Counter-Islamophobia Kit

Workstream 2 : Dominant Counter-Narratives to Islamophobia -Portugal

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Countering Islamophobia through the Development of Best Practice in the use of Counter-Narratives in EU Member States.

CIK Project (Counter Islamophobia Kit)

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Counter-Islamophobia Kit

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About the CIK Project

The *Countering Islamophobia through the Development of Best Practice in the use of Counter-Narratives in EU Member States* (Counter Islamophobia Kit, CIK) project addresses the need for a deeper understanding and awareness of the range and operation of counter-narratives to anti-Muslim hatred across the EU, and the extent to which these counter-narratives impact and engage with those hostile narratives. It is led by Professor Ian Law and a research team based at the Centre for Ethnicity and Racism Studies, School of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Leeds, UK. This international project also includes research teams from the Islamic Human Rights Commission, based in London, and universities in Leeds, Athens, Liège, Budapest, Prague and Lisbon/Coimbra. This project runs from January 2017 - December 2018.

About the Paper

This paper is an output from the first workstream of the project which was concerned to describe and explain the discursive contents and forms that Muslim hatred takes in the eight states considered in the framework of this project: Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Portugal and United Kingdom. This output comprises eight papers on conditions in individual member states and a comparative overview paper containing Key Messages. In addition this phase also includes assessment of various legal and policy interventions through which the European human rights law apparatus has attempted to conceptually analyse and legally address the multi-faceted phenomenon of Islamophobia. The second workstream examines the operation of identified counter-narratives in a selected range of discursive environments and their impact and influence on public opinion and specific audiences including media and local decision-makers. The third workstream will be producing a transferable EU toolkit of best practice in the use of counter-narratives to anti-Muslim hatred. Finally, the key messages, findings and toolkits will be disseminated to policy makers, professionals and practitioners both across the EU and to member/regional audiences using a range of mediums and activities.

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1. Introduction[1]

This report presents an analysis of the main counter-narratives to Islamophobia that we have identified across a diverse range of individuals, organisations and public bodies in the Portuguese context. The analysis engages with the theoretical understanding of Islamophobia proposed in the project (Sayyid, 2014) and dominant Islamophobic narratives that we have previously identified in the Portuguese context (Araújo, 2017). According to Sayyid, 'Islamophobia is not about the "hatred and fear of Islam" or Muslims. The range of activities covered by Islamophobia exceed its common formulations; rather it occurs as *a response to the problematization of Muslim identity* (…) more than an expression of hatred or fear, Islamophobia needs to be understood as *an undermining of the ability of Muslims as Muslims, to project themselves into the future*' (Sayyid, 2014, p. 14, emphasis added). Accordingly, two different counter-narratives (and the specific counter-measures associated to them) to combat Islamophobia can be identified: *conventional strategies* that aim to correct *prejudiced representations*, to demystify or enlighten our views about Islam and Muslims. They (cor)respond to the dominant approach to Islamophobia as hatred or fear fuelled by misinformation and ignorance. The second set of counter-narratives comprise *political strategies* in the sense that aim to counter Islamophobia as a *relationship of domination* (Ibid., p. 22).

The categorisation of the counter-narratives identified in the Portuguese context considers this distinction and engages with our previous analysis of the existing academic literature and the five performative clusters of activities that shape Islamophobia in the country (Araújo, 2017), in particular, acts in institutional settings and public commentary:
  – Attacks on persons perceived to be Muslims;
  – Attacks on property considered to be linked to Muslims;
  – Acts of intimidation;
  – Acts which may occur in institutional settings, in which those perceived to be Muslims receive less favourable treatment than their peers in comparative positions;
  – Incidents in which there is a sustained and systematic elaboration of comments in the public domain that disparage Muslims and/or Islam.

The report is structured as follows: section 2 describes the methods and data sources for the identification of counter-narratives, with an emphasis on the conduction of interviews and the scope and limitations of the fieldwork. Section 3 is focused on the categorisation of the counter-narratives in relation to the ten 'umbrella narratives' of Muslim hatred identified in WS1 and, more specifically, those present in the Portuguese context. The final section gives concluding remarks.

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[1] Fieldwork has been conducted by Marta Araújo, Silvia Rodríguez Maeso, Max Ruben Ramos and Pedro Varela.

2. Mapping current counter-narratives to Islamophobia: contexts, methodology and data sources

Empirical research has aimed to grasp discourses and political arrangements and initiatives developed in diverse spheres at both local and national level. Engaging with our previous analysis in WS1, we have identified the following data sources: news items, academic literature, parliamentary debates, policy and legal texts, and in-depth interviews. However, as we have already pointed out, the discussion on Islamophobia and on counter-measures is almost absent in the Portuguese context in parliamentary politics, policy making and academia, where the dominant views convey the idea that discrimination against Muslims due to its religious belonging is not significant. In this context, Islamophobia is mainly understood as a matter of prejudice and stereotypes (Araújo, 2017, pp. 7-13). Accordingly, data sources have been used more for understanding the wider context of reflections and statements gathered during the interviews, rather than as specific sources of counter-narratives to Islamophobia.

Interviews have been the main source for identifying counter-narratives to Islamophobia. They were open-ended, following a guide with a general outline of issues and questions that allowed the generating of other topics. Questions focused on the Islamophobic narratives already identified in our previous analysis in WP1 (Araújo, 2017; Mescoli, 2017) and some of the contextual issues described above. Key issues raised were the following:
- A historical perspective on the discussion about Islamophobia in Portugal and in particular, in relation to colonialism and racism;
- The main approaches to the discussion on Islamophobia or its silencing;
- The political construction of the issue of gender oppression and Muslim women;
- The policies surrounding secularism, state-religion relations and religious dialogue in Portugal;
- The counter-measures to Islamophobia.

Table 1. List of Interviews conducted (July - November 2017)

CODE	DESCRIPTION
P-01	Politician, MP, left-wing party. Man.
PA-01	Pro-Palestinian activist. Woman.
PA-02	Political Activist, anti-racist movement. Man.
PA-03	Political Activist, black movement. Muslim. Man.
PA-04	Pro-Palestinian activist. Muslim. Man.
NPO-01	Social Worker, non-profit organisation. Muslim. Woman.
IA-01	Representative of Islamic Association. Metropolitan area. Man.
IA-02	Representative of Islamic Association. Metropolitan area. Man.

IA-03	Representative of Islamic Association. Metropolitan area. Man.
NPO-02*	Representative of International non-profit organisation. Muslim. Man.
NPO-03*	Representative of International non-profit organisation. Man. Muslim. Man.
A-01	Academic, historian. Man.
IA-04	Representative of Mosque. Metropolitan area. Man.
IA-05	Representative of Mosque. Metropolitan area. Man.
IA-06	Representative Islamic Community. Medium-size town. Man.
J-01	Journalist, public broadcasting service. Woman.
J-02	Journalist, private diary newspaper. Woman.
P-02	Representative of the Commission for Religious Freedom. Man.
A-02	Academic, historian. Man.
A-03	Academic, law studies. Woman.
A-04	Academic, theologian. Woman.
PA-05	Political activist and researcher. Muslim. Man.
IA-07	Representative of Mosque and Islamic Community. Medium-size city. Man.
IA-08	Representative of Mosque and Islamic Community. Medium-size city. Man.
IA-09	Representative of Mosque and Islamic Community. Medium-size city. Man.
IA-10	Representative of Mosque and Islamic Community. Medium-size city. Man.

*Conversation not recorded.

We have conducted 21 interviews with 28 participants – from July to November 2017 (see Table 1) – from **five key spheres**:

a) Political Activism

There is not a specific Muslim political activism in Portugal, or organisations that have had an emphasis on the issue of Islamophobia. However, there is a growing concern about Islamophobia in two areas of political activism: the anti-racist and black movements, and pro-Palestinian activism. There has been a strengthening of anti-racist organisations – mostly, Black and Roma political activism – and the debate on racism, and more specifically, on institutional racism, has acquired more centrality in the public debate. The issue of Islamophobia has not featured significantly in this context. SOS Racismo has published two works on Islamophobia in different European contexts and in Portugal (Ba and Alves, 2002; SOS Racismo, 2011).

We have privileged interviews with political activists that allowed us to identify analyses of the current situation concerning Islamophobia from different political trajectories and with participants that have diverse lived experiences regarding ethnicity/race, nationality and religion.

b) State politics

Our previous analysis showed the absence of specific policies to counter Islamophobia or that targeted Muslims in Portugal. Most of politicians and MPs have been silent on the matter or have made public comments regarding issues raised in other European context, such as France and the banning of "religious symbols" and the polemics on the so-called 'burkini-bans'.[2]

We identify two periods that have shaped the current debates in the sphere of state politics, within the framework of *state-religion relations* and the increasing centrality of state policies to *combat terrorism* and *radicalisation.*

The period between 2000 and 2005 was dominated by the discussion of the Freedom of Religion Bill[3] and the 9/11 attacks. The Bill was proposed by the Socialist Party (PS) before the parliament and enacted in June 2001 (Law 14/2001, 22 June). The parliamentary debate (Plenary Session, 30 March 2000) focused on the relation between the Catholic Church and the Portuguese State[4] and, in particular, on the privileges of the Catholic Church due to the *Concordata*, signed in 1940 between the Portuguese State and the Holy See-Vatican with a specific focus on the status of religious education.[5] MP Vera Jardim (PS), in his opening statement, considered that the bill aimed to meet the Constitutional rights and the expectations of different religions to enjoy an equal status within the Portuguese State:

> Unfortunately, there has not been much development of studies on the current situation of religion in the country, beyond the Catholic literature. However, it is today evident that, either due to the process of decolonisation, that brought populations from other religions, above all from Mozambique and Guinea[-Bissau] that professed the Islamic faith, or due to the current emergence of new religious movements, we are living today in an increasingly multicultural society, similar to other European societies, that it is also religiously plural, with the prevalence of a majority of Catholic faith though.

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[2] See, for instance, the interview with José Vera Jardim – former Minister of Justice and current President of the Commission of Religious Freedom –, on this issue (Barros, 2016). See also the debate on this issue in the tv programme 'Prós e Contras': 'Should the burkini be banned?" ('*A utilização do burquíni deve ou não ser permitida?*') broadcast by the RTP, the Portuguese public service (19 September, 2016), available online: https://www.rtp.pt/play/p2233/e250609/Pros-e-Contras (accessed: 22 November 2017).

[3] Concerning legislation, Law 134/99 forbids discrimination in the exercise of rights on the grounds of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin. The prohibited grounds do not include religion. The Labour Code (Law 7/2009) implements the EU Employment Directive. Article 24, on equal access to/equality in employment, prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of religion. Article 381 prohibits dismissal based on religious reasons.

[4] *Diário da República*, 1st Series, No. 48, 31 March 2000, 1964-1992.

[5] The PS also proposed a Bill for the revision of the *Concordata*, and the *Left* Bloc (*Bloco de Esquerda*, BE) had proposed a Freedom of Religion and Secularisation of the State Bill that considered the abolition of the *Concordata* as a premise for the enactment of a Law of Freedom of Religion. The Bill proposed by the PS was approved and the *Concordata* was revised and ratified in 2004 (Law 74/2004).

> This Bill aims to meet the just claims to a more egalitarian status – and therefore, in conformity with the Constitution – of all religious faiths existing in the country, which continue to face situations of unequal treatment that need to be redressed (*Diário da República*, 1st Series, No. 48, 31 March 2000, p. 1965).

Law 14/2001 also established the Commission for Religious Freedom (Article 52) as an advisory independent body to the Parliament and the Government.

This period was shaped by the 9/11 attacks, the US-led invasion of Iraq, and the emergence of new EU legal frameworks on the combat against terrorism as well as international political initiatives such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) set up in 2005.[6] In this context, in 2003, it was discussed (Plenary Session, 6 March) and approved the Law on Combating Terrorism (Law 52/2003, 22 August) – that transposed Council of the EU Framework Decisions 475/JHI/2002 on combatting terrorism and 584/JHI/2002 on the European arrest warrant and the surrender procedures between Member States, into the Portuguese juridical order.

The period between 2015 and 2017 has been shaped by the enactment of a National Strategy for Combatting Terrorism (Resolution of the Council of Ministers, N0 7-A/2015, 20 February) in 2015 that made explicit the centrality of discourses on *prevention* of processes of *radicalisation*. The Strategy included the adoption of an Action Plan for the Prevention of Radicalisation and the Recruitment for Terrorism, and other measures such as 'combatting social exclusion, especially in those present in the most problematic areas such as the periphery of big cities' and 'encouraging the intensification of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue between communities' (*Diário da República,* 1st Series, No 36, 20 February 2015, p. 1022-(3)). In 2015 there was also a new amendment (the forth) to the Law on Combatting Terrorism (Law 60/2015, 24 June).

The new regulation act of the Anti-Terrorism Coordinating Unit (*Unidade de Coordenação Antiterrorismo*, UCAT) – set up in 2008 –, entered into force in 2016 (Regulatory Decree No 2/2016, 23 August) when the Unit started to function on a permanent basis. In this period, controversial legislation regarding surveillance and access to metadata by the information services of the Portuguese State has been approved: Organic Law 4/2017, 25 August 2017 regulates the access by the Security Information Service (SIS) and the Strategic Defense Information Service (SIED) to telecommunications and internet data.[7]

These recent legal and policy initiatives have been reported in the media that in the context of attacks in different European cities – Paris (January and November 2015), Manchester (May

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[6] Jorge Sampaio, former President of the Portuguese Republic (1996-2006), was the High Representative for the UNAOC between 2007 and 2013.

[7] In 2015 there was a previous attempt to regulate the access of the Information Services to metadata, however, the access was declared unconstitutional by the Portuguese Constitutional Court (Judgment 403/2015, of 27 August 2015). The Left Bloc (BE), the Communist Party (PCP) and The Greens voted against Organic Law 4/2017 and the BE and PCP have expressed their intention to request a control of constitutionality.

2017) or Barcelona (August 2017) – have given more centrality to the discussion on 'radicalisation' and the focus on Muslim communities in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. This discussion has also been shaped by the polemics surrounding the construction of a new Mosque in Mouraia, Lisbon (see Araújo 2017, p. 23) and the consolidation of academic experts on terrorism and security in Portugal (Ibid., p. 6) that is receiving increasing attention in the media[8] – for instance, the Observatory of Security, Organised Crime and Terrorism (*Observatório de Segurança, Criminalidade Organizada e Terrorismo*, OSCOT)[9], hosted by the Faculty of Law of the New University of Lisbon.[10]

In view of the absence of a consistent discussion on Islamophobia in the institutional political milieu, we have only conducted interviews with two key participants from State politics.

There have been a few instances of discussions concerning Islamophobia or discrimination against Muslims in the Portuguese parliament and they have been mostly in relation to international affairs rather than the situation in Portugal.[11] Two discussions should be highlighted: the debate that took place in 2006, regarding the Danish cartoons affair,[12] when MPs requested clarification to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Freitas do Amaral (PS), concerning his public statement where he condemned the publication of the cartoons.[13] Opposition MPs considered the Ministry's statement was 'anti-Western' as it criticised Europe without condemning the 'Islamic violence' against the Danish embassies (*Diário da República*, 1st Series, No 97, 3 March 2006, pp. 4555-4602). Another example is the debate held in 2017, following the presentation of a resolution (775/XIII) by the conservative party, CDS-PP,

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[8] See: Lino (2017), Interview with Felipe Pathé Duarte: 'The Mouraria cannot become a Molenbeek' or TSF (2017) 'New Mosque in Lisbon is a "risk", says José Manuel Anes. Sheik Munir disagrees'.

[9] The founder and former President of the Observatory, Rui Pereira, was Minister of Home Affairs between 2007 and 2011.

[10] The establishment of public and policy debates on 'radicalisation' and 'Islamic fundamentalism' can also be seen in journalistic investigations and publications such as the book by journalists Hugo Franco and Raquel Moleiro on 'Portuguese jihadists': *Os Jiadistas Portugueses. A história de quem luta no Estado Islâmico* (Lisbon: LeYa/Lua de papel, 2015); or the books: O *Islão e o Ocidente, a Grande Discórdia* (Alfragide: D. Quixote, 2015) by Jaime Nogueira Pinto, conservative political scientist and entrepreuner, and *Jihadismo Global. Das Palavras aos Actos* (Marcador/Livros RTP, 2015), by Felipe Manuel Pathe Duarte, political scientist, a publication sponsored by RTP, the public service broadcaster in Portugal.

Journalists Hugo Franco, Raquel Moleiro and Joana Beleza received the 'Innovation Award' of the 2016 European Press Prize, for the multimedia report *Killing and Dying for Allah – Five Portuguese Members of Islamic State*. Available online: http://multimedia.expresso.pt/jihad/EN/killing-and-dying/ (accessed 16 November 2017).

[11] An exception dates from 1981, when MP Magalhães Mota requested information to the Lisbon City Council concerning the request from the Islamic Community of Lisbon to have access to burial ground in cemeteries in order to be able to follow the Islamic funeral traditions. The MP also requested information on the reasons that led to a previous prohibition of Islamic burials in a public cemetery in the capital (*Diário da República*, 2nd Series, No 40, 13 March 1981, pp. 951-942).

[12] The Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published 12 editorial cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad on September 30, 2005, conveying highly offensive, anti-Muslim symbolism such as one depicting the Prophet Mohammed as a terrorist with a bomb. The cartoons were reprinted in January 2006, in a small evangelical Christian newspaper in Norway. The publication of these cartoons raised protest all over the world and created diplomatic tensions between Denmark and several Muslim countries.

[13] 'Declaração do ministro de Estado e dos Negócios Estrangeiros sobre a publicação dos "cartoons" sobre Maomé'. Available online: https://www.publico.pt/2006/02/07/mundo/noticia/governo-cartoons-sobre-maome-ofendem-as-crencas-dos-povos-muculmanos-1247102 (accessed 10 November 2017).

recommending that the Government endorses a firm and active defence of religious freedom. MPs from the left (BE, PCP) considered that the proposal only focused on the condemnation of attacks against Christians in different countries and it did not include any condemnation of 'Islamophobic attacks' that are strengthening the extreme-right in Europe (*Diário da República*, 1st Series, No 79, 22 April 2017, pp. 28-33).

Since the 2000s, different initiatives have been promoted by public bodies and different religious institutions and communities such as the Catholic Church or the Islamic Community of Lisbon (*Comunidade Islámica de Lisboa*, CIL), within the framework of interreligious dialogue (see Stilwell 2008; Lopes and Avillez, 2011). The High Commission for Migrations (*Alto Comissariado para as Migrações,* ACM)[14] has also sponsored different initiatives such as the Interreligious Meetings (MEET IR) with youth from different religious communities.[15]

c) Islamic organisations and mosques

Since the mid-1970s, Islamic organisations and Muslim local communities have been established all over the country. There are not official data concerning the number of Islamic associations, mosques and places of worship; for instance, the Halal Institute of Portugal (*Instituto Halal de Portugal)*[16] has registered 55 in total: 60% are located in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, 16% in the South and 13% in the Northern region of the country. The legal recognition of religious groups, with the exception of the Catholic Church, requires their registration in the Ministry of Justice. Registered religious groups settled in the country for at least 30 years, or internationally recognized for 60 years, can apply to obtain a higher status as 'Churches and religious communities *settled* in the country' that would allow them to receive government subsidies and to sign 'mutual interest' agreements with the State that 'poses insurmountable difficulties to all other Muslim communities [except the CIL] in Portugal, apart from resource scarcity' (Pais Bernardo and Vink 2010, p. 18). Obtaining status as 'settled' communities or places of worship also requires a favourable opinion from the Commission for Religious freedom.

The CIL has maintained its primacy as representative of Muslims in the country, with a key role in official, State-sponsored venues. The work of the Aga Khan Development Network is also very relevant in Portugal (AKDN) and, in particular, the Aga Khan Foundation, present in the country since 1983. They have signed a series of Protocols of Cooperation with the Portuguese Government since 2005, and have a strong role in development projects, mostly in education and urban exclusion, targeting communities irrespective of their ethnicity or faith. This central role is connected to the high number of Shi'a Ismaili Muslims in Portugal that came from Mozambique, mainly in the 1970s after the country achieved independence. The AKDN has supported the establishment of other Islamic associations in the Lisbon Metropolitan area. Representatives of the CIL and the AKDN have generally expressed the view that Islamophobia is not a relevant issue in Portugal and there is no need for specific public policing or measures targeting Muslim communities, as they are well integrated and they have good relations with

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[14] This public body was formerly named High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (*Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e o Diálogo Intercultural, ACIDI*), between 2007 and 2014.
[15] See http://www.acm.gov.pt/-/meet-ir-2017-reune-21-jovens-de-8-comunidades-religiosas (accessed 1 October 2017).
[16] http://halal.pt/myihp/locais-de-culto/ (accessed 9 October 2017).

other religious communities – despite some hostility generated by the 'Israeli-Palestine conflict' (see Númena, 2008, pp. 19-20).

Most of the interviews conducted for the present research have been with representatives of Islamic associations and mosques from the Great Lisbon, and several interviews in central and northern regions of the country. Muslims attending these mosques are mainly from Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry, Angola, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and due to the prevalence of *jus sanguinis* after the modification of the Law of Nationality in 1981 (Law 37/1981, 3 October), many of them are not Portuguese citizens even if they were born in the country or came to live when they were of a young age. There is a strong mobilisation for a change of the Nationality Law with the Campaign and Public Petition 'For Another Nationality Law' (*Por Outra Lei da Nacionalidade*).[17]

d) Academia

Our previous analysis showed that academic research 'does not offer a systematic account of the workings of Islamophobia' and the focus has been more on the 'presence' of Muslims or Islam in the country, their specificities, rather than on Islamophobia per se (Araújo, 2017, pp. 5-8). The dominant understanding of Islamophobia is that of prejudiced representations of Islam and Muslims although some research has also engaged with legal and institutional arrangements and also about the relationship between Islamophobia and racism (Ibid., p. 7). Academic research has not developed a discussion or knowledge production concerning counter-measures to Islamophobia.

The interviews conducted with academics aimed to identify views from disciplines and spheres of discussion – history, theology and law – that have shaped some of the key debates on Islamophobia such as legal discrimination, the relationship between colonialism and Islamophobia, and the model of State-religions relations and inter-religious dialogue.

e) Journalism

Research conducted in WP1 has extensively analysed media content published in the last 20 years, including news outlets, and the key narratives of Muslim hatred that they convey (Araújo, 2017, pp. 15-25). Journalism – printed press, TV and radio – has mostly focused on reports about the reality of Muslims in Portugal with a specific interest on portraying the everyday life in mosques in Lisbon – and other big cities like Porto –, the Ismaili community or interviewing Muslim women (see, for instance, Gomes 2001; Neves, 2008; Freitas de Sousa, 2011; Henriques and Pina 2011; Henriques, Martins and Pelarigo, 2015; Carneiro, 2015; Garcia, 2015; Henriques, 2015; Ferreira da Costa, 2016; Carita, 2017). These journalistic works tend to convey a 'ritualistic notion of Muslim identity' that is, that 'Muslims are identifiable by their adherence to a number of discreet practices and beliefs (*salat/namaz*,[18] fasting during

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[17] See: https://campanhaporoutraleidanacionalidade.wordpress.com/ (accessed: 12 November 2017).
[18] Mandatory prayers performed five times each day.

Ramadan,[19] *hajj,*[20] …)' (Sayyid, 2010, p. 143). Printed news, multimedia resources or radio news deploy a narrative of 'normalisation' of Muslims in Portugal, the need to have more knowledge about Islam and the experiences of discrimination are often downplayed or framed within the 'fear to the unknown' or 'ignorance' narratives, as also conveyed by representatives of Islamic communities. The journalists interviewed (J-01; J-02) stated that according to their experience, representatives of Islamic communities and associations do not usually want to publicly expose cases of discrimination or hate speech. Counter-narratives fall mainly into the category of 'conventional strategies', analysed in detail in the next section. The only definition we found of Islamophobia in the press is the reproduction of the Runnymede Trust 'Closed views of Islam', published in Público as part of a news piece covering a seminar that took place at the Nova University of Lisbon – 'Diversity and National Identity in the EU' – (Santos and Santos Costa, 2007).

In the printed/online press, news reports and commentaries discussing legal and institutional discrimination against Muslims usually follow the covering of specific international events and the discussion on Islamophobia is usually ambivalent. This can be illustrated with the news coverage of the federal popular initiative in Switzerland to prevent the construction of Mosque minarets (November 2009) and the recent ruling of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) that allowed companies to ban staff from wearing visible religious symbols (March 2017). Several news pieces on the Swiss referendum expressed critiques to the accusations of Islamophobia by representatives of 'Muslim countries' where 'only the faithful to Allah can pray', for instance, in Lopes' piece, in Público, entitled: 'When religious apartheid critiques Islamophobia' (Lopes 2009).[21] In this same newspaper, historian Abdoolkarim Vakil published an opinion piece reflecting on the moral panic around the presence of Muslims in Europe and how the referendum showed the relations of 'coloniality, orientalism and racialisation of Islam' and the new 'respectability of "cultural racism"' (Vakil, 2009); and an editorial entitled 'Islamophobia, a vaccine or a fuse?' that expressed the premise that Europe needs to be faithful to its foundational principles – 'a first step is to understand that our European matrix is one based on freedom and tolerance, emancipated from oppressive traditions.[22] An emancipation that has not been achieved by many of the peoples we are hosting now throughout their history, it is true' – and be aware that most of Muslims living in Europe are 'willing to integrate' (Público, 2009).

Most of the news and opinion pieces covering the recent ruling by the ECJ expressed views contrary to the Tribunal's decision for its violation of the principles of freedom and tolerance, its consequences to the strengthening of the extreme-right and the formation of Muslim ghettos (see Lorena, 2017; Franco, 2017; Monteiro, 2017). Similar to the comments on the Swiss referendum, editorials compared the bans in the European context with those in Arab or Muslim countries – 'the use of a bikini is mandatory on Belgium or French beaches, and it is forbidden in the United Arab Emirates' (Correia, 2017) – and that most Muslims are not so

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[19] Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar and the holy month of fasting. It is a period of introspection, to practice self-restraint – one of the Pillars of Islam –, communal prayer in the mosque, and reading of the Quran. fasting, prayer, and faithful intention.
[20] The pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia – one of the Five Pillars of Islam.
[21] Similar views were expressed in other opinion pieces (Borges 2009).
[22] Similar views were expressed in other editorials (Pereira 2009).

different to peoples from other religions or traditions – most Muslims are not radicals and most Muslim women are not obliged to be Muslim (Monteiro, 2017). Journalist Fernanda Câncio (2017) expressed a more insightful take on this discussion that considers the different interpretations of the principle of neutrality and religious freedom by European tribunals in cases concerning Christian *symbols* and in cases that rule on Islamic *symbols*.

The remainder of the report is devoted to the categorisation and analysis of counter-narratives, drawing mostly on data from the interviews.

3. Categorising current counter-narratives to Islamophobia in Portugal

The analysis of counter-narratives to Islamophobia, across the range of data sources already identified in the previous section, presents their categorisation in relation to the ten "umbrella narratives" identified in WS1 (Mescoli, 2017) and, more specifically, the narratives identified in the Portuguese context drawing on the analysis of news outlets online, social commentary and personal blogs:

> The master narrative found is that there is an intrinsic incompatibility of the West/Europe/Portugal and Islam. The former – even when not totally idealised (for instance, 'still' sexist, 'still' homophobic, 'still' religious) – is presented as always superior, because it is *adaptable*, guided by *rational* philosophical principles and thus tends to move towards civilizational *progress*. Hence, Islam is perceived as incompatible with the West/Europe/Portugal, in a set of 'characteristics' which would constitute the core of anti-Muslim narratives (Araújo, 2017, p. 15)

Accordingly, these narratives reproduce Eurocentrism as a paradigm of knowledge production and as a discourse of power that re-centres Europe/the West as the universal political horizon. They function as a sort of check-list of 'Europeanness' versus non-'Europeanness'/'Muslimness':

- DEMOCRACY vs.
  Violence/Theocracy/no freedom of speech
- GENDER/SEX EQUALITY vs.
  Sexism/Homophobia/Trans-phobia
- RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE vs.
  Intolerance/Fundamentalism/proselytism
- NATIONAL IDENTITY vs.
  Inassimilability
- RATIONAL DECISION-MAKING vs.
  Irrational/unscientific

The analysis of counter-narratives to the Eurocentric-check-list-discourse differentiates between "conventional strategies" and "political strategies":

a) Conventional strategies: challenging prejudiced, stereotyped representations

Most of the participants interviewed drew on dominant understandings of Islamophobia as 'hatred and fear of Islam/Muslims' within a general approach towards discrimination as

stemming from *fear to difference*. In this context, participants expressed the need to challenge prejudiced representations about Islam and Muslim communities and to acknowledge Western *ignorance* about Islam. There is also an emphasis on increasing Muslims' visibility that would allow to acknowledge the heterogeneity of Muslim communities and, thus, the different ways to understand Islam and the Quran.

▪ The need of a more accurate knowledge of Islam and the Quran; there is not one Islam but a *heterogeneity of Islam(s)* and *different approaches to and interpretations of the Quran* (P-01; PA-03; NPO-01). [countering irrationality; sexism; violence].

▪ Islam does not promote sexism, fundamentalism; Terrorism is not part of Islam, is not religion [countering irrationality; sexism; violence]

> 'It is important to reinforce the idea that there are various ways of interpreting the Quran, stop saying that there is "Islam" and say that there are several "Islam(s)". Extremists make interpretations of Islam that have nothing to do with most Muslims' (PA-03)
>
> 'There is not an analysis of the differentiated way in which Islam is lived, it appears as a block, a single identity, all the same. There are different ways of living Islam, but it is seen as undifferentiated; this discourse ends up putting Europe as "the land of women's rights"' (P-01).
>
> 'We want to show a different idea of what it is to be Muslim and it is not what people think. (…) We want to break down a wall that exists between us and … well, not everybody (…) that fear… Some people see the Muslim in a way… it has nothing to do with reality' (IA-07).

▪ the existence of a *heterogeneity among Muslim communities* must be stressed, they need visibility and the recognition of their everyday life as showing *conviviality* and *tolerance* [countering violence, intolerance and inassimilability] (J-01; J-02; P-01; IA-01).

> 'When I write more personal stories, the portraits… these are the stories that have most impact; I receive feedback from readers because they begin to see and reflect that "they are people like me, they are worried about the same things"' (J-02).
>
> 'In the West there is a concern about what is different, and they think that if we let them [wear the veil], they [Muslims] will force me to wear a veil. Journalists sometimes write news pieces about the use of the veil, the minarets… that influence the image that we have [about Islam] in Portugal. Fear of difference, of the other; fear that the Muslims would be majority' (J-01).
>
> 'Above all else there is a need for establishing contacts between civil society and Islamic communities. It is important for the Islamic community to be invaded by the civic community, they should go to the mosque, the schoolchildren...' (A-01).

- Local communities with high self-esteem, a cohesive identity that is proud of its Muslim identity are an example of how to counter the representation of Muslims as radicals and violent, they do not interiorise fear and intra-community suspicion [countering violence] (NPO-01).

- Professionals in the media, in education and state institutions, lack knowledge and culture about Islam [countering theocracy; violence; irrationality].

The emphasis on the lack of knowledge about Islam is expressed in public commentary. For instance, in several opinion pieces published by Faranaz Keshavjee, a social anthropologist and expert in Islamic Studies; Keshavjee considers the negative impact for a comprehensive and well-informed understanding of terrorist violence and Islamophobia of the 'absence of teaching anthropology of religions in secular curricula' (2010) and 'the Ignorance of the religious fact in our educational system, encouraged by secular extremism, [that] prevents us from knowing enough to make informed judgments' (2016).

> 'The media lacks knowledge; they have no intellectual background to talk about the subject [Islam]' (IA-05).
>
> 'History teaching in our education system aggravates Islamophobia. (…) The overwhelming majority of history teachers did not have a course in Islam in their degrees. Teachers are not trained to teach about Islam' (A-01).
>
> 'Problems stem from a lack of knowledge. (…) For example, the history curriculum, history is not properly taught.' (NPO-03)
>
> 'Many journalists write about these issues [Islamic beliefs, precepts], without any previous experience, and end up making serious mistakes and undermining the image of Muslims. Many Muslims have decline to talk to me because of this.' (J-01)
>
> 'The training of legal professions, increase awareness in comparative law perspectives; there is a lack of knowledge of discussions outside Portugal; we need to start thinking about this… It is not a question of inventing problems, but thinking more about prejudiced ideas, and about the principle of equality; what is discrimination?' (A-03).
>
> 'I think it is very important that teachers have access to training from truthful sources. (…) For instance, in regions of the country where there are a lot of Muslims, Jews, teachers need to take a training course jointly with the Mosque. People at the Mosque o the Synagogue should prepare a sort of presentation for the teachers to gain knowledge of who these Muslim children are, the cultural aspects, and what you need to do to respect this and prevent offensive behaviour. This is a good idea.' (IA-07)

> 'When people start gaining a better understanding of Islam, I can assure you they change their ideas. There is not a single word in the Quran that incites to violence or disrespects women'. (IA-10)

- Contrary to the dominant representation of Muslim women as the paradigmatic example of gender oppression ('the *hijab* issue' is recurrent), instead of merely emphasizing that there is an emergent "Islamic feminism", it is crucial to show that there is a long history of Muslim women in political and cultural spheres. [countering sexism] (PA-01).
- There is a lack of knowledge of Muslim feminists and how issues regarding women, gender, and Islam are discussed. The idea that there is not a debate about gender roles or about the leading role of women in religious, social and political affairs should be challenged. (A-04; PA-05) [countering sexism; irrationality]

b) Political strategies: countering a relationship of domination

Conventional strategies are mainly located in the understanding of 'Muslimness' as a religious identity and challenge misrepresentations and misunderstandings of Islamic religious thought and practices – 'the refutation of the claims made by Islamophobia' (Sayyid, 2014, p. 22). The emergence of political strategies to counter Islamophobia in the Portuguese context shows the engagement with power relations that have shaped the discourse of European exceptionality – that is, Western modernity as *the* universal political horizon of emancipation – *versus* non-'Europeanness'/'Muslimness'. These counter-narratives express a critique of both historical narratives about state and nation formation, the legacies of colonialism and racism, and contemporary institutional arrangements concerning state-religion relations. Political strategies also engage with the context of deniability of Islamophobia in Portugal and the differences and similarities between Portugal and other European contexts regarding the problematisation of Muslim *presence* and Islam in the public debate.

We have identified three interrelated issues that were tackled by political counter-narratives:

I. NATIONAL IDENTITY, COLONIALISM AND STATE-FORMATION

Education and history teaching were issues raised by most of the participants and, in particular, the narrative about the formation of the Portuguese nation-state and the *Reconquista* presented in textbooks and in-class teaching. This narrative constructs Muslims as the 'historical enemy' of the Portuguese people (see Ba and Alves, 2002, p. 387; Araújo and Maeso, 2012, p. 1275).

- Challenging the narratives about Portuguese national identity, the centrality of the *Reconquista* narrative that constructs a boundary between barbarism (Islam, Muslimness) and civilisation (Christianity) [Countering 'the West and the rest' narrative].

> 'When you study the history of the *reconquista* at school there is always a game of identity projection that constructs a "we, the Portuguese that

> heroically conquered Portugal against the Moors". This narrative constructs the Muslims as an alterity' (PA-05).
>
> 'There is a historical memory about the Muslim "presence" and the narrative of the *Reconquista* as a "liberation" of the country from an 'impious world' and in favour of a benign Christian civilization. There is also a more contemporary narrative, elaborated during the 20th century, about Islam v. the West; Islam is associated with a representation of violence, of disrespect for human rights, for women. This would be a relationship between faith and politics that Western modernity would have rejected' (P-01).
>
> 'I see in the [curricular] programs, from basic to secondary education, for example in History, that they are thought from the Judeo-Christian paradigm; (…) Everything is designed to be monocultural. In History textbooks, for instance… (…) the idea of the crusades, they say that the Muslims "invaded" [the Iberian Peninsula]' (IA-05).
>
> 'I remember, as a kid, to study the "discoveries" and the *reconquista* and I believed in that. I only changed [my opinions] when I was eighteen. It is a colonization of minds.' (PA-04)

Whereas conventional strategies do not challenge the commonplace ideology of Portuguese *benign* colonialism and its wider relation to processes of nation-formation and national identity, this is a crucial issue, albeit still marginal, for the emergence of political counter-narratives. Participants expressed the need for a radical critique of colonialism and its legacies in the Portuguese context and, in particular, of the relationship between colonialism, religion and Islam. Academics and researchers highlight the scarcity of studies on the history of Islamophobia and Portuguese colonialism, however, there is no consensus regarding the continuities and specific legacies of colonial policies for understanding contemporary manifestations of Islamophobia – whereas some participants suggested that there is not an impact of the colonial policies on contemporary Muslims in Portugal (A-02), others saw that colonial hierarchies in terms of 'race' and class had an impact in the process of formation of post-colonial Portugal and the integration of Muslims and consider that it should be a relevant object of study (PA-01, PA-05).[23]

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[23] Historians Abdoolkarim Vakil (2003; 2011) and Mário Machaqueiro (2011; 2013) have analysed Portuguese colonial policies regarding Islam and Muslims in colonised territories, with a special focus on Mozambique and the period of the war against national liberation movements (1961-1974). Their analyses show the ambivalence and changing character of the colonial administration regarding Islam and Muslim peoples: from suspicion and fear, towards a policy of co-optation and potential collaboration with the colonial regime and against the liberation movements. They also show the colonial ethno-racial divide of Muslims, their hierarchisation and changing political approaches towards them. One of the key issues was the relation between Islam, (inter-)nationalism and anti-imperialism; in this regard, since 1961, the Portuguese administration focused on the configuration of a 'Portuguese Islam' and 'Portuguese Muslims' that would be loyal to the colonial administration. This political endeavour was interrelated with divisions between what the Portuguese administration regarded as "Black Islam" versus 'Arab' or 'Indian' Islam/'Muslimness'.

- Challenging the historical account of the relationship between *Portuguese colonialism*, the process of nation-making and Islam, that is, the ideology of 'benign colonialism' and 'integration' [Countering 'the West and the rest' narrative] (PA-02; PA-04; PA-05; A-04).

> For instance, within the Mandinga culture [in Guinea-Bissau] – there are different ethnic groups –, their proximity to the national liberation struggle, fuelled the fact that they were, among the Muslims, the most discriminated groups within the [colonial] discourse; even in the way the colonial State considered the people linked to national liberation, for example, the notion of 'terrorism' that was applied at the time, to these communities. (PA-02)

- Islamophobia is rooted on colonialism. Countering islamophobia is part of the anti-colonial struggle and the fight against contemporary imperialistic wars [Countering 'the West and the rest' narrative] (PA-04).

II. STATE – RELIGION RELATIONS, SECULARISM and LEGAL/POLICY ARRANGEMENTS

A key issue raised by several participants is the way in which the Portuguese state has arranged the relationship between religious institutions and organisations and, in particular, the central role that the Catholic Church has had within economic, educational and social care spheres. The *Concordata* – the convention between the Portuguese State and the Holy See-Vatican revised and ratified in 2004 (Law 74/2004) – is considered as a legal arrangement that creates unequal power relations and reproduces a culturalisation of religious beliefs that are read in national/territorial terms, and legitimise specific political projects and imaginaries of cultural national integrity (see Mamdani, 2005, p. 27; Sayyid, 2010, p. 130-131). Legal arrangements are also seen as shaped by the central role that the Islamic Community of Lisbon in (post-)colonial Portugal that has favoured a relation between the State and Islamic organisations that gives visibility to a Muslim elite. This latter issue was mainly discussed in relation to issues of racism and the discourse about integration and assimilation.

- Exposing how the self-image of the Portuguese State as a Secular State silences the unequal power relations between the State and different religious institutions and, more specifically, the privileges granted to the Catholic Church [Countering the religious (in)tolerance rhetoric] (PA-02; A-04; PA-05).

> 'Generally speaking, without a reference to Portugal, if you have a secular state but you use secularism to discriminate Islam and then you use the "cultural question" to say that "I do not practice but this is my culture" … In Portugal, the State is a secular State, but you have a lot of people involved in the State apparatus that is not secular, and this not a conspiracy theory, there is a strategy from the Catholic Church to have influence. A Secular State means that religion does not influence the State, but there is a Concordat… (…) I do not understand these ambiguities… because politicians

> do not want to antagonise the Catholic Church, it represents a lot of voters and they have a large infrastructure that the State depends on it.' (A-04)
>
> 'For many years, jurists, constitutionalists, have justified the Concordat arguing that the majority of population is Catholic… this has changed a little bit.' (A-03)
>
> 'There are structural aspects that show Islamophobia at the State level. We have the Concordat, this means that the State has a relationship with the Catholic Church where there is a shared management of the institutional, symbolic moments of the Catholic community in Portugal. This relationship does not exist regarding Muslims. We have not seen any actual dialogue between the state and Muslim leaders concerning the socio-economic situation of Muslims. There is a high instrumentalisation [of Muslim communities] that takes place during (electoral) campaigns or, often, a sort of blackmailing, that is: when there is a serious international incident, the Muslim community is obliged to say that it condemns that and has to prove that is keen on participating in political and religious ecumenism. All the public initiatives that tried to join all the religions, sponsored by the authority of the President of the Republic ... [State, Church] they have the privilege of saying that this is done for you [Muslims] to show that you behave well'. (PA-02)

- The principle of secularism and religious freedom is mobilised to make an apology for Western modernity as the only political horizon [countering religious (in)tolerance discourse] (P-01; PA-02).

- Challenging the idea of a harmonious relation between the State, legal provisions and freedom of religion; there is discrimination, but fear of public debate and challenging power relations (for instance, in employment), silences these practices [countering religious (in)tolerance discourse].

> 'The fact that Portugal is a Catholic country, culturally speaking, on the one hand, and the supposed normative secularism, on the other, contribute to a situation where issues such as halal meat are not discussed as questions in which that the State should intervene. This affect people's lives and the State should take initiatives on this. The Portuguese State does not reserve any day for Muslims to commemorate their festivities, in comparison to other people that, being Christians or not, have the right to the Christmas holidays'. (PA-05)
>
> 'In practice, the law of Freedom of Religion in Portugal is not respected… nobody takes the risk of challenging employers to have the right to perform the prayers, and enforce the law.' (IA-05)

> '[the implementation of the law of Freedom of Religion] is very important to us, because many people [in our community] cannot come to perform the prayers, the ceremony on Friday, because they are busy in the workplace and sometimes when they ask for permission to come [to the Mosque], they [the employers] usually do not agree. They do not agree.' (IA-08)
>
> 'There are many schools that do not accept our demands [regarding Halal meals]. I have already received complaints by some parents asking us to see what we could do [at the Mosque]. Some parents prefer to pick their children up at lunch time, go home, and then come back to school'. (IA-08)

III. (INSTITUTIONAL) ISLAMOPHOBIA, RACISM and WOMEN

The interrelatedness between Islamophobia and racism has been pointed out throughout the interviews, and the need to analyse the legacies of post-colonial politics of *integration*, racialization and migration. Views expressed the need to critically engage with the dominant idea conveyed by decisions makers that 'in Portugal, we have "good Muslims" (…) who are moderate people – 'just like us' (Araújo, 2017, pp. 10-11). This idea is seen as connected to the increasing centrality of policies to combat terrorism and the discourse on "radicalisation" that fuels differentiation and hierarchisation of Muslim communities. The views expressing the need for a politicisation of the debate on Islamophobia and everyday discrimination practices against Muslims, also point at the split between racism and Islamophobia: although many black Muslims experience both oppressions – Islamophobia and racism –, the former is downplayed and invisibilised. Issues of class are also seen as crucial. It is considered that, in the Portuguese context, the expression of racism and the identification of Portugueseness with whiteness is more evident than Islamophobia, but this does not mean that it is not expressed at an institutional level, in the media and public commentary. Moral panics centred on 'the oppressed Muslim woman' and the 'radicalised Muslim man' are considered by several participants as key issues to unravel how Islamophobia operates within institutional spheres – academia, the judiciary, social welfare services, local and national policy making.

▪ Uncovering institutionalised forms of Islamophobia and their relation to institutional racism (e.g. Muslims' everyday interactions with social servants, practitioners or social assistants, show a pattern of interpreting situations and Muslim families that are dehumanising),[24] and the complicity and responsibility of dominant, respectful political parties, from the right and the left political spectrum in its silencing. [Countering the denial of Islamophobia and

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[24] The legal case *Soares de Melo v Portugal* at the ECtHR (ruled in 2016), application No.72850/14, was discussed by two participants (NPO-01; PA-02). The applicant was a black Muslim woman, Cape Verdean national, living in Portugal. In 2012, six of her ten children were taken into care with a view to their adoption. The applicant, who lived in severe conditions of poverty, was coerced to undergo sterilization. Racism was not an issue raised in the ECtHR ruling and in relation to the applicant's Islamic faith, the tribunal stated that the Portuguese judicial authorities did not consider her 'cultural differences' during the process (*Soares de Melo v Portugal*: para. 118), see also: Ba, 2013; David, 2016.

racism; countering the preclusion of the debate to the presence of extreme right movements].

> 'In my experience working with women, they suffer double discrimination, they are black and Muslim. Their experience with social workers, public servants, is that they criticise them: if they [couple] do not sleep in the same bed, if they are not married… There is a framework that limit their opportunities. Social workers are standardised; this is why we use the term "institutional racism": [Muslim] women that are able to get a job, they must change their clothing – to take off the headscarf – and this has happened since 2007… before the visibility of terrorist attacks… [Social workers] tell them: "You are not in your country", "Allah is not watching"'. (NPO-01)
>
> 'The fact that the extreme right in Portugal is not relevant, this should not prevent us from having a more serious discussion on Islamophobia. (...) The Left? There is a limited capacity for the discussion of this issue. There is more emphasis on what? In denouncing practices of an imperialist nature; the imperial, colonial past; there is a small possibility here for a deeper critique'. (P-01)
>
> 'The response to combat against the far right's Islamophobia is the organization of the left. There is not a coherent project, and the populist right has a stronger discourse. The moderate centre is also to blame; it has no position. (…). It's an internal problem within the political Left'. (PA-04)
>
> 'It's very interesting for me, as a Portuguese, a left-wing Muslim… it is something I've been struggling a lot with: racism and unacknowledged Islamophobia of the Portuguese Left.' (PA-05)

- The heterogeneity of Muslim communities should be seen in terms of different power relations and economic status, some of them are rooted in the historical relation with the colonial administration (e.g. some Muslim communities are complicit with whiteness and the silencing of experiences of racism and institutional Islamophobia). There is a need of political visibility of how different Muslim communities, how black Muslims experience Islamophobia: to challenge the discourse on integration and the idea of the 'good Muslim' that helps to legitimise the increasing vigilance of Muslims communities [Countering the discourse on (un)assimilability; countering the 'good Muslim/bad Muslim' discourse].

> 'The Muslim community in Portugal is invisible. It is (…) manipulated to show how to be an exemplary community and the media love to do this (…) and the [Muslim] leaders in Portugal – and I completely disagree with [this point of view] and I confront it – their speech is "we are like you", they are always apologizing, while in the UK there is not such a discourse. There is

> also [in the UK] a certain class that is like that, they identify more with the establishment, with the elite, but there is ... there is much pride: "I am what I am, I can be different, I can use completely different clothing, and this is not only with Muslims; an African can walk dressed in Nigerian clothes, for example, and [he] is accepted as a British Nigerian. In Portugal, you can be a third-generation immigrant, but if you do not wear the clothing that is predominant in Portugal, he will always be the foreigner. (…) The idea that there is no Islamophobia in Portugal, it is more about maintaining unequal power relations, keeping [the Muslim community] invisible and presenting it as an exemplary community . (PA-04)
>
> 'There should be a process of visibilisation of Muslim communities, their realities, beyond the 'they are good, they are few' discourse. (…) We need more social policies in the areas of education and housing'. (P-01)
>
> 'For a long time, there has been a strong interlocutor in Portugal, the Islamic Community of Lisbon. The CIL was the interlocutor between the State and the wider society. However, due to the absence of any direct, obvious confrontation in the public sphere regarding the presence of Muslims in Portugal, the debate [on Islamophobia] has had a low profile. It began to gain more visibility when other communities started to raise issues of discrimination. We have communities that organise themselves on the basis of their religious affiliation but they have citizenship claims. (…) They have raised the issue of education, employment, access to housing. They are communities [on the periphery of Metropolitan Lisbon] that have been greatly affected by the housing problem. They have community projects on bilingual education, literacy (…). Then we have lobbying organisations, communities from Bangladesh that have pressed the city council to have places of worship. (…) All these organisations establish their presence in the public space, they demand dignity, recognition of their faith. And if this happens, it is because the state is Islamophobic, if not, there would be no need. (PA-02)

- Anti-racist movements and the anti-racist political agenda need to engage with the struggle against islamophobia (PA-02; PA-03; NPO-01)

- There are feminist movements, also within the organisations led by racialised people, that are embracing Islamophobia; to counter this trend, Islamophobia needs to be seen as a political issue and for this, we need to construct a Muslim political subjectivity [countering sexism] (PA-02; PA-03).

- Challenging the narrative on Islam and gender inequality and sexism: this narrative is part of a wider discourse to project the self-image of the West/Europe as the land of women's rights and the identification of 'Portugueseness' with whiteness/'Europeanness' [Countering sexism] (P-01; PA-01; PA-05; IA-02; J-02).

'The West, Christians, they do not give a balanced critique; they do not criticize their own inequalities and do with the others [minority groups]'. (IA-02)

'Journalists fall into very simplistic narratives. The issues of Islam, Muslims in Europe, they are contemporary to the crisis in journalistic production; we never have time to do things in depth. But you have to think we cannot write by repetition: the "headscarf" issue, for example. I am against prohibitions because they have bad consequences and have brought about a problem that is secondary in most communities in Europe (…). It leads to the marginalization of women. It is a debate that is reductive and offensive to women. Stories from different angles have to be told: telling stories of Muslims who want to wear the headscarf and had to emigrate to countries that would allow it. We should look for other angles of the story that is never linear: girls that their mothers did not use it and they do, to make a point, as a reaction'. (J-02)

'This is a key question… on behalf of feminism, of the combat against "female genital mutilation", in Portugal, you find the harshest racism in the most progressive sectors. We have seen people engaged with the human rights struggle endorsing very racist, islamophobic comments, and this has paved the way for the stigmatization, the classification [of Muslim communities] and above all, for the complete belittling of Muslims communities…namely, black Muslim communities'. (PA-02)

'(…) dominant discourses use, in a selective and hypocritical manner, the issue of women – that exists in the Islamicate world – as an argument to justify, at a discursive level, practices of control… of political, social and cultural governance, and even military, that were already there'. (PA-05)

- The increasing centrality of counter-terrorism measures and the discourse on the radicalisation of young Muslims show the alignment of the Portuguese state with hegemonic EU politics that and it is revealing of institutional Islamophobia and increasing everyday experiences of Islamophobia (e.g. the vigilance of Muslim people) [Countering the discourse on 'radicalised' Muslims] (PA-01; PA-02; IA-06)

'What has worried us since 9/11 is that the Islamic community is always under surveillance'. (PA-04)

'9/11 completely changes the [public] rhetoric. We begin to have opinion makers that consider it important that we have a policy for monitoring the presence of Muslims in the national territory. (…)
From 2010 onwards, we started to have not only security experts and opinion makers that speak about the danger of terrorism in Europe… we

started having manifestations of the extreme right (…) against the presence of Muslims. And the truth is that... everything has consequences. It is not by chance that whenever there were extreme-right demonstrations against the presence of Muslims in Portugal, they were always held in Mouraria. This has a symbolic, historical character. The idea conveyed by the official rhetoric of the potential danger in that place, and because it was a more visible location, a very central location [in Lisbon], with Muslims or people perceived as Muslims'. (PA-02)

'[Since the early 2000s] there is a large number of immigrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and also from Afghanistan. There is a concern about places of worship: who attends to these places, who finances them, how they work, how they relate to other places in Europe that are potentially suspect. This rhetoric begins to appear in the press through the voice of experts who comment on international events, in the EU, and, in most cases, they are people with responsibilities in the definition of strategies to combat terrorism. The debate gains a greater intensity, in my opinion, when the municipality of Lisbon decides (…) to support the construction of the new mosque [in Mouraria]: it was contested from left to right. (...) The city council supported the donation of the land, it did not give a penny, [but] people began to say that you could not use the public funds… This was simply a cynical approach, what they did not really want was a mosque there. The real debate was focused on the suspicion of who would attend this mosque because most of the people who go to that area are from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Discussions began as to whether that location could be a place for terrorism recruitment and the debate escalated, with demonstrations organised by the far right.' (PA-02)

4. Concluding remarks: national significance and impact

The preliminary findings of our analysis of counter-narratives show the impact of dominant understandings of Islamophobia as 'hatred and fear of Islam'. This fear would be fuelled mainly by ignorance of Islam and, more broadly, a lack of an adequate education in the history of religions. Dominant understandings of Islamophobia tend to frame Muslimness in terms of a religious identity that is subjected to prejudiced representations. Overall, these 'conventional strategies' have more national significance – they are present in public commentary, academic discourse, prominent Islamic associations, journalistic work and official State rhetoric – than political strategies.

Dominant views have been shaped by two key discourses and political processes that reinforce each other and are mediated by the figure of the *good/moderate Muslim, integrated into and faithful to the Portuguese/European identity*: on the one hand, the view that Islamophobia is not a relevant issue in Portugal, and its interrelation to the presumed Portuguese pioneering

ability for intercultural dialogue and leading best integration practices. The *shared* colonial history is usually seen as an asset, for instance regarding cultural 'assimilability' and language, for the integration of Muslims (NPO-03; IA-04; IA-05; IA-06). In this discursive field, it is common the comparison with France, as an example of an extreme secularist approach in politics (P-02; A-03; A-04; J-02). On the other, the view that Portugal is also inserted in the European and global combat against terrorism; although it has not been the target of any attack, there is a concern with and surveillance of processes of 'radicalisation' taking place within Muslim communities in the country and, in particular, in Metropolitan Lisbon. Since 9/11, public policing, academic expertise and journalistic work have increasingly invested in these issues.

In this context, 'political strategies' that engage with the political contours of Islamophobia challenge the assumptions supporting the reproduction of the figure of *the good/moderate Muslim*. They also challenge the culturalisation, racialisation and nationalisation of politics and religious belonging (see Mamdani 2005; Brown 2008). Although the absence of similar studies on Islamophobia in Portugal, and the limitations and scope of our fieldwork demand a cautious approach, we can point out two main issues that have more national significance:

- Education and history teaching: the need to critically reconstruct the narrative about the formation of the Portuguese nation-state and the *Reconquista* presented in textbooks and in-class teaching that constructs Muslims as the 'historical enemy'. The views expressed are located in a spectrum that includes more conventional strategies towards reform and inclusion, and more critical strategies that demand also a broader critique of the relationship between Portuguese national identity and colonialism.

- State-religion relations and the Concordat: the privileges granted to the Catholic Church within a State defined as secular has always been an issue of controversy that gained momentum in specific periods – such as during the discussion of the Freedom of Religion Bill. The power of the Catholic Church, and the maintenance of a monocultural approach that shapes educational programmes and access to the job market make it difficult an adequate application of the law and the effective tackling of Islamophobic practices that remain silenced.

The impact of counter-narratives across local communities can be seen in relation to two key issues:

- Islamophobia and racism in institutional settings: political activists have emphasized the need for increasing the political visibility of different Muslim communities and their experiences of Islamophobia and racism. The challenge to the official rhetoric of the *good/moderate Muslims* and a *benign* State administration, considers the existence of practices of control and assimilation that pass unnoticed, above all regarding women. The issue of racism is considered central and also ambivalent regarding Islamophobia: on the one hand, it is considered that Islamophobia is mostly expressed in Portugal throughout the reproduction of Eurocentrism and the identification with whiteness and European modernity (more explicitly in the problematisation of Muslim women); on the other hand, racism against Black Muslims, for instance, is seen either as more relevant than Islamophobia or with more

political purchase. Racism and integration discourses differentiate Muslim communities hierarchically.

- Counter-terrorism policies and surveillance: the discourse on the danger of 'radicalisation' of Muslims is perceived as encouraging racialisation of and differentiation within Muslim communities. The combat against terrorism needs to be analysed within imperialist geopolitics and the alignment of Portugal with the global, hegemonic rhetoric. The discourse on 'radicalisation' legitimises surveillance of Muslims (places of worship, bank accounts, clothing) and more explicit expressions of Islamophobia.

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