore, the neglect of not coming out and/or not having a traditional family, or the mere presence of children, leaves a gap for this type of interpretation. Of course, no value judgment should be made about the agent's choice of family formation, after all, it is a completely valid way of living, however, there are double ties in the situation stated, in which seeking psychological help is harmful and going without help is also harmful. He continues:

Yes, mainly because of that. Because the psychologist is a professional who... you trust, right? And in the institution, we don't trust the institution's psychologist, you know? Because he's the famous "take and bring", and I'm not there seeing him as a person who can help me, so he... everything I'm going to say he'll take to the command. A situation that I'm unhappy with and everything, instead of him taking it, helping me to improve, he'll take it and take it... He'll try to f... I see it as a harmful factor. (PM3, 2025, free translation).

With this second speech, a new character in the institutional space emerges as an important part in the discipline of the subjects, since the instance of help and comfort does not offer any of these possibilities. Something that draws attention to the alarming data regarding the mental health of police officers. Another example of the work of a military institutional psychologist is given by PM5, which shows that it is not a general trend in this area in the institution (at least, not in this sample):

So when I went to see a psychologist, she wrote reports. But there's no action to be taken about it, no. Unless you want to take action. At the time, I didn't want to take action. I just wanted to talk to her, to talk... She thought it was absurd. She wanted to think that she would put it on paper, make a report. Hold on. Make a report. But I didn't want to go ahead with it. That's all. So, if you want, there's action, people take it. I didn't want to, at the time. (PM5, 2025, free translation)

PM5's choice not to take action is crucial to the case, since the professional had some influence to do so. Some important details to be observed here are the preventive silence chosen by the officer and the need he felt to vent and talk to someone, or better yet, to a specialized professional. Furthermore, he makes it clear that there are measures that can be taken, but that he simply chose not to follow them. However, the statement also acts as a double conviction, since, due to the other cases and PM5's own attitude, the complaints regarding discrimination are not taken forward.

Another problem arises when the insults and discrimination come directly from people in higher hierarchical positions, something that is highly respected in the military:

About me, specifically, no. But I suspect that one person, who was my boss for a while, thought that the jokes she made about the LGBT community were a way of trying to get to me, but she didn't have the courage to tell me directly. So, I'm sure that she was a very conservative person, a sexist woman, which I think makes things much worse in the context we live in, a sexist woman. If you don't want to be a feminist, don't be a sexist. And she created these situations to try to get to me because she suspected that I might or might not be gay. As I told you, she wasn't my friend, so I never came out to her. I didn't think it was necessary, and I didn't feel comfortable doing it either. (PM2, 2025).

PM2 emphasized that he is a person who reports and seeks action, but in this specific case it can be noted that he did not seek other measures. Partly because they were not jokes made directly to him, but partly because of the possibility of what this would result in. The closet “put on” by the interviewee demonstrates an effective self-silencing motivated by the hierarchical superior, so that sexuality was not exposed in the relationship between them,

something that can be interpreted in a positive way in terms of how closets can be beneficial, but also negatively due to the need that existed in the situation for this to happen.

As for reprisals, these were presented in the speeches as extremely naturalized and common formations in the daily life of corporations, and not only related to facts involving sexuality, but also in relation to any movement that is contrary to the ideological positions of the institution. This is another case in which there are several statements from the interviewees that could be cited on the subject, but the following are good examples to be analyzed in the *corpus*:

And they said no, that it seemed like I wanted to leave the police force and that I shouldn't go to college, but to send me to another city far away. So they went and sent me to another city far away. And it was certain that I would go. It was so much that everyone got scared, right. They said: "hey, PM1, you were supposed to come here". So, they sent me to another city, and that's when I did it. I traveled 3 hours from there to here, just to come, to study and then 3 hours to come back. But it was something I did just for the sake of it... Then there was a time when I wanted to leave PROERD, because they were pressuring me to do work beyond what I was capable of. So I went and said that I wasn't going to mess with PROERD anymore and they started threatening me and everything. Then, when I showed up more than the commander, I started to think it was bad, I changed my schedule, looked for time off, worked at city events, so it was kind of complicated (PM1, 2024, free translation).

Persecution. The famous persecution. There is the veiled persecution, right? (...) I put you on duty several times... Situations in... Of operations that put you. So it is this veiled persecution, it is everything, everything is you. You start to see that you have become overwhelmed and you see that it is not because of the service, you understand? (PM3, 2025, free translation)

The first quote is a demonstration of the incessant attempts to discipline and arbitrarily exemplify the behavior and life choices of PM1. The change of city, the exaggeration in the number of functions and responsibilities, and the shift as a punitive tool constitute violent discipline, which is physical and psychological. The subjectivity of the subject is affected by the police structure, which distributes the work aiming at coercion and also threats.

There is an anti-sentimental manifestation of the institution highlighted in the speeches, since there is a refusal by the Police itself to accept that the agent studies or follows other tasks other than those internal. The interdiscursivity is marked by the military ideology that soldiers should only follow orders, without questioning or seeking to change routines.

In addition, PM3's statements portray the persecution with an emphatic repetition and an increase in the tone of voice to emphasize that "it's all you," in addition to recognizing the veiled nature that they can take. The speech marked by vocal changes and the pause for self-correction symbolize two moments in the speech in which the message must be conveyed with all vehemence, but with the right words. At the end, the confirmatory question "do you

understand?” after stating that the persecution was not due to the service, creates a moment of connection with me so that I affirm that I understood that the motivation was a subjective issue.

The reflexive violence in this situation puts the subject under a spotlight in which he is singled out in the corporation and punished, so everyone can see themselves in him, and at the same time, he can consider the unnamed reason for the punishment.

In addition to punishments for harassment and other reprisals, jokes and harsh responses permeated by humor are also tools of discrimination and defense strategies mobilized by officers. At this point, I will only address the first aspect, in which jokes, ironies, jokes and *teasing* are manifestations of the prejudice of heterosexual officers and constitute an ideological reproduction of the moralistic, conservative, religious, sexist and homophobic thoughts of the police officers.

Not with women. The funny thing is with men. Every time... All the jokes have to do with... Always referring to the male gender. We, like, for women, I think they accept it better. The idea I have is that women are more accepted, because men really are more trampled on in this situation. (PM10, 2025, free translation).

Yes, yes. Because we, me and this other colleague, we applied PROERD in the rural area of [city hidden to make identification difficult]. Then they kept saying that we were going to be... “Be careful with him, he’s going to keep harassing you all the way there, on the road”. It was some pretty unpleasant things. (PM1, 2025, free translation)

Look, it's a military situation. It's a whole rule. I think that for me, in order to not cause so much trouble and that thing... Nowadays, it's so peaceful... Nowadays, these issues of... You know? Of coming out. The person who doesn't come out and is teased, they won't want to bring more spotlight to themselves. They won't want to prove all that. So, I think that's why everyone keeps to themselves. Because the person isn't out. So, they won't want to bring that into vogue anymore. To make this research more latent, this whole thing. (PM5, 2025, free translation)

I've seen them joke, but always about someone else, not about me, like, my battalion has a lot of homosexuals, there must be about six there. Even before, for example, they knew about me, it happened that I worked with someone for the first time, one of those others passed by, and they said: "So-and-so is gay ". But not about me specifically, about others. (PM8, 2025, free translation).

These statements, each in their own way, present jokes as weapons of control, and together, they present an institutionalized discursive pattern of normalization of derogatory sexual jokes as instruments of discipline and symbolic exclusion of agents.

In PM10's speech, the position of acceptance she holds among heterosexual police officers gives her an insight into how jokes work, as she says they always refer to men, and that women are more accepted. I interpret that here she was referring only to the issue of sexuality by the phrase “in this situation”, or at least from the interviewee's perspective. The description is of the presence of male panic among heterosexual officers, who must reproduce behaviors of

symbolic exposure of others by “trampling” – something stronger than just jokes. It is also a clear vision of the spectacle of the closet.

For PM1, who is not out in the workplace, the way found to put him in this position was to discipline him through humor, because, while they mock the other colleague who is out, there is a tone of accusation and “concern” that he is like his partner. In addition, the figure of the gay or bisexual police officer (there is no specification) is presented as that of a sexual predator, a threat to those who do not present themselves in this way. The effect of this is an anticipation of what the other person thinks, a mirrored violence, that if the other person goes through this, they are also certain to go through this stigmatization if they come out.

And it is precisely this self-silencing and paralysis caused by jokes that PM5 reports. There is hostility preventing the existence of a safe space for coming out, or for mere coexistence. At the beginning of the speech there is an expression of conformity, that “it is a military situation. It is a whole rule”, which indicates the position assumed by this agent after talking about his bisexuality and going through a period of violence and discrimination (see the situation with the closet and the magazines). At the end, he mentions this research as being a way of keeping the topic latent, as if it were some kind of inconvenience for those who do not want to draw attention to themselves – which I recognize.

The spectacle of the closet in PM8's speech is in the indirect comment, which is intentional, and which shifts the focus from himself to the other. PM8 is not the direct target of the comment, but it is he who is the target of the information about the other person's sexuality, and it is up to him to decide what it means. One might think that it was a sexual innuendo or a warning about the “threat”, but considering the space in the corporation where, despite there being several openly homosexuals, there are still jokes and comments, in other words, the natural reaction will be to keep a strategic closet about oneself.

The statements reveal a homophobia that is reproduced and produced on a daily basis in a normal way. They are like acts of performance that guarantee an interpretation of the position of the person making them (that they are not the same as the victim of the joke) and ridicule, silence and discipline colleagues about the position they occupy.

This practice can be called part of the *technologies of the closet*, due to the power of the sexuality device that it has in contributing to cisheteronormativity and its maintenance.

The concept of violent and exemplary discipline comes from Foucault's studies (2014) and refers to what was demonstrated here in this topic, a public punishment used as a way to demonstrate who holds power and to dissuade crimes that have been committed. There are two parallels to be drawn with this concept: the first, with Sedgwick's (1990) “closet spectacle”, in

which, even if you have not explicitly revealed your own sexuality, the suspicion and premonition of other people cause there to be a level of exhibitionism regarding your own sexuality. This, added to the punitive nature, generates examples such as those of PM5 and PM1. Another parallel is in the very association of dissident sexuality with criminality, after all, it would not be necessary to punish and exemplify an act that was considered correct.

The military institution operates on subjects as a machine for docilizing bodies and creating ideal soldiers, as theorized by Foucault. Sexuality other than heterosexuality is interpreted and conditioned by the vision of deviance, a crime that can be corrected through exemplification. One effect of this is the manifestation of mirror violence, which not only affects queer police officers and the institution internally but also externally. In this way, these police officers are forced, and over time, force themselves to mitigate this part of themselves or even dissociate it from other experiences so that they do not see themselves in the reflection of the “criminal”, the deviant.

Therefore, adapting to a model that is easily digested or protecting oneself from the gaze of others seems like a useful strategy, but regardless of whether one is aware of the act or not, it helps to perpetuate a cycle of symbolic and violent oppression. There are no elements that indicate physical violence as aggression, but one can notice a symbolic and silent ideology, in which one speaks without necessarily saying it, as happens with the naturalization of cisheteronormativity as the correct, healthy and moral path.

The discourse that promotes this normality is present in society, but it takes on well-defined contours within the military institution, since there is already a set of rules, roles and hierarchical chains that help to disguise what is being done. In this way, retaliation against an officer who reported discrimination can simply be publicly mobilized as punishment for incorrect behavior. However, *those who know know* what the real reason was, and adapt to it or they will also be subject to punishment.

#### **5.1.5. Male Panic/Paranoia**

Male panic and paranoia are categories that reflect each other, with a symbiotic relationship of causality that justifies their union to explain the analyses performed. As for the first category, attributed to the male and similar to terror as a condition that incites fear of the possibility of being treated or interpreted negatively, or differently from who one is, there is a fear of meeting with other men or being in their company or interacting and generating violence.

This generates paranoia, not in a pathological way, but as a perspective in which being out or not, being queer or not being queer can have the same weight and power to cause harm.

A straight man who, out of panic, does not want to be interpreted as gay, begins to see situations in a paranoid way, resulting in behaviors and attitudes that perform his own heterosexuality (at least what he understands in this sense). Therefore, his relationship with other men will be marked by distance, jokes that transfer the possibility of dissent to someone else and not to himself, or a complicit companionship to dispel his doubts. Another possibility: a gay man who, within the workplace, knows that he will be harmed if he comes out, performs the same behavior as before or keeps quiet and evades situations to dispel his doubts.

Sedgwick's (1990) explanation of these themes is concentrated on the male level, and in fact, when observed in the female sphere, there are not many occurrences in this exact sense. However, the discourse of the female PMs interviewed still demonstrates a certain distance from the other female police officers, something that I notice in the absence of women in their speeches, and when they appear, they are as superficial examples of some situation.

So... So, when I arrived at the company, I had the ease of joking around with everyone, of getting close to everyone. Some were embarrassed with me at first, but they saw that I am a person who doesn't care about some things. Like when a... There was one day when I was getting ready, he didn't know I was a woman, with short hair and facing away, and the guy came in, and I just looked at him like that, he was all embarrassed, then I came back and he kept looking at me all embarrassed. I didn't apologize, but he was very disconcerted. After a while I caught him and teased him, because I started getting intimate with some of his work. And I talked to him, I said, wow, what? Very embarrassed, I said, I noticed, but I don't care, I know it confuses. Women go into the women's bathroom too, when they don't come face to face with me at the entrance, they get scared. So, then I catch him and turn around and say "no, lady, I'm a woman too, calm down". But I had an easy time being a little more extroverted, joking around with everyone, having contact with everyone. So, I didn't have any problems. So, when I joined the police force, I arrived at my company, I had a lieutenant who was about to retire, and he really liked me. He thought I was a different kind of guy. Because there aren't any lesbians with short hair, I know that there must be one or two in the police force now, I've seen them, but there are few. And he liked me, he would... Joke with me, I would joke with him, and he kept me in that group, in that vehicle that was crowded. And then I remember that I wasn't committed to many services, whereas many of my other friends who were straight, you know, in the police force, went. So, I feel like I was privileged, because I had a good relationship with everyone, and I went straight into that vehicle, and then I stayed in some others, but they never stuck me in strange jobs. And I don't think I was gay either, you know? It was more because I was more talkative, more extroverted, I joked with everyone, I had a good relationship with everyone in the beginning. That's more it. (PM7, 2025, free translation).

The category of male panic derives from the category formerly called *homosexual panic*, but because it no longer refers only to gay and bi men, but also to heterosexual people, its name was changed. Therefore, it refers to relationships that occur between men, but I extend the idea



of this homosociality here to think about gender differences, which, as previously criticized, women ended up being little analyzed in these contexts by Sedgwick. In this excerpt, it is possible to notice that there is a certain "fear" on the part of other female police officers regarding the one who is a lesbian and has a "less effeminized " appearance, as she describes.

Another point that needs to be observed is that in the female interviews, the characters are mostly men and the interviewees themselves - which serves as a criticism of the number of women in the police force, but also of the way they experience these spaces. Some questions can be raised such as: *is there no interaction between heterosexual/effeminate fem police officers and lesbian or bisexual/masculine fem police officers?*

When analyzing the interview excerpts, there are indications that there is a distance between these groups of police officers, who, despite experiencing similar violence in terms of gender in common, differ when observing sexual orientation and the manifestation of this sexual identity in a dissident way. The fact of having long hair, for example, gives PM9 peace of mind and an overall very positive experience, compared to the others, who had short hair and communication closer to what is expected of men in a cisheteronormative regime.

The bathroom, as a space for discussion and even as a closet in Galuppo's (2019) interpretation, proved to be a significant field in PM7's discourse, in which there is a description of some situations involving this space that justify a distancing from other *fems*, and represent how paranoia and panic can manifest among lesbian and bisexual women in these spaces.

After a long time, when I was here at my company, there were some unfortunate comments, I think it was from a girl saying that... I think she was joking, but I didn't like it, because I'm very systematic. She said that other girls said that I went into the bathroom to watch. Because I kept switching bathrooms, because in fact my bathroom was very far from where I had a locker. And next to my classroom there was a bathroom, which was a changing room. So I would go to my changing room downstairs, because I didn't need to use my locker, but when I just needed to use the toilet, I would go to the bathroom next door, which was just a door away, it was the first door next to mine. I would go to the closest bathroom, I had 20 minutes to eat and pee, and I would have to walk, like, almost a kilometer to be able to go to the bathroom? No, I would go. And I wouldn't go to the bathroom that was next to my changing room, for example. I would go to that one, because there were two that used it. So all the girls would go through. And I've always been very systematic. Precisely because I knew it was a military environment, I would go to the command and say that there was a soldier who was staring at the girls, you know? I never needed that. I have friends who would tease me, who still tease me today, because I would be in the room with them and I would turn my back. I was in the room once with a friend of mine and her sister. She already knew I was a lesbian, her sister started to undress, I turned my back, looked at the wall. Because I don't like to give the impression that I'm looking. So when she told me that, I said you're crazy. I would come to my office and ask for a picture, I would cut everyone out, I would say that I would never do something like that. I have no reason to look at the female body, since I also have a female body, people. Okay, there is desire. I'm a lesbian, I like the female body. Yes. But I'm not sick enough to stare at a girl changing in a locker room. Then the girls out

of nowhere, man... There were even times when I couldn't help but see, because I was talking to the girl, the girl would simply turn her back to me, and lower her pants, with her butt facing me. But I would immediately turn around so as not to have any small talk. But that was a comment, but it was made a long time after I had already graduated from the police force. (PM7, 2025, free translation).

In parallel with the previous statement, this one presents a more direct and descriptive formation of a fact that occurred (a contradiction of the interviewee herself who had previously reported the non-existence of any situation of this type). While at first one can notice a gentle and calm acceptance of PM7, who questions whether it is due to her social behavior or sexual expression, there is a marked paranoia in the attitudes of surveillance that she has over herself, mainly in relation to other women.

At other times, there is a description of jokes between the female officers and the PM7, which shows that there is a certain comfort between the women, but due to situations like the one described, it must be noted that the military ideology also affects women, in such a way that gender does not become the most important marker in the relationship, but rather sexual orientation and the performance of the latter. In the case of the interviewee, there is a comfort between the male and female police officers, but a more disciplined and self-vigilant behavior, such as “I am very systematic” (said repeatedly throughout the interview, as if to demonstrate to me that she was correct).

Another important highlight is the agent's view as if she had committed a sexual or immoral crime, as in the case of the bathrooms or in the jokes mentioned above, inducing her to have a relationship with a married woman.

The symbolic closet in the case of PM7 is manifested through mirror violence. Despite being openly lesbian and considering herself *visibly lesbian*, the agent's very presence is interpreted by the paranoia of others (of other police officers), and not by the way she behaves (respecting turning her back, for example). Therefore, no matter how much she names herself and reveals herself, her sexuality cannot and should not be visible to others without being criminalized.

And at this point, when I talk about sexuality, I am not just talking about the desire for the opposite or similar sex, but also about the tranquility and security of being able to express oneself in an environment that should provide security for everyone. The result is that the discourse of criminalization of sexuality and non-conforming gender identities is internalized by the agent, even though she tries to resist the stigmatization of lesbianism. She feels that she needs to defend herself from the criminal and pathologizing discourse of her own

homosexuality, and that this is reproduced discursively by the reply (both to me and to herself) that she “does not have to look at the female body” and that she is not “sick.”

From another point of observation, but more aligned with the notions of Epistemology of the Closet, strictly male panic and paranoia are part of most interviews, even if in a lesser or less incidental way in some, and, when they are not from the interviewees themselves, they are part of the speeches of other agents – indicative of how the institutional space is constituted in the face of the interaction between genders.

These closet tools are in essence internalized and reproduced in different ways, and in this statement, there is an example of how they reproduce themselves as one of the forms of Mirror-violence, in reflection:

Too much, too much. Comments and talking like that, sometimes joining in on their jokes so I could... That was more in the beginning, right? So I could fit in more, right? For fear of them finding out. That's it, these are things I notice, I who... I did a lot of it out of fear.

(...)

But there are other things that my friends notice and tell me jokingly, like, when I'm with them, more relaxed, right? At the bar table, freer. Then the phone rings because of work, and even my voice changes, they say my voice changes, the way I answer and talk. That's it. I don't know. Right? (PM1, 2025, free translation).

In addition to the reflection on reproducing the same discriminatory behavior out of fear, there is an incidence regarding positions of self-disclosure and social behavior outside the institution, such as the description of changes in voice, way of attending and talking to someone who is from the service.

As previously described in the categorization of paranoia, it can be seen as a direct opposite of knowledge. But this does not mean ignorance per se, but constant doubt, possibility, the future that can be expected or not. Therefore, for those who are “on the outside” it can be difficult or questionable to know about the sexuality of others, so this information becomes necessary to determine whether the coexistence will be friendly or disciplinary.

Yes, I have, jokes like that have been made before. But in the case I mentioned, where someone is walking by and someone else is talking, I think it's very curious. Straight people are very curious about this, they want to say who the other person is, they want to know who they are, they often come up to me and say, "So-and-so, do you think he doesn't like it too?" No." Even married straight people and such, asking about someone else, "why does he do this, he does that, he says such and such, what do you think?" They use me as a sensor to know if the other person is or not. I think straight people are very curious about this in others, I would like to understand why. (PM8, 2025, free translation).

Oh, right . He's called So-and-So, right? Then everyone asks me. "Ah, So-and-So is gay, right?" As if I were the guarantor, as if I could... That idea of black bull knows

black bull. Guys, nowadays there's no way to know anymore! It's not that simple, no. Nowadays there are women out there who are super effeminate, who are no longer the idea they used to have of the lesbian truck driver or the effeminate gay, which is going to be characteristic, no. We have judges who are gay, we had a governor who was gay. We have people everywhere, nowadays it's not so easy to know if someone is or not. Do you understand? So, then people would ask me. I would say, "Guys, I'm going to be very serious with you. I do think...", because I'm quick to say, "I do think he has some more effeminate mannerisms." Which is normal, yes, as there are other military women here who have a more masculine path, but it's a mannerism. I can't turn to you and say that it is, because he's never told me so. And even if he had, and if it was in secret, I wouldn't tell you. Then he came to me once and asked if anyone had ever said anything, asked anything. I said to him, "Hey, the thing is, they've already asked me and I said that I couldn't say for sure, but that I thought you had feminine mannerisms, yes." There's no way around it, you know? The most effeminate gay man we know, but the way he deals with things and talks and does things. Then he was like, "Fuck, you screw me over, like that." I said, "No, he asked me and I was honest, but I didn't say that it was. I just said that for me, there were only a few mannerisms. I didn't say that it was, I don't have the right to say that." Then he said, "No, but that's because people get into it, but that's because no one understands that I'm a guy who was raised only by women." I think he didn't have a father, which he explained to me at the time, many years ago. "I didn't have a father, I was raised by my mother, my aunts and my cousins, so it was a group of women only. I didn't have any men around." So that's a bit of what he explained to me, because it's more like that, you know? But you end up noticing the exclusion. There are jokes about him, but I think he's boring. He's a boring guy. (PM7, 2025, free translation)

In both cases, the agents were used for their *gaydar*, for their own knowledge about their sexualities, so that they were used by others to say something about the other. "As if I were the guarantor, as if I could do it" demonstrates a maturity in understanding that it is not possible to make a statement at this level, but those considered "accepted" by the corporate environment end up being *tokens* of sexuality, a way of marking those who may or may not be, or in other words, those who *need* a prejudiced spotlight to free themselves from the closet.

PM8 questions the heterosexual curiosity of wanting to know about other people's sexuality, and through the discursive analysis on the themes of panic and paranoia, it seems that this so-called "curiosity" is a mechanism to identify an institutional composition, and therefore, control it. When he made the statement, PM8 also questioned himself on this point, but raised the possibility that there was a sexual intention behind these questions – a universalizing view that everyone can be secretly queer, which is not proven and feeds a paranoid perspective of the speaker himself.

Among the statements marked by the categories in vogue, PM6's speech was the one that stood out the most. The discursive formation involved a strong political tone, an academic intellectuality, a critique of military discourse and an introjection of the closet that made him quite explanatory and detailed regarding the points he addressed, or the situations he experienced inside and outside the corporation, always with a criticism of his own training.

In PM6's statements, there is always an attempt to consciously choose words and topics to be addressed. His criticism of right-wing political discourse, religion and military ideology were vehement, especially when it came to his profession, although when it came to political issues, he tried to avoid exaggerating on points that were not relevant – but he always skirted around them. The discursive elements that express paranoia and panic are from the interviewee, but they are also reported semi-consciously about his colleagues.

Look, if it were at another time, if I wasn't close to retiring, and I didn't know about your commitment to your research, just like PM 2 told me, about the terms of responsibility, I would be very worried about answering this question, you know? Because it would be very hypocritical of me to say that I live... first of all, society is very prejudiced, so we have to be very careful about where to talk and who to talk to, right? So, imagine a society that is prejudiced within an institution that is military, you know? And I'm going to tell you something that I find really interesting. There are a lot of people, there are a lot of homosexuals in there, there's no explanation, but it's people who don't accept themselves or, well, what I joke about here, is the homophobe, right? The person who wants that, doesn't have the courage to admit it and then the repulsion. At work, I've never been... I know people who are open, who got married ... I got married and didn't publish my marriage in the bulletin, so my HUSBAND who is married to me doesn't have the benefits of my health plan because I'm waiting to retire to do so. Why? Because of jokes, teasing, you know? That happens a lot. I know they talk about me. First of all, I work in a service that is not very well-regarded, I deal with administrative processes, no one has ever seen me with a woman, that's a fact, you know? So that's when suspicions arise, they say something like, "you're over 40 and you're not married, you don't have a woman, something's wrong", they say it like that and I know there are a lot of jokes, teasing. In the environment where I work today, it's very outgoing and it's been one of the best I've ever worked in, thank God. (PM6, 2025, free translation).

The statement begins by explaining the reasons why he agreed to talk to me about the research topic, so he acknowledges me as his interlocutor and at the same time makes sure that I understand the sensitivity of what he is talking about. His own hesitation about the research demonstrates his fear of exposure and the possibility of sanctions, which he fears and prefers to avoid by maintaining a protected position. Waiting until retirement to publish research (as in the previous quote) or for the publication of a marriage in the bulletin are a manifestation of the mechanism of anticipation towards the structure of the institution.

The suspicions of colleagues about sexuality, the presence of “jokes”, the connection between age and marriage show how there is constant surveillance of personal life, and the incidence of a moral discourse in the institution. Furthermore, since there is no performance of heterosexuality, the interpretation made by others is of deviation.

The elements of panic brought up by PM6 in his statement are: homophobic colleagues who feel a homosexual desire and reprimand themselves for it, and project violence onto others as a way of maintaining the rigid norm; the need for a heteronormative performance in order to

not cause problems for oneself; and the effect of violent and exemplary discipline, which causes collective panic, in which suspicion about the open secret controls behavior.

PM6's criticism stands out with irony and even the use of colloquialisms in speech, such as "a really interesting thing" and "homophobic who wants that" and positions itself in the opposite direction to the seriousness and rigor of institutional military discourse.

And in 2017, this guy, when he found out that I was going to teach them, he went and told the group, because PM 4 told me, right, that he 's in the group, "oh, the one who's going to teach us is that faggot", he put it like that. I found out about this, but it doesn't affect me, you know? At the time, you get a little bit angry, let's put it that way, with anger. But I learned to abstain from these things. I always try to look for the positive to let the negative pass, because if we focus on the negative, people get depressed and do stupid things. (PM6, 2025, free translation).

Another moment of panic in PM6's speech occurred during his experience as a teacher on training courses. The students were irritated/mockled/scared by the fact that the teacher was gay. This attitude demonstrates the fear of associating with dissident sexuality so as not to deviate from the norm. Furthermore, another important element comes at the end of the statement with a mention of depression and doing something stupid, which I interpret as suicide – a recurring theme in the statements of this corpus: the mental health of police officers (whether *queer* or not).

Constant surveillance of other colleagues is observed even in looks and in the presence of the agent in the same environment, where jokes and indirect comments are made. The result is isolation and self-silencing, fruits of discipline that does not need to be formalized to be effective, as can be seen in the statement:

So, even though I don't know officially, because nobody knows from my own mouth, but I certainly know through third parties or comments. I always notice, like, that when I arrive at the place, it's not once or twice, but often, or there are indirect comments or jokes, or when you arrive like this... You know when you arrive and you notice that people look at you differently or are bothered by you, or you notice it like this, right? They want to say bad things about me, but they can't say it now because I'm here, something like that, you know? I notice that very often. So much so that, whenever there's an event or something, I always keep to myself, I don't socialize, I think that bothers me a lot too. (PM6, 2025, free translation).

Given the presentations of the agents' discursive situations, I believe that a better option would be to name *male panic* simply as *panic*, or at least to reference it without excluding female experiences, which, despite the influence of gender, are also significantly affected by expressions of sexual orientation. In general, it is not possible to talk about panic without involving it with the behavioral results of paranoia, therefore, intertwining them as categories

of analysis and observing them through discourse analysis seems to be the most viable way to extract the subjective content that sometimes goes unnoticed in the daily experiences of police officers.

As an academic space, it is known and considered correct (in some fields) that there is a cisheteronormative system that is the dominant standard of the social body, but the reasons for this are diverse and explained by several authors. With crime and its treatment, this system does not evade affecting individuals and social phenomena, directing the way in which gender and sexual orientation influence the relationship between subjects and the ways in which they reproduce and produce prejudiced discourses regarding difference, and which, consequently, result in discrimination, social exclusion and policing (external and internal) of behaviors considered deviant by this ideological formation.

#### **5.1.6. Closet and Relationships of the Closet**

The main category of this work, “closet”, manifested itself in different ways, both in personal lives and in the institutional space, and helped in the attempt to answer the research problem, which is: *In what way, according to the perception of police officers with dissident sexuality, can the closets present in the Military Police influence the treatment of crime?*

Relationships of the closet, here treated as part of an individual category, are those that arise from the positions in which individuals find themselves when they do not assume some aspect of their sexual orientation and gender identity. These positions shape the way in which established relationships will be guided, whether at work, family, friendship, or others. Considering that the closet is part of everyone's life, albeit in a different aspect than sexuality, the relationships that arise from it, in turn, are also present.

It is important to highlight that all the categories and elements analyzed in the previous topics represent closet tools, mechanisms that are used (consciously or not) to keep or remove people from this space-situation.

The most common version of the closet is in the popular metaphor that someone has come out or is *in* the closet, a reference to sexuality and the open secret interpreted by others. In fact, this was the best way to start the dialogue with the interviewees to explain to them what the research was about, which was easily understood by some and required a more elaborate explanation by others. Identifying a closet about sexuality, according to the jargon, is simple, however, trying to understand the different versions it can take can be a more complicated task.

In this sense and institutional context, we should not talk about just one closet, but rather about closets. Since when interacting with each colleague, victim, criminal, or other people involved in the crime, a new type of closet emerges, just like in any encounter. Thus, one of the first points I want to highlight about this specific category is the multiplicity of these devices.

Yes. We are... There are many things that we are forced to hide. Many, many, many, many. Mainly, social media. So, social media is the less you expose yourself... I tell people, the less you expose yourself, the police will say "oh, I'm gay, I'm lesbian, whatever, the better", you know? We still have a certain control over our social media. "But the social media is mine" "Ah, but you can't separate your professional side from your personal side" I said "What do you mean?". As a professional, I'm like that. There I am selling my work time, in my leisure time, I'm this guy, in a leisure time. "Ah, but you have to separate it". You *ca n't* separate it, you know? There is a certain control. (PM3, 2025, free translation).

Look, I know a lot of people who are on apps, and when you find out who they are, they get desperate. When I was single, I'll put it this way, you were on the app, you were chatting, you had contact with the person, and when you went on WhatsApp or got close and you saw that person who was a police officer and they recognized you, they blocked you and stopped chatting with you, you know? I'm scared. I've walked by the person and they turned their face away from you, embarrassed. Or, I think of two things: either they are very repressed, which I don't blame, because it's a form of protection, in this case, right? Or what I also notice a lot in my work is, I would try not to talk about it, but I end up talking about it. There are a lot of... How can I talk about it, guys? It's hypocrisy, it's like this, I know some who are staunch supporters of Bolsonaro, defenders of values, of family, all that stuff, you know? (PM6, 2025, free translation).

I remember that all the in-person stages ended and then I cut my hair, because I wanted to cut it, but my mother said, don't cut it, because I was afraid I would suffer prejudice due to the more masculine stereotype of a lesbian woman. So I waited for all the in-person stages, they ended and then I cut my hair. Only the medical exam evaluation stages remained, but I didn't need to show up. I already started the course with short hair. (PM7, 2025, free translation).

The three statements refer to some type of situation or space in which they live/interact as a closet for their own sexualities. Something that has already been mentioned previously, the expansion of disciplinary control through military discourse is broad and even reaches the external lives of the subjects, as with the social networks mentioned by PMs 3 and 6.

The repetition of "many" by PM3 indicates the existence of a large number of elements that are forced to be hidden, which is why the officer himself internalizes this need and reproduces it with other officers who have not yet become familiar with this subliminal rule. PM6, in turn, already exemplifies the previous statement by talking about officers he sees on dating apps and who, upon discovering that they are talking to another officer, despair or simply shut down and no longer interact. These are manifestations of the double binding systems, which expand to limit the lives of queer people with regard to safety and freedom, and of



paranoia and panic, in which it is preferable to take a negative attitude to avoid exposure or reaffirm heteronormative practices to avoid suffering repression.

It is similar with PM7 when she describes her situation during her entry period. There is a presence of a closet in the act of choosing a strategic moment to cut her hair, the chosen moment being the one where she would no longer need to be seen to enter the Police. It is evident that there was fear on the part of the mother, but that there was also an act of self-preservation to avoid any type of reprisal, even before starting the service.

The conservative moral ideology, gender binarity, and institutional heteronormativity are the most evident in the excerpts, and in the speeches as a whole. PM6 still tries not to mention political issues, but already weaves an association between the ideals of the former president of Brazil and the sexual repression that affects the police and criminalizes queer people. This link is strong and recalls the statements of threat to the national order that circulated in Brazil during the Military Dictatorship (Quinalha, 2021) – a discourse that is taken up by the politician and expands on those already existing in the institution in vogue.

More specifically, within the Military Police, the types of lockers most closely linked to the actions of the agents and which may be relevant in dealing with crime were observed. The analysis was based on the existence of multiple types, but which are almost never identified by the agents themselves, except when they realize that they are victims of some institutional reprisal.

We are left with a bit of... no space, you know? Literally no space. At the time I was in high command, there were situations where we had to take a few steps back, because people look at you in a certain way, but today, when you work with the public, I think it's easier for me. (PM3, 2025, free translation).

Yes, for them, PROERD is like a service... It's a waste, you know? So, when you mess with PROERD, it's like... It's nothing. (...) Then, because it's a program that doesn't provide an immediate response, to only have future results, right? So, it's not seen in a good light, despite the state's huge investment in PROERD. But within the institution itself, they don't... It's not seen in a good light. Besides, we get very little. (...) Yeah. It's a 'muxiba', they call it a 'muxiba'. A lazy person. "Oh, the 'muxiba' over there, he's going to work at PROERD. For them, I'm just going to visit the school, play with the kids. But there's a lesson plan, there's a schedule that we have to follow exactly." (PM1, 2024, free translation).<sup>9</sup>

I always like to work in an environment... Maybe it could be because of a... Yes, it could be indirectly, because what you said... That, in the following sense, in administration we deal with fewer people, the cycle for you to deal with people is shorter. So it could even be... it could even be covertly, I never thought about it. But if it is, I think, look... I didn't really like dealing with operational activities, because, first, there's a lot of exposure to the street, it's a fact. I never had that ease, I never saw

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<sup>9</sup> The term "muxiba" or "muchiba", in Brazil, refers to a stiff meat given to the dogs, not fit to be eat. The piece of meat you chew and spit it out. In the military, according to the interviewee, it receives another connotation.

myself with that ease. But I think that in administration it really generates this issue of preservation. You have more intimacy because you have a reduced number of contacts. It could be that too. I had never thought about it until you said it, I'll be honest. (PM6, 2025, free translation).

There are three statements in which I noticed the presence of institutional cabinets in different forms and with effects in broad aspects. PM3 was a hierarchical superior and had problems in which he had to “take a few steps back” to avoid problems with the public; PM1 talks about the PROERD program - Educational Program for Resistance to Drugs and Violence, which is not well regarded by others; and PM6, after openly stating his dream of joining the police force since he was young, when asked about his administrative functions, reflects and assumes the possibility of being in this space due to his own orientation.

I was struck by the case of PM1 with PROERD, and its characterization as a closet. At that moment, I asked about the profile of the agents who worked on this program and about the expression of feelings:

Although I often do social work, the people who do this most well are those who are involved in prevention, like PROERD, school patrol, domestic violence. So they are always at the forefront of these lecture events, these social events, and they are usually the people who are involved in prevention, who have this more relaxed profile, right? And not rigid like the others. (...) Yes. *Broken* in a good way... More relaxed. (PM1, 2025).

The mention of the “broken” profile for social work is a metaphor and, simultaneously, a preterition (in its sense in the Epistemology of the Closet): an attempt to not name something as queer. By explaining that this is not a rigid person like the others and that they were agents with more emotional expression, there is an indication that the people in these projects are chosen for their sensibilities, in addition to the expression “more loose”, said in a different tone from the rest of the speech, with an extra meaning beyond the literal. Furthermore, as I have previously reported, due to his functions in this space, he suffered reprisals and threats, since he was more susceptible to the public.

PM6's reflection already provides an opposing view on contact with the public, but a profile that appeared several times during the interviews: queer police officers who do not work on the streets. While placing “more relaxed” and “sensitive” officers in the institution's social programs is a positive benefit (for the Police), putting them on the streets to deal with more people seems to be a negative view of the corporation. It is a manifestation of the institution's moralistic and anti-sentimental ideology, with well-defined roles and an intention regarding the

corporation's publicity, as seen on police officers' social networks, public demonstrations, among others.

As a result of the existence of some closet, closet relationships emerge. And here are some of the ways in which relationships are constituted in their majority, marked mainly by a subjective duality of the agents, one professional and one personal, symbolic violence, or conditional acceptance:

Actually, I told you, I've never been open to talking about my personal life with anyone either. I think that the job, I'm there to work, not to make friends. And if friends show up, they're welcome, but that's not the idea. (...) Because I think they socialize, even if indirectly. [inaudible] So they already socialize, they don't come "oh because he's a lesbian, he's going to go into the women's bathroom and get all the women in the world". Because they think that, because he likes women, he likes them all. [inaudible] (PM10, 2025, free translation)

It's like I said, I have friends within the police who are gay, but they don't come out within the institution, so I've seen these issues, they limit themselves there, they really limit themselves, like you said, avoiding any speech or any attitude that could identify them or identify their sexuality, but I myself don't, like I said, I've always felt very comfortable about my sexuality within the police. (PM9, 2025, free translation).

So, like I told you... when people come across the military police, the military police are very sexist, right? Maybe that's what people are afraid of, right? Of ceasing to be themselves because of others, right? So, I think the biggest problem for those who live in this situation, right, is the few... I have acquaintances who: "Oh no, there in the police force...". A friend of mine today has come out and such. He's a sergeant today. But until recently he wouldn't take his boyfriend where there were people on duty. Yeah, but why? His concern was for others, how would people see him... So, I think it all involves that, it's a question of hierarchy, it's a question of discipline, right? So, these are things that people sometimes have in their heads and they stop being themselves when it comes to duty, not knowing how to distinguish between personal and professional. (PM4, 2025, free translation).

Yes, yes. They already asked. Including the one I know, who knows about me, but they asked the one I know if I was homosexual too. Then... people say, "Oh, aren't you hooking up with anyone here in town?" Because for them, people must hook up with everyone in town, right? So, whether they like it or not, there are a lot of women who end up hitting on people, right. Because it's the uniform, there's no way around it. So I always got away, I stayed... Then they said, "Wow, why? Do you want to be like the other cop there? Is that it? Are you on their team?" (PM1, 2024, free translation)

The statements come from different places to form a very similar discourse regarding the ways in which they interact with other colleagues in the corporations. PM10 reflects a forced silencing of not exposing herself to others to avoid risks to her career, while PM9 already talks about her closeted gay police friends who limit their own autonomy by restricting gestures and behaviors to avoid being victims of a forced exposure of the closet. I reiterate the apparently positive experience of lesbian women, but which is also crossed by silencing (PM10) or visual alterations (PM7) as points of tension in the relationships they have.

The division between public and private, which also guides relationships in the closet, shows how some officers divide themselves between being one person on duty and another outside of it. PM4 criticizes those who do not know how to make this distinction, despite being out, while opposing the view of PM1, for example, who feels pressured to perform heterosexuality, such as “hooking up with everyone in town” – something he reports as being practically inherent to the uniform. In a way, it would be as if these gay male officers were *wasting an opportunity that is granted by wearing the uniform*.

Coming out is also a point of tension in relationships, since, as previously established in the category of double-binding systems, there will always be a point of loss regardless of performance, stereotype, gender or companionship. Even when there is no coming out moment – as in the case of PM7, when everyone knows she is a lesbian but there is no time to tell them, or PM6, who simply never told anyone, but everyone treats him as if they knew.

I've seen this happen a lot when you come out publicly, and I don't even know if it's coming out, but it's perhaps the fact that you say you're coming out of the closet. Because I usually tell my friends, whether they're gay or not, that I don't see the need for a gay person to come out, because no one comes to the dinner table one day and says, "Family, I have something to tell you, I'm straight." So why is it mandatory to do otherwise? I don't think it's necessary, but those who like to talk publicly or feel the need to talk to their family members, the workplace, society as a whole, about their orientation, I think that creates more problems and obstacles in this sense. And if it's in the security service, I say security because this also applies to the civil police, and firefighters, then maybe the price is a little high. (PM2, 2025, free translation).

Yes, yes, there is. There is one who is open about it where I currently work, and they treat him differently. Not with me, not really. But I have been treated differently for other reasons. My size, which I had when I was very young, so because of my height and because I am very skinny, they didn't want to work with me on the street and would just leave me in the barracks, alone there, and they would go patrol. (...) Oh, it doesn't change that much with me because they don't know about me openly, right? But with colleagues it is very different. They try to be... "oh, I accept you, you are cool", but behind my back I see that it is very different. (PM1, 2025, free translation).

Yeah, it's not always... More to joke around... How do you say it? To joke around and everything. But we still have a certain prejudice from the group, right? There's a certain... that each person's worldview, their lifeview is very... What's it like? It's very individual. So there are still some people who make jokes like that, which bothers them from time to time, depending on their emotional state that day. But in general, it's fine... nowadays, for me, it's pretty calm. (PM3, 2025, free translation)

Even though we don't know officially, because nobody knows from my own mouth, we certainly know through third parties or comments. (PM6, 2025, free translation).

The statements above show how the closet is not merely an individual space of concealment, but a discursive field that is also relational, collective and institutionalized, although it does not have to be that way in all possibilities. This instrument works through the tools already mentioned, but in addition, it requires an asymmetry in terms of sexuality

experiences, as PM2 highlights regarding the assumption that coming out of the closet is necessary – and uses a resource of comparison with heterosexuality that, discursively and didactically, is quite useful. PM1 and PM6 reveal how silence in relationships is also not a guarantee of protection, so everyday life is permeated by paranoia and a calculated risk of exposure.

As highlighted previously, jokes are constant devices in interactions between *queer* and non- *queer people* , as mockery and ridicule make physical violence unnecessary, as there is a guarantee that there will be discipline and example set.

In all statements, the mechanism of anticipation (for me as the interlocutor) and for the characters in their own statements is in force; after all, it is still a relationship of the closet, since our conversations are guided by this theme. The interviewees talk about their experiences knowing that they will be highlighted in this research, but knowing this, they also hold back and protect themselves due to fear regarding the concrete effects that it may trigger. Therefore, the topics about the closet and relationships have a touch of shame and liberation, even though they can be hidden as self-protection.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight some of the statements that were made in a tone of lament or outburst about how the situation affects the agents themselves, and consequently, the work that is performed:

Oh, sure. And that's what I said, easy, easy in the sense that I've done this my whole life, like I said. But I don't think it's good, no. Like I said, since I was little, we've always been holding ourselves back, like, it gives the feeling that I can only be myself in a closed environment. Today, the doubt, when I go out with my friends, it's already easy, but at work I'm still weighing what's more worthwhile, me being authentic here or me leaving on my own time, it's not a problem. I think that's the way it works. (PM8, 2025, free translation).

It is a story of an entire life, with a chronology that starts from childhood to demonstrate how much the closet is part of everyday life and how strong it is. The repetition of “calm” contrasts with the justification presented as a strategy. The shame that sometimes accompanies this experience is justified here with a direct and easy-to-visualize question: “what is more worthwhile, me being authentic here or me leaving on my own time”. PM8 is out in the workplace, but still sees this type of issue as unresolved, therefore, he resolves the complexity of the closet in his own life in a simple question of multiple choices.

Relationships of the closet, therefore, refer to the complex interactions and power structures that arise from the contact between what is hidden and what is known, between those who have come out and those who have not, a tension that surrounds non-hegemonic

experiences of sexuality and gender identity. Therefore, in addition to involving the dynamics of negotiating the closet, open secrecy, spectacularization, discrimination and/or support, it also talks about the strategies needed to deal with the *ethos* in which they are inserted. Thus, the next topic deals with these benefits acquired over time or experience, or even through the need to interact with other subjects with sexuality as a relevant aspect.

## 5.2. Tangencies: lines of action and flight

As highlighted by this research, closets manifest themselves, in some cases, as a need for subjects to hide part of themselves to avoid some type of confrontation or harm. This was observed with the police officers, and through their own statements with some of the civilians they served. Therefore, the figure of this closet as “beneficial” can be difficult to construct, given its harmful potential as an open secret; however, some strategies are created and developed by those who have it as a reality.

In the interviewees' statements, at various times, there are some subtleties that demonstrate tangents between facing the problem and running away from it simultaneously, or in other cases just one of these modalities. It is clear that the conditions of production of police discourse incorporate elements of masculinity, hierarchy and conservatism, regardless of the gender of the person delivering the speech, and there is control and discursive formation guided by an institutional structure.

One of the main points identified, and in which I can identify double bindings, is the use of humor as action, escape and violation. From the very beginning of reading Sedgwick's work, it was possible to notice that there was a dimension of spectacularization that had a humorous character or that reached the level of absurdity, as would be saying about gay people being homophobic or black people being racist. Something that, at first glance, makes no sense, but at a discursive level manifests an intention.

The absurdity seen in these situations represents a kind of media and attention-grabbing tool to shift the focus from one thing to another. After all, the main problem is not the mere fact that a gay person expresses homophobia, but rather what is leading him to express it. This is what I identify in the speeches as one of the police officers' attack and defense tactics. In this way, the interviewees report being victimized by humor and defending themselves through humor.

As highlighted in the previous topics, the mention of jokes and pranks was recurrent, and in all the interviews there is some type of reference in this sense. In some cases, as a furtive

strategy and in others as a constant attempt at intimidation and exercising violent and exemplary discipline.

First, I would like to highlight the good humor of the female police officers during their conversations with me, which I noticed was absent in most conversations with male police officers. The tone of these interviews was, for the most part, very serious, with attention to detail in their speeches, and nervousness at some points. As a researcher, I expected to see the mechanism of anticipation of the speech in front of me, due to the content of the research and the other elements that encompass it, so much so that my approach to the conversation was light and questioning but avoiding intrusions that were not pertinent to the investigation.

As a gender comparison, saying that women were good-humored is not a mere compliment, but I see that the women's calm came from a place of overcoming the violations they had suffered at other times. I say this because I noticed that there seemed to be nothing to hide in the statements of these interviewees, who did not show major manifestations of categories such as "panic" and "paranoia", common among men. In these moments, good humor was welcome and served as a way of exemplifying how there was some overcoming in the manifestations of partnership and good-humored companionship among agents. As is the case of interviewee 11, who says:

From then on, no one ever bothered me about something like that again. And I gave them the answer, so they don't like [inaudible]. I don't let them. I nip it in the bud. When these comments like that start, it turns into another comment, and in the end it turns into another comment. And if you cut one, you cut it out really quickly. Really quickly. (...) There's this boy I told you about, who's out, who also does that. But he does it as a joke. He jokes with everyone, makes fun of everyone. Then sometimes people lose the fun and the joke ends too [inaudible]. It's a strategy. (PM10, 2025, free translation).

She reported a situation in which she had to be more direct with a colleague, and that this helped to resolve the misogynistic and homophobic problem. She then spoke of another colleague who also has the same position regarding jokes. She jokes back, "people lose the fun and the joke ends". The recognition of PM10 as a strategy shows that she is aware that jokes represent violence, and that, if they are not *nipped in the bud* (ended as soon as they start), they will continue.

Well, regarding myself, I never had. I had a... No! Lie! I only had one situation, but it wasn't... How can I say that? A derogatory one. It was one... Those sexist jokes, like, the guy ... Asked me to hook up with his wife, something like that. So, I responded at a higher level and put him in his place, and never again. And I was subordinate at the time. Then he told me, then he made me this proposal, and I said, "I have 10 friends too, do you want me to introduce you?" Then he got it and saw that the problem was

deeper, he took it and stopped there. Now... I didn't need much in the face of the problem. I think I even got talked about in the public speech.

(...)

Just yesterday, a colleague made a comment like that... I said: "Funny, I don't know why at the straight table, you guys have this habit of introducing people because they're gay *and* a good person, I'm going to start going to some gay tables and saying 'oh this one's straight, but he's a really good person, you know guys?'" Then they got even "more awkward" and stopped there too. (PM10, 2025, free translation).

These situations reported by PM10 are presented with a tone of pride and good humor, mainly because she is a decisive person. They are examples of what Gedro (2006) also calls a "*double bind*" (different from Sedgwick's concept), in which there is a double workload for LGBTQIA+ police officers, especially lesbians, of having to defend themselves, but at the same time teach their colleagues so that the situation does not happen again. Generally, the double bind involves this teaching load towards the combination of at least two factors: homophobia, misogyny, prejudice against police officers, or specifically against queer police officers.

Of course, they should talk. I think they're afraid of me, they think I'm crazy. (...) Oh, they think I'm the closet expert. You can make a list of "it's in the closet, it was taken out of the closet." (laughter). If it's not like that, [inaudible]. Then he said, "So, PM 10, what do you think of him?" Then I said, "I won't! I'm not going to give my opinion. Go and ask." Then he goes and doesn't say anything else. He's the one who wants to know. As for me, why do I want to know? [laughter] (PM10, 2025, free translation).

"They think I'm crazy" is a discursive reference that should not be read literally, as a pathology, but as a person who is not afraid to speak her mind or to live her sexuality more freely within the corporation. It is important to highlight that it is a certain privilege due to her acceptance in the male environment, but her own attitude of not leaving room for other comments about herself and her colleagues. She jokes about being sought out as a "closet expert", highlighting the instrumentalization of her position as a benefit for those driven by panic and paranoia.

Oh no, I'm already used to the jokes, there are several, superiors, even officers, superior warrant officers make these jokes about me. I take them and deal with them back. It's because I'm a person who doesn't care about what people say to me, I don't absorb what they say to me in that sense. And so, I've always said, I've seen many friends, even ex-boyfriends, saying "Oh, you have a lot of patience, the person asks you a question and you answer, tell the person to search on Google, they're already in such and such a century, they keep asking you these things, that's ridiculous, that's a pejorative tone, it's an insulting tone...", and for me I don't care. It's like that little question "Oh, why do you like toys, rubber cocks?" Only I always get very... I say it like this, I identify as a lesbian, but I don't have a sexual problem with men. (PM7, 2025, free translation).



PM7 also has a similar position, although she accepts some jokes and reports that it is customary. Following this statement, she described the complete explanation she gives for the question asked, extensive and complete, which demonstrates the patience and didactic position she needs to assume. It is a strategy to recover her voice in a space that tries to silence her.

Other devices developed by police officers to modify or better manage the relationships within the closet in which they are inserted can be seen in the following statements:

Yes, but I work on this perspective within the content of human rights, gender issues and racism. These are the three issues that I work on the most to try to demystify some taboos, some prejudices. This is something that will still take a lot of time, but someone has to start.

(...)

I've already appealed to this, but I'm the guy who seeks to assert my rights and I would say that one in a hundred who does this, one in a hundred. And look, because of retaliation, fear or even "Oh, if I take action, will people really start to think I'm gay?" It can happen. So, I think that in many cases people prefer to let it go than to expose themselves or to find themselves in a situation where they will be persecuted, even if covertly. (PM2, 2025, free translation).

No, in my day-to-day life, I say... People even joke with me and say, I don't know how you do it. I, at my job, am a professional. "PM4. Work. PM4, working." I leave my job, I hang up. In fact, when I leave my job, I turn around and say, look, guys, I'm going to the gym. From now on, don't call me, don't haunt me. Because the gym is my time to relax, to put my mind in order. I won't answer the phone. They already know. When they call me, I don't answer, it's because it's my time. So, I can make this transition. Of course, this will take time, right? As I said, I'm going to be working for 26 years. So, this won't happen overnight. But today, I'm calm, in my day-to-day life, the people in my group of friends are my friends, the PM4, not the professional, not the military. So, with that, it's really easy. With my kids and stuff, I'm more of a clown than my kids, sometimes, do you have any idea? (PM4, 2025, free translation)

Yes, yes. Yes. In general, those who are part of the community suffer more, they suffer more. I notice that. And I often say to people, "Guys, get psychological counseling." We pay for it. And it's paid every month, it's not an expense, but an investment. Mental health today is an investment, both for gays, lesbians and the like, in general, for the community in general, right? But we, in general, the little gang suffer a lot. (PM3, 2025, free translation).

PM2's alignment with intellectuals and the discourse of human rights and diversity as a whole is noticeable, opposing the dominant discursive formation in the institution. There is a tension between this position of resistance and the space in which it is inserted, as he highlights "there has to be someone to start", in which there is a political and subversive positioning, also through didactics. The recognition of the difficulty in this type of activism comes from the hyperbole that "it will still take a long time".

At another point, PM2 states that he is a person who "seeks to assert" the right and highlights that other people do not do so out of fear. This situation indicates that there is an identity association with the demand for rights, as if taking action in the face of prejudice would

lead to the interpretation or proof of a dissident sexuality. The (informal) statistic mentioned that “one in a hundred” take similar actions places him in a discursive position of courage and, in a certain way, solitude (both due to the position of teaching and demanding). This same discursive formation permeates the speeches of PM6, who also aligns himself with intellectuality and activism, but who differs in that he does not come out in the workplace.

PM4, in turn, is on a borderline. He divides himself into professional and personal, which highlights the separation he felt was necessary between public and private. The recognition of time as a relevant aspect for him to be able to act in this way indicates that he has not acted in this way since the beginning of his work, and that it is not something that everyone can do “overnight”. The request to the corporation “don’t haunt me” so that they do not bother him provokes an imaginary formation of the institution as something frightening, from which he wants peace while he is off duty.

The discourse of mental health as a form of resistance also stands in opposition to the institution’s hegemonic discourse. The mention that it is advice given to others demonstrates the knowledge acquired through experience and the care for the “little gang”, which he affectionately calls the LGBTQIA+ community he meets at work. There is a discursive effect of softening and companionship in the face of a serious problem in the police environment as a whole. The “investment” made in mental health is vehemently defended, as a political force and resistance.

These are different discursive formations, with different strategic manifestations. PM7 and PM10 position themselves as teachers, but also as quick defenders through the use of their own speech, a reuse of humorous attack discourses as defense. PM2 and PM6 approach these groups as teachers within the institution, and agents of transformation through activism and awareness. PM4 uses identity dissociation as a protection strategy. And PM3 resorts to therapy and psychological care, as well as raising awareness among those with whom he has contact.

A simple thought that might come to mind for those who read these experiences is the question: *why don't they simply leave the Police?* In fact, the presence of these agents' sexuality in the institutional military space seems to be disturbing, but their departure from these environments would only work as a palliative measure, since it would not actually solve the institutional problem that exists. I highlight some statements made that indicate a motivation for staying and joining – although there are no necessary justifications beyond the subjects' wishes.

Because with the salary range that it has, it's the easiest competition today, I see. So, it was this idea of a springboard. I come from a very difficult reality. I said, I need stability, even to have peace of mind to study. You study with your head, worrying about bills, about the minimum. So, when I entered, it was in that sense. I was just graduating from college and I practiced law for a year or so, the return was not so positive. So I said, I'm going to take this competition here, because there I'll study something else. That was the idea, it was never a dream or a vocation. (PM8, 2025, free translation).

And I always wanted to be a soldier because of the pomp, the uniform, and because of something. I remembered it now too. I always imagined that being in uniform and being a soldier would protect me. As if it were an armor against the issue of my sexuality. I've already thought about this. I always wanted, I always thought that, being a soldier in uniform I would be less criticized, or I would have less... I would have fewer people pointing the finger at me saying: "That guy over there? He's gay." So I imagined that, being in uniform, people wouldn't say that. Secondly, of course, in addition to the family issue that I always wanted, I always imagined that this could also work as protection. (PM6, 2025, free translation).

Here it is possible to observe that the uniform itself is a closet, but one that grants protection and superiority over many people: civilians. Although it is not a general perception, wearing a uniform helps in participating in economic cycles with good financial benefits and respect, in addition to the social recognition that the profession brings. After all, a profession whose main function is to assist in the safety and protection of people must be respected and valued.

So, there are people who may not like me being gay, but I'm a sergeant, and he's a soldier or corporal, so he'll have to keep to himself, he can't do anything about it. So it ends up being... (...) Yes. It's that armor that I told you about back then that the military maybe... that I wanted it to provide me, and it does provide me a little, you know? He can even say bad things, but if I give him an order, or tell him to do something and he can't help but do it, because if he doesn't do it, I can arrest him, so he ends up being forced to accept it.

(...) Yes, yes. No, not because of the hierarchy. In that case, they don't know the hierarchy, because a civilian citizen, if he gets close to a soldier or a colonel, will call everyone a police officer. So he doesn't know the hierarchy. I think it's more about the uniform, the imposing uniform. The vast majority of people... I don't defend... I've always believed that the vast majority of people are good people and are orderly. I'm not like those crazy people who think everyone is bad, so many people still like the imposing uniform or the... Not because of militarism, but because of security. When a person is in the mall, they think they're being followed, who are they going to look for? They're going to look for the security guard, because he's in uniform, because he's the one who represents security, you know? So I think that when these people see the uniform, whether it's the military police or the firefighters or the armed forces, they feel protected. I think this protection makes her forget for a moment her repulsion of whether that person is gay or not, out of a need for self-protection, so it could be that. But I never, I... I realize that it protects in that sense too. (PM6, 2025, free translation).

In the first part of the answer, the agent spoke about the benefit of protection and respect that the uniform grants him, in addition to the hierarchical position that exists within the military

– something that is very strong in the institution. Therefore, the hierarchical function that the agent performs can represent the difference between being respected or not. While in the second part of the answer, PM6 talks about having the same reverence as civilians, but for a different reason.

In this excerpt, it is possible to recognize a little more about the motivations for queer people to feel attracted to these positions, and the instrumentalization of the military hierarchy as a protection against homophobia, both inside and outside the institution. Despite the resistance to this ideology, there is a strategy that mobilizes the authority of the function in favor of safe social recognition.

The discursive formation is mixed, with military discourse and sexual minority discourse coexisting in favor of itself. The image conveyed in the metaphor of the “uniform as armor” reinforces the strength of public security and the symbolism it holds for the civilian public. The temporary suspension of “repulsion” in the face of the need for protection highlights something hidden in the speech: the positive treatment of a queer police officer depends on the conditions and functions performed, but not on the identity as a whole.

At this point, homo/biphobia seems to be domesticated by some of the speakers, who, despite reproducing discourses of military ideology, mobilize it in their own favor for acceptance and effective performance of the work.

Therefore, I notice the difficulties and violence, but at the same time, I notice the constant evolution of the agents' practices so that they can live better and perform their functions. These are strategies of action and escape, because the same approach will not always be the best for a queer person, who understands that any attitude, behavior or appearance can be interpreted as subject to correction.

Finally, I now set out to identify effects in criminology and develop some specific contributions on what can be taken as a path of study or political implementation to improve the treatment of crime.

### **5.3. Effects on Criminology**

As previously mentioned, Criminology is concerned with the aspects of crime, and in its critical aspect it makes considerations about what should be different in this study, while, delving deeper into criticism, the queer misguided line follows the same path, but is concerned with defendants, victims, agents of repression and other circumstances related to LGBTQIA+ people. The literature on this topic tries to make visible how much sexual identity influences

this phenomenon, therefore, the search carried out in this research to understand how individuals of dissident sexuality involved in the repression of crime deal with the closets proved to be important in this sense.

With the main discourses that permeate the statements of the interviewed police officers, it was possible to identify the presence of closets that are significant for the experience within the police force, as well as in the relationship that is established with one's own sexuality and with the outside world. Regarding the incidence of closets (in a broad sense) in the activities performed in dealing with crime, the records and approaches of queer people by the police stand out as relevant issues to be observed.

The police reports are direct situations in which the impacts of knowing or not knowing the sexuality/gender identity of someone involved in a crime can be seen. Most of the statements are made in defense of the institution, that there is a concern for the correct completion of the reports and parameterized fields; however, the discourses around this topic seem to refer only to general cases in which there is no involvement of queer people. In addition, it is noticeable that there is a concern among the agents not to appear to be doing a poor job in their work. However, it is still possible to make inferences about the selected statements.

And then you're going to go to... Every police report has to ask the person this question. Nobody asks this question. If I ask it too, people will make fun of me, and I think it also ends up being a bit invasive to go up to the person and say, "What's your gender, what's your sexual orientation?" Now, if I notice... that it's important for the person during the incident, depending on the type of incident, then I'll put it there. When someone gives me a man's ID, but in front of me is a woman who hasn't changed her name yet. Then, of course, I'll go up and ask. Then, of course, I'll go up and ask what the social name is to put in the incident, so that I can be treated like that, right? But it's something that, for the military, this... If someone has a man's ID, they'll be treated like a man.

(...)

Oh! Yes! Yesterday at the toll booth. A trans woman works there, a trans woman, and they treat her like... In this case, they say she was a man, using her baptismal name. Treating her like a man. And I say, "Guys?" Completely a woman, but they always speak in a derogatory way. And say, "Oh, I'm going to introduce you...", Do you understand? It's very boring. So, there's this difference in the way they deal with incidents, yeah, sometimes on the radio I've heard people say it was a fight between a couple at home. Then later I heard people say, "Oh no, guys, but it's a homosexual couple". I didn't understand his tone of voice, did I? Because from CITY OF MINAS GERAIS he goes to the entire region nearby here. Then he said, "Oh guys, be careful, okay, with the HIV issue and such". Aaaaah (raised tone of voice), what do you mean? They still associate, for example, HIV with homosexuals! Even though there's already been a study that shows that there are more heterosexuals infected than homosexuals, actually. But it's something that's ingrained, so it's hard to change. (PM1, 2024, free translation)

At this point, the topic of trans people and the use of social names by police officers is brought up again. PM1 had previously mentioned that this was happening, and even mentioned

an example from the previous day, and returned to the topic, even when not directly asked about it. The tone is one of indignation regarding the intentional error of other officers.

The statement shows signs of discursive resistance, with examples of hegemonic cisheteronormative and binary discursive formations and the discursive formation of PM1 that is reflexive and critical. The valorization of legal documents in an ontological way in opposition to the social level of the situation represents the dominant military ideology, as well as the pathologizing discourse evidenced in the association of HIV (Human immunodeficiency virus) with homosexual people.

At this point, the topic of trans people and the use of social names by police officers is brought up again. PM1 had previously mentioned that this happened, cited an example from the previous day, and spoke about the topic again, even when not directly asked about it. The tone is one of indignation regarding the intentional error of other officers, with an emphatic exclamation of his criticism. This highlights the problem with the treatment and recording of crimes involving trans people and same-sex couples, as exemplified.

The speaker, despite not having admitted it and having already stated that he did not get involved in these issues in order to protect himself, disagreed with his colleagues. I see that it was an unsustainable situation, so he could not remain silent, and soon after, discriminatory moods appeared.

Some of the main effects in the study of crime to be observed here are: the criminalization and pathologization of same-sex relationships, and the delegitimization of gender identity (both in the approach on the streets and within the police force at the time of registration). In addition to these, I highlight as one of the most important and pertinent to queer criminology, which is the production of deviant subjects through the reproduction of a legal-police discourse. In other words, from this contact between the police and sexuality/gender identity, the way of erasing, harming and excluding identities is created and reinforced.

Yes. What happens is... What I've experienced is that people who have declared themselves... How do you say it? They identify as people of a different orientation than heterosexual. And so I say it this way, in the most diverse ways possible. From what I've experienced, they tend to identify themselves precisely so as not to be violated in some way, or to show that they deserve a different level of respect, or even in the sense that they want to identify themselves so that the incident is recorded exactly as it happened, and not softened or treated with less importance. I can say the following: sometimes, the prejudice or the fallacy that there is a prejudice on the part of the police towards gay people is so deep-rooted that the person arrives at the incident with resistance, assuming that they won't be well treated because they are gay. Because the police, in theory, are prejudiced. So there is a generalization that ends up harming the response to the incident, because this has also changed. Of course, it's not the whole story. It will take time to have something more humanized, in this isonomic sense. But it has improved, in the sense that even heterosexuals have

been more open to dealing with incidents involving LGBT populations in a more humanized way, in an egalitarian way, like any other person. But this is mainly due to the mentality of these people, who already understand that being gay does not make anyone different. (PM2, 2025, free translation).

Here there is a representation that the act of coming out when filing a police report or participating in a crime in which there is recognition of diverse sexuality is also interpreted in a way that binds queer people. In that, if the person comes out with the intention of having an effective record, they can be ridiculed or convinced that something other than a hate crime occurred, or if the person does not come out, there is a vacuum (preterition) that is filled by the person responsible for dealing with the crime. In PM2's own speech, there is a conflict between the denunciatory tone of what happens to queer people and a position aligned with militarism that sees oneself as a victim of generalization, something noted in the statements of other interviewees.

However, it is important to highlight the relationship of distrust between these two groups – something observed in theory, and which motivated the choice of specifically queer police officers as the methodological focus of this study. The view that officers have, in general, is that there is prejudice inside and outside the institution and that this influences the way they work and deal with crime, but they also consider that the treatment of LGBTQIA+ people towards the military also makes it difficult to carry out a respectful approach. This can also be seen in the discourse of other speakers:

Initially, it was quite... Traumatic. Because the group was made up of older people, they are kind of... a bit truculent. And I'm a guy, as I told you, I'm a more open guy. I like to chat, talk, see different points of view. And with the police, no. "I told them to catch and do it", but to do it because, you know? We still have a certain fear of reporting to people, to the public... To the trans public, homosexuals, lesbians, right, why? It's complicated. There I insert myself in that world, you see that certain communities, they don't accept a certain way of being approached that causes a lot of stress. So today I see it in a slightly more lenient way, but there are still a lot of problems. (...) It depends a lot on who is going to assist. And the way the person approaches the police, if they approach them harshly, they will be treated harshly. If they approach them more calmly and everything, we will generally assist them in a more lenient way. It all depends on the way you are treated, right? Not only the community, but anyone else, I notice this in general. But in general, in the community, we have a certain difficulty in responding to incidents. There is still a certain prejudice in the response, you know? (PM3, 2025, free translation).

It's like I said, the institution has a positive orientation, which I find useful. But there's no way around it, it will depend a lot on the personality of the police officer who will respond to the situation. But I've also never been there and I've never heard of anyone who treated anyone in a negative, pejorative way... Anyone involved there who is LGBTQIA+. (PM9, 2025, free translation).

The question here was about what the training to join the police force was like and the interviewee changed the subject in his answer to demonstrate a certain indignation with the records with trans, homosexual and lesbian audiences, in particular.

The interviewee assumes a group position when using "we" as a way of referring to the treatment of queer people, demonstrating a greater acceptance of police identification when faced with this dilemma. I say "dilemma" because I notice in the statement "there I insert myself in this world" that there is an attempt to include himself as a part, but soon after he distances himself to criticize "certain communities" and the act of not accepting certain types of approach. We can identify it as mirror-violence, which is the recognition of dissident sexuality in the other, as well as one's own, but the option to return violence.

The different discursive formations are marked by "I am"/"but they are" or "I fit in"/"we generally go to serve", in which on one side there is the authority and on the other the open subject. PM3's hesitations and self-corrections demonstrate the difficulty and discursive discomfort in talking about the LGBTQIA+ population in a more direct context with crime, in addition to reporting fear, which is not expressed, and may be of making a mistake in the register, suffering reprisals or being exposed by contact with someone different. Therefore, it is clear that the disruptive body makes standard care difficult.

The logic of reciprocity in treatment with queer people demonstrates another side of a double-binding system, with a structure of victim blaming. It is clear that this can happen, but it is an argument that serves to justify institutional prejudice or the distancing of agents with the idea that this community is not respectful, or that the harshness or aggressiveness of these people is insubordination.

PM9's denial, in turn, of not having seen or learned about discriminatory situations in records places him in a neutral position, just as the institution wishes to present itself, but only reinforces the invisibility of symbolic violence and takes its lack of knowledge as non-existence, rather than non-occurrence. It is a *queer criminological influence*, that there is an institutional erasure of "minor" violence without formal records, but with subjective effects, such as the distrust of the police itself.

On the other hand, I see what they describe as a difficulty in approaching, especially when observing the very long speeches of other interviewees about the demand for correct filling of the fields parameterized by superiors. In this sense, the bureaucracy itself influences the occurrences, but not enough to justify discriminatory treatment.



In general, the way I treated this part of the course that I mentioned to you has a big influence on the insensitivity with which people are often treated, in general. And the community, the minorities, are not immune to this, no. But, on the other hand, this same issue that I see with myself, of them holding back on certain things, I see in many cases as well. And, when they realize that they are acquaintances involving minorities, whether trans or just gay, they change their treatment a little, they slow down. I think it's to avoid any issues. (...) And when I realize that there is any type of minority, I notice that people respect them even more. (PM8, 2025, free translation).

PM8's statement conveys a very positive view of the treatment and dealing with people, highlighting a "slowdown" in police officers for cases involving LGBTQIA+ people. However, it is important to demonstrate that the space in which this interviewee is inserted has other homosexual police officers, including those before him, who "calm down" the space and behaviors. Therefore, the discursive position taken at this moment is privileged and cannot be taken as a general view but serves as a point of observation of the influence of larger numbers of police officers of diverse sexualities within the police force.

Another statement that highlights another approach to civilians directly was made by PM8 himself:

So, I believe so, especially when we are with our friends, we can show off. On the street I avoid it, even to avoid someone noticing, some citizen I am dealing with, and if they realize that I have to do this and use it and if they realize this and use it to say something, and what I had said, the incident escalates. If a citizen, in the middle of the incident, calls me a faggot, I will have to take action. To avoid this, with the intention of ending the incident quickly, solving the problem of the incident, not creating others. When I work, I try to speak more harshly, I try to avoid mannerisms, in fact. But not out of fear of the environment or a colleague, precisely fear of creating a problem of an incident that could have been avoided. (PM8, 2025, free translation)

The public/private binary is clearly evidenced by self-censorship in performativity during occurrences, in which one avoids "showing off" as an expression of mannerisms associated with gay or effeminate stereotypes. It is a survival tactic and improvement of the service offered, but it should not be necessary, but it shows that the invisibility of this aspect in itself and the performance of masculinity are elements associated with the police professional and induces respect. Butler names this behavior as *compulsory masculinity*, especially visualizing the attempt to preserve the crime scene.

The DA's anticipation mechanism is used by the PM8 to prevent an embarrassing situation during an incident, and also to avoid a transition in position: from authority to vulnerability. Which, from the military discursive perspective, would be likening him to those

involved in the incident. Thus, the queer police officer tries not to suffer discrimination or insults so that his authority as a professional is not mitigated.

This example shows how important it is for the institution to maintain a unique and specific vision of the police officer, since the real fear is that the command hierarchy of an incident and of a police force will be destroyed. The figure of a lesbian, a gay man or a woman carrying the same type of power destabilizes the pre-existing and historically constructed structure. Sexual and gender dissidence threatens the culture and ideology of this environment, which is why it is possible to understand (but not accept) the difficulties that arise in the daily lives of queer police officers in positions of authority.

Considering everything presented in this research, especially in view of the Epistemology of the closet, the existing studies in Queer Criminology and the discourses of the interviewed police officers, I elaborate some considerations in a summarized way because I believe that they may represent benefits or discussions for studies on crime, and consequently, police institutions.

The presence of police officers with dissident sexualities must be encouraged within military institutions: considering that it has been reported that corporations with a greater presence of police officers who identify in this sense have less extortionate experiences in relation to their own closets, and do not reflect so negatively when filling out police reports and treating other queer people.

The underreporting of cases involving LGBTQIA+ people is related to the way these individuals are treated within the corporations: in this case, it is not just about victims or perpetrators of crimes, but also about the agents responsible for the approaches. Given that the tools of the closet, such as humor for discipline and panic and paranoia about associating with other queer people, are strong and affect those who report them.

Positioning queer police officers as central to the methodology of this research represents an epistemic strategy of including dissident bodies as analysts of the penal system and the elements of crime. Therefore, I identify and suggest that LGBTQIA+ police officers should not be seen only as objects of repression, but as key individuals in it, with strategies and performances that go against the norm, to the extent that they can/are able to. Therefore, seeing experiences from the other side of the uniform can represent a strong contribution to Criminology as a whole, as it is not limited to the cisheteronormative standard that is already the vision in the social imaginary of a police officer.

The idea that there is a dual identity that is “forced” on LGBTQIA+ police officers in the relationship between sexual identity and police identity as mutually exclusive can also help

in studies. Since the result of this situation is silence, performance or closet, the compulsory dual identity can mark a conceptualization that queer people in these spaces need to be “more police officers” than their colleagues, with the reproduction of “bigger and better” behaviors and discourses of cisheteronormativity.

A surprise in the analysis, but an important consideration is the role of humor as an institutional strategy, both of attack and defense. Resistance in cynicism, irony and discursive surprises (such as the stated departure from the position of victim) place humor as an important category of queer criminological analysis, as it constitutes a character capable of revealing the meanings in tensions and clashes between colleagues, norms and institutional standards.

The ethical dimension of the reproduction of normative violence by queer people in police institutions is complex and needs to be observed. After all, the culture of silence and discrimination is also internalized and, simultaneously, returned to other dissidents. The place in which the LGBTQIA+ subject is inscribed in repression is difficult to identify as just a fixed position, since they are not only victims, but also agents in the production of violent discourses in the social body. Therefore, an ethical observation of this phenomenon would be welcome in Queer Criminology, especially in the Brazilian space, where police officers are rarely considered as part of crime as a social fact. To this end, thinking of “mirror violence” as a power that acts through internalization and discipline provides a tool for analyzing this phenomenon.

I consider my attempt to observe “debts and inheritances” in Sedgwick to be successful, especially when observing that the collection of local empirical data with an analysis based on the categories of the Epistemology of the Closet, but with characteristic outlines of military institutional ideology and culture, demonstrates how diverse the closet can be. The singular contours of this device of sexuality are created from the scenario in which the subjects are inscribed. With this, the closet is no longer read only on a personal level, or as an individual problem, but interpreted as a technology of collective and institutional control.

Furthermore, observing the effects of closets on women's experiences also helps in the rereading and interpretation of Sedgwick's work, but even more so in queer literature on crime. After all, the intersection of markers brings a difference that is marked by the production of new situations of prejudice.

Finally, the methodological process led me to value listening, venting, and non-judgment as good research tactics. This is not something new in the academic space, but in the criminological field it is pertinent to influence the break with cold structures of conducting research with marginalized subjects. Discourse Analysis, for example, helped to identify affections, vulnerabilities, and details that perhaps could not be observed with the objectivity

and neutrality that some methods require. Thus, I point to a *queer ethic* in criminological research or a *queer identification*, because I notice that the understanding of the literature, the interlocutor's position as queer and distant from the observed space led to the construction of trust on a topic and an experience that are sensitive and highly subjective.

Regarding theoretical categories and empirical findings, I would like to highlight a few points. *Self-disclosure and self-naming* demonstrate how the closet can function as a defense mechanism and as a tool of oppression and self-censorship. It disciplines the identity of individuals, so that there is an intersection of power relations and institutional risk that brings negative consequences. The union with Criminology here makes it possible to note that there is a discursive production on crime and sexuality, which does not focus only on sexual crimes, but on non-normative identities that are repressed by the punitive structure.

With the possibility of naming and revealing subjects, speech loses its chance to be said, which is a manifestation of silencing and invisibility. Or in Foucaultian terms, muteness and prohibition. Thus, a double-binding system is created, in which visibility is punished, but the opposite is also true. There is a false neutrality in police professionalism, which is manifested by disciplinary control inside and outside the institution and by the reinforcement of the heterocisnormative standard. Some cases of restraints are in the need for silence as self-preservation, or in the oppressive cycle of denunciation-retaliation-discipline.

In this sense, the opposition between *anti-sentimentality and sentimentality* is expressed through a binary hierarchy in which affection is repressed in favor of virile masculinity. This binary refers to the way in which the feminine is viewed within the police force, and is part of the difficulty in accepting diverse gender performances, such as effeminate men, masculine women or transsexual people. In a way, it is not enough for the law to be followed, but it must be enforced in accordance with the social norm of gender. Thus, the penal system regulates sexual affections and expressions, with negative effects on the interpretation of subjects (involved in crimes) and on the psychological repression of individuals.

The apparent objective is to resemble the standard of the virile, heterosexual, married male police officer, and as one moves away from this reference, difficulties arise. The search for this model is carried out through *violent and exemplary discipline*, that is, symbolic, physical and subjective control of the way people behave. It is repressive and didactic, as the example serves as a parameter for predicting the outcome of the action. In this vein, *mirrored violence* demonstrates a double power of discipline, since it not only inflicts repression on agents, but also causes them to reproduce repression and control among themselves, in society and in those

involved in crimes. Those most affected are those who do not resemble the pattern previously described.

Mirroring also serves as a form of preservation within the hostile environment that is created, thus maintaining a distance between other LGBTQIA+ colleagues and individuals involved in crimes. In a certain way, the idea of neutrality that the discourses report exists persists. And so, violence becomes part of a cyclical system of production of subjectivities.

Between discipline and violence lies *panic and paranoia*, a mechanism that brings together attempts at control and results in repression. They represent institutional anxiety, fear and the need for self-protection in the face of disruption of the hegemonic pattern of sexuality and gender. A space is created in which the virility of agents is constantly tested, and there is exaggerated self-policing regarding speech, behavior and relationships. The naming of panic as masculine highlights the greater impact on men, which, in turn, highlights the valorization of masculinity in these spaces – something that also affects women.

Driven by feelings of fear, shame and anticipation of punishment, the *closet* emerges as an institutional device for modulating *relationships*. It is not just about a secret that is hidden, but rather about the existence of a regime of control. Queer criminology dissociates itself from the view that coming out will be the salvation from problems, especially those involving the law. For example, the agents interviewed who are out also report similar situations to those who are not.

The closet is relational and collective, as it affects everyone who lives under the norm. Through devices such as discipline, panic and paranoia, heterosexuality is also performative. Furthermore, in this context, closets are instruments for reproducing a penal order, which defines the type of suspect and victim, and who can exercise authority in criminal situations – see gay police officers who raise their voices to avoid being disrespected in the field.

A main conclusion of criminological effect is the recognition of the closet as a structure of repression that is both symbolic and material, which regulates dissident bodies and determines predefined roles in policing and crime treatment practices.

## 6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research sought to answer the main question “*In what way, according to the perception of police officers with dissident sexuality, can the closets present in the Military Police influence the treatment of crime?*”, and, simultaneously, to elaborate contributions to Queer Criminology from the perspective of the interviewees. With the methodological procedures undertaken, some considerations can be made.

According to the statements analyzed, the closets that exist in the Military Police significantly influence the way officers relate to each other and perform their duties inside and outside the police force. It is important to keep in mind that the officers interviewed are people who identify with dissident sexualities, so the impact they suffer should also be considered as a way of influencing the treatment of crime. Some examples, such as prejudiced approaches, gaps in police records, discriminatory jokes, and relationships with heterosexual officers within the workplace, are representations of the social impacts that the closet has.

The narratives of openly and non-openly outed agents were extremely beneficial for comparison, especially considering the similar and different elements of discursive reproduction of political, religious, military, moral or gender elements. As a consequence, the institutional culture of prejudice against queers and women persists, with special emphasis on trans people and *travestis*, even if they are not involved in crimes.

However, I believe that the main way in which closets influence the treatment of crime is by silencing officers who, because they experience a double-binding system with symbolically violent and exemplary disciplinary manifestations, choose not to get involved correctly in situations where other LGBTQIA+ people are present. Incomplete police reports, or the persuasive practices used to discredit a crime as homophobic/transphobic/discriminatory, or the opportunity for jokes and the possibility of retaliation are effects caused by the perception of open secrets.

I highlight the originality in trying to discuss Queer criminology from the perspective of the Epistemology of the Closet, and the fruitful field that has opened up with this intersection, which I consider a theoretical advance. However, some research limitations have emerged. Among them, I would like to highlight the small number of revisionists of Sedgwick's works, especially in Portuguese, as well as productions that are specific to the deviant criminological field. And similarly, the works that have the perspective of queer police officers on these topics. On the other hand, I would like to highlight the difficulty in finding agents who were willing to participate, and among those who did participate, the fear of expressing their experiences. One

example of this is that the number of interviewees represents only a part of the number of people indicated, and another: the withdrawal of consent by one of the agents after the interview.

Understanding the concept of closet in presentations, discussions and papers also made it difficult for the topic to be fully understood by peers and interviewees. Therefore, the use of examples, slang or diagrams is useful to expand the discussion.

With this, I highlight some of the main contributions to the study of Queer Criminology that I was able to infer, such as: the impact of institutional closets on the silencing of agents, and the consequent registration and prejudiced approaches of LGBTQIA+ people; the positioning of the queer police officer as a central subject in the observation of repression, both as a producer and reproducer of violence; and the motivation for the presence of dissidents in the police force, as an incentive to mitigate extortionate experiences of closets and improve services. In addition to these, and more specifically on the theoretical side, there is: the analysis of humor as a strategic tool of the closet, both for attack and defense; studies of compulsory dual identities, in which being a police officer and being queer seem to exclude each other, and result in an exaggerated performance of gender; ethics in the observation of reflected violence, in the internalizations and reproductions of disciplines. And finally, a *queer research methodology* that is attentive and strategic in obtaining and analyzing sensitive and subjective data.

The contribution points also represent possible future developments for new research possibilities, of which I highlight: the constitution of a double-binding system and the negative and ambiguous results for queer people in contact with justice and public safety; the duality of the identity of police officers; the presence of closets in other professions, such as social workers and teachers. For Queer Criminology itself, it is useful to seek to understand the perception of victims and perpetrators of crimes regarding treatment and approach; or even the vision of trans and black people.

Through observations, it is possible to infer that agents develop escape and protection strategies, in addition to the closet itself, such as manifestation through speech, calculated and distanced performativity of submission, identity ambiguity in public and private behavior, mobilization of humor, and assistance to other agents in similar situations (even if outside the corporation's vision).

Something that Orlandi brings up about Discourse Analysis, specifically about the relationships between the same and the different that are said, is that there is a distinction between productivity and creativity. Creating would be saying something new, something that goes against what has been said previously, is unprecedented and breaks with an existing

process of language construction, while producing is the use of paraphrasing to return to existing spaces of production. I bring up this distinction at this point to emphasize that the interviewees' discourses only produced and reproduced other previous discourses, whether those uttered by the Police or the Military (as an institution), or those called queer, what gays, lesbians, bisexuals, trans people and others should be and how they should behave.

Understanding these discourses in this way is not exclusively saying that they are wrong but saying that they are forms of manifestation of an interdiscourse that is significantly marked by the conflict between identities that are distant from each other – but that could and should come closer together.

This approximation is something that was observed here and that, at first, was also defended, especially considering the historical interaction that exists between crime and sexuality. However, as a criminological contribution, it is worth analyzing it in depth, accompanied by the criticism that if there must be an approximation between the professional identity of an agent who deals with crime and the personal sexual identity of that same individual, there must be ways to mitigate the effects of this situation. Or, in other words, defending a separation of these identities is defending a closet that does nothing but harm – which I agree with.

Didactically: Should there be LGBTQIA+ police officers? Yes, after all, the existence of these people should not be in vogue. But should they be outed within the police force? If they wish to be outed, yes. If not, no. Does the fact that there are closets within the police force impact the handling of crimes? Yes, the mere presence of the sexuality element in a historical, cultural and social context of prejudice and repression, such as criminalization, causes an influence, however, the feeling of obligation to hide a personal aspect of both the officer and any other person involved in the incident, whether out of fear, self-protection or the search for justice, makes already harmful situations worse.

Discursively, the very understanding of a discursive formation as heterogeneous, and that it is mobilized by an ideological clash, helped me in the general perception of how the enunciating agents in this *corpus* locate their discourses. It is possible to broadly identify that all the interviewees are discursively and socially inscribed in a space of clash. Some deal with it better, others are dealt with. The ideological disputes that cross them are fierce and affect them on a deep level, to the point that they involve freedom regarding each one's sexual subjectivity, but, simultaneously, involve economic survival and recognition in a capitalist society.



The conflict that constitutes the discursive formations of the interviewed military police officers, both men and women, is reproduced in terms of the military position and the discourse it carries *versus* the imaginary and ideological formation of what it means to be an LGBTQIA+ person today. This discursive dispute is inscribed in the bodies, behaviors and relationships of these subjects, in such a way that they are led to sacrifice elements of their experiences in sexuality and gender identity, totally or partially, in order to obtain an experience of well-being that also contemplates them as those who do not subscribe to the same markers.

This in itself is already a problematic dimension of discussion (the authoritarian and harmful way in which the closets act), but it has effects that overlap with society and, in turn, are inscribed in other bodies through the institutional action of these first subjects.

As previously highlighted by studies by Dywer, Ball and Crofts in Queer Criminology, police officers must also be understood as producers of social reality and not just as reproducers of old patterns. It is clear that, when I deal with discourses and their analysis, I also bring up their ideological, institutional, cultural and psychological construction, but when locating crime repression agents with crime itself (social fact) it is important to highlight them as primary influencers of what is understood as crime, who commits it, who is punished for it, how, where, what is prevention, how is registration, among other details.

At this point, the occurrence of discriminatory violence against queer police officers significantly affects the way crimes involving queer people are understood and dealt with in society. And this is not to say that the easy solution would be to simply remove these officers from their positions and this problem would be solved, but quite the opposite: the presence of these subjects is essential in producing a broader and more inclusive perspective of what is seen as crime, offender and victim.

The context in which the statements analyzed here were produced is marked by the constant expansion of the Military Police institution and the “closet” sexuality regulatory device, both in positive and negative ways. What I want to show in this comparison is that both elements are deeply linked to the lives of these subjects, and in turn, become practically inseparable when united in the same “body”. Nor does it mean that these agents should seek other professions or further suppress their sexual orientations and gender performances, but that they should study, develop and collaborate on alternatives so that coexistence is healthy, and of course, productive.

Pêcheux would call this phenomenon “internalized ideological contradiction,” which would be precisely the notion that ideology is not only external and oppressive but is also incorporated and internalized by subjects through discourse, and as a result, internal and

subjective contradictions that can be reflected in their relationships and behaviors. Since ideology is not just a fixed set of beliefs and defense of ideas that are prior to the subjects, one can glimpse in the individual clashes and dilemmas expressed in the statements the true meaning of this concept, that is, that of multiple discursive practices that influence the perspective one has of the world, of everyday life, and of subjects, ontologically.

The power that closets have as discursive practices in the “hands” of an institution that rejects people of dissident sexualities and gender identities is impressive, given that the history, formal and informal rules and culture of the Military Police continue to fuel discriminatory acts within and outside its corporations.

As this research ends, several ideas emerge about what these findings might become. However, I take one of the interviewees’ statements as a criticism and motivation that this research may not represent anything without a political impact. In this way, I see that understanding closets is still an incipient task, as is relating them to crimes or listening to marginalized people in conflicting positions.

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## ANNEXES

### ANNEX I - INTERVIEW GUIDE

- 1 - How long have you been serving in the Police?
- 2 - How do you identify yourself? Was assuming this identity a smooth process for you? And within your work, do people know about your sexual orientation? What was it like telling them? If they don't know, why?
- 3 - In relation to your colleagues, do you notice any different treatment? Do you know any colleagues who are afraid to come out in the workplace? Or who has already come out and suffered harm because of it?
- 4 - At work, have you ever heard any comments about your sexuality? Or has anyone ever stopped talking/doing something with you because of your sexuality?
- 5 - Have you ever noticed any type of exclusion among police officers related to the way they express themselves or relate to each other?
- 6 - Have you always performed the role you perform today? If not, was there any reason for the change in role related to your sexuality?
- 7 - Does anyone talk to you or others about your sexuality? How do they talk?
- 8 - Have you ever seen or heard jokes about your sexual orientation?
- 9 - How was your training to join the Police? What were the main changes you noticed in yourself during and after the training?
- 10 - Have you ever found yourself changing or disguising a personality trait or way of being to avoid being interpreted as (...)? If so, was it out of fear or self-protection?
- 11 - Do you like the feedback you receive from your service?
- 12 - Do you notice any difference in the relationship between other heterosexual agents, and in the relationship with you? Both men and women.
- 13 - In cases of discrimination, do other people notice? Does anyone take any action? How does it work within the Police? If not, why don't they take action?
- 14 - Have you ever had or known someone who has had an experience of "extortion" regarding their sexuality? It could be another colleague, someone in the Judiciary or even someone involved in a case.
- 15 - Have you ever had an experience in your workplace where someone tried to harm you in some way? Did you feel or realize that it was because of your sexual orientation?

16 - Have you noticed any changes in the way you deal with and express your feelings after joining the Police?

17 – What characteristics do you feel allow another person to identify that you are (...)? Do you express your feelings (whether happy or negative) in the workplace or with colleagues?

18 - Does treatment within the corporation influence in any way the way you record crimes against LGBTQIA+ people?

19 - Does treatment within the corporation influence in any way the way you treat LGBTQIA+ people involved in crimes?

20 - Do you receive any training to deal with crimes involving LGBTQIA+ people? And how do you assimilate this training?

21 – Is there any concern within the corporation about changing the way it is treated and recorded?

22 - In your perception, in general, how are crimes involving LGBTQIA+ people handled within the corporation?

22 - With the concept of institutional closet that I have already explained to you, can you identify one in your work area?

## ANNEX II – SUBSTANTIATE OPINION OF THE ETHICS COMMITTEE OF THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF MONTES CLAROS (UNIMONTES)

UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL DE  
MONTES CLAROS -  
UNIMONTES



### PARECER CONSUBSTANCIADO DO CEP

#### DADOS DO PROJETO DE PESQUISA

**Título da Pesquisa:** "TIRANDO A CRIMINOLOGIA DO ARMÁRIO": CONTRIBUIÇÕES DE EVE K. SEDGWICK PARA O ESTUDO DO CRIME

**Pesquisador:** MOISES OLIVEIRA COSTA

**Área Temática:**

**Versão:** 1

**CAAE:** 84779624.1.0000.5146

**Instituição Proponente:** Universidade Estadual de Montes Claros - UNIMONTES

**Patrocinador Principal:** Financiamento Próprio

#### DADOS DO PARECER

**Número do Parecer:** 7.321.419

#### Apresentação do Projeto:

As informações elencadas nos campos deste parecer "Apresentação do projeto", "Objetivos da pesquisa" e "Avaliação de riscos e benefícios" foram retiradas de dados e documentos inseridos pelos pesquisadores na Plataforma Brasil.

"Trata-se de um trabalho de dissertação de mestrado, cuja temática envolve sexualidade, os estudos da Criminologia e da Teoria do armário, bem como Instituições militares. A pesquisa será realizada no Norte de Minas Gerais, com análise qualitativa de dados por intermédio de análise do discurso e fundamentação nos estudos de Eve K. Sedgwick. Com isto, espera-se obter contribuições para o estudo do crime no que concerne pessoas LGBTQIA+. A coleta de dados se dará por intermédio de entrevistas semiestruturadas com policiais de sexualidade dissidente do Norte de Minas Gerais. Com o devido consentimento dos participantes, pretende-se gravar as falas com a utilização de um gravador ou aparelho telefônico, a fim de evitar falha de memória e distorção de fatos em caso de anotação posterior. Após organização dos dados com o software Atlas TI.8, será realizada uma análise hermenêutica do discurso para desvelar o sentido oculto nas falas dos participantes. A vertente da Análise do Discurso a ser utilizada será a de origem francesa. Com a leitura e interpretação da obra "Epistemologia do armário", serão extraídas categorias teóricas com a observação de conceitos importantes para a autora e outros que o pesquisador considerar úteis para o estudo. Estes serão utilizados na

Endereço: Av. Dr. Rui Braga s/n- Prédio 05, 2º andar, sala 205 - Campus Univers Prof Darcy Ribeiro  
Bairro: Vila Mauricéia CEP: 38.401-089  
UF: MG Município: MONTES CLAROS  
Telefone: (38)3229-8182 Fax: (38)3229-8103 E-mail: comite.etica@unimontes.br

**UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL DE  
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Continuação do Parecer: 7.321.419

Interpretação dos dados coletados, em que serão classificados para fins de análise. A seleção dos entrevistados será por amostragem por bola de neve. O número de entrevistados variará de acordo com critérios de acessibilidade e disponibilidade, podendo variar do número informado. Especialmente, quanto a realidade externa de comparação."

**Objetivo da Pesquisa:**

**Objetivo Primário:**

Elaborar contribuições à Criminologia quer por intermédio da Teoria do armário de Eve Sedgwick e da Análise do Discurso de policiais militares de sexualidade dissidente.

**Objetivos Secundários:**

Identificar as categorias teóricas presentes na obra Epistemologia do armário que se adequem ao contexto de tratativa do crime;

Analisar a estrutura organizacional da Segurança Pública e da Polícia Militar concernentes as relações do armário;

Analisar o discurso de agentes da segurança pública quanto ao controle exercido pelos armários.

**Avaliação dos Riscos e Benefícios:**

Conforme os pesquisadores, o projeto envolve os seguintes riscos e benefícios:

Riscos: "Pode-se apontar como possíveis riscos decorrentes desta pesquisa, a interferência na rotina dos participantes, bem como a realização das entrevistas que podem, em algum momento, talvez constrangê-los e/ou causar cansaço. No intuito de evitar ou minimizar os possíveis riscos, serão fornecidas informações claras sobre a liberdade dos participantes para participarem, continuarem ou não na pesquisa. As questões serão elaboradas da forma objetiva, com a possibilidade de desvio do roteiro em surgimento de necessidade acadêmica, momento em que o participante poderá optar por não responder e se ater ao roteiro. Por se tratar de um assunto sensível e que expõe a vulnerabilidade do sujeito perante outra pessoa, há o risco de que o participante se sinta constrangido ou demonstre pouca colaboração nas entrevistas, ou ainda que sinta medo de exposição diante da hierarquia da instituição que faça parte. Estes riscos e desconfortos derivam da natureza da pesquisa, por tratar de aspectos íntimos da personalidade, vivência e desenvolvimento sexual, e atuação profissional, o que pode ser compreendido como ofensa e prejudicar a colaboração do participante. Ademais, quaisquer informações que possam ser identificáveis ou rastreáveis, serão omitidas. E os pesquisadores se responsabilizarão por qualquer identificação que possa sobrevir."

Endereço: Av. Dr. Rui Braga s/n- Prédio 05, 2º andar, sala 205 - Campus Univers. Prof. Darcy Ribeiro  
Bairro: Vila Mauricéia CEP: 38.401-000  
UF: MG Município: MONTES CLAROS  
Telefone: (38)3229-8182 Fax: (38)3229-8103 E-mail: [comite.etica@unimontes.br](mailto:comite.etica@unimontes.br)

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Continuação do Parecer: 7.321.419

**Benefícios:** "A pesquisa tem o potencial de produção científica para auxiliar no desenvolvimento social, com fomento à discussão crítica sobre organizações, sexualidades e violência. Ademais, considerando a vasta produção estrangeira sobre policiais gays, lésbicas e transexuais, a presente pesquisa pode beneficiar os estudos concentrados no Sul Global, mais especificamente o Brasil e o Norte de Minas Gerais, com a perspectiva desta região sobre um fenômeno que é observado por certo período em outros locais. A utilização da teoria de Eve Sedgwick também traz originalidade para esta temática, pelo que envolve conceitos seminais sobre armários, sexualidade, e construção do pensamento ocidental. Além do espaço acadêmico, as próprias instituições de segurança pública poderão ser beneficiadas com a possível identificação de aspectos que carecem de melhoria visando a Inclusão."

### **Comentários e Considerações sobre a Pesquisa:**

O projeto apresenta relevância científica e social, com metodologia capaz de responder os objetivos propostos. O objetivo é elaborar contribuições para o estudo do crime (Criminologia) após observação da realidade de agentes que lidam pessoalmente com suas próprias sexualidades e são confrontados com pessoas queer no cotidiano da profissão. Busca-se resposta à problemática de quais os efeitos dos armários institucionais presentes na Polícia Militar na tratativa de crimes envolvendo pessoas LGBTQIA+. O intento é que o estudo se tome uma somatória ao movimento de Criminologia queer ou Criminologia transviada, como tem se chamado no Brasil (Serra, 2017), que visibiliza as diferenças no tratamento do crime quando pessoas queer estão envolvidas.

### **Considerações sobre os Termos de apresentação obrigatória:**

Os documentos de caráter obrigatório foram apresentados e estão adequados.

### **Recomendações:**

- 1 - Apresentar relatório final da pesquisa, até 30 dias após o término da mesma, por meio da Plataforma Brasil, em "enviar notificação".
- 2 - Informar ao CEP da Unimontes de todos os efeitos adversos ou fatos relevantes.
- 3 - Comunicar o CEP da Unimontes caso a pesquisa seja suspensa ou encerrada antes do previsto, estando os motivos expressos no relatório final a ser apresentado.
- 4 - Providenciar o TCLE em duas vias: uma ficará com o pesquisador e a outra com o participante da pesquisa.

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Bairro: Vila Mauricéia		CEP: 38.401-089	
UF: MG	Município: MONTES CLAROS		
Telefone: (38)3229-8182	Fax: (38)3229-8103	E-mail: <a href="mailto:comite.etica@unimontes.br">comite.etica@unimontes.br</a>	



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5 - Atentar que, em conformidade com a Carta Circular nº. 003/2011/CONEP/CNS e Resolução 466/12, faz-se obrigatória a rubrica em todas as páginas do TCLE pelo participante de pesquisa ou responsável legal e pelo pesquisador.

6 - Inserir o endereço do CEP no TCLE:

Pró-Reitoria de Pesquisa - Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa Envolvendo Seres Humanos - CEP/Unimontes, Av. Dr. Rui Braga, s/n - Prédio 05 - 2º andar. Campus Universitário Prof. Darcy Ribeiro. Vila Mauricéia, Montes Claros - MG - Brasil. CEP: 39401-089.

7 - Arquivar o TCLE assinado pelo participante da pesquisa por cinco anos, conforme orientação da CONEP na Resolução 466/12: "manter os dados da pesquisa em arquivo, físico ou digital, sob sua guarda e responsabilidade, por um período de 5 anos após o término da pesquisa".

**Conclusões ou Pendências e Lista de Inadequações:**

Não há pendências ou inadequações no projeto.

**Considerações Finais a critério do CEP:**

O projeto respeita os preceitos éticos da pesquisa envolvendo seres humanos, sendo assim somos favoráveis à aprovação do mesmo.

Este parecer foi elaborado baseado nos documentos abaixo relacionados:

Tipo Documento	Arquivo	Postagem	Autor	Situação
Informações Básicas do Projeto	PE INFORMACOES BASICAS DO PROJETO 2389880.pdf	07/11/2024 21:18:12		Acelto
Projeto Detalhado / Brochura Investigador	projeto tirando criminologia.pdf	07/11/2024 21:16:05	MOISES OLIVEIRA COSTA	Acelto
TCLE / Termos de Assentimento / Justificativa de Ausência	TCLE.pdf	11/08/2024 16:14:17	MOISES OLIVEIRA COSTA	Acelto
Folha de Rosto	folhaderosto.pdf	29/07/2024 14:50:10	MOISES OLIVEIRA COSTA	Acelto

**Situação do Parecer:**

Aprovado

Endereço: Av. Dr. Rui Braga s/n- Prédio 05, 2º andar, sala 205 . Campus Univers Prof Darcy Ribeiro  
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**Necessita Apreciação da CONEP:**  
Não

MONTES CLAROS, 30 de Dezembro de 2024

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Assinado por:  
Carlos Alberto Quintão Rodrigues  
(Coordenador(a))

Endereço: Av. Dr. Rui Braga s/n- Prédio 05, 2º andar, sala 205 - Campus Univers Prof Darcy Ribeiro  
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