

ISLAMOPHOBIA IN PORTUGAL, BEYOND THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Abstract: The relationship between Islam and Portugal is intimately tied to processes of national formation and diverse in terms of the key protagonists, historical periods, and political conjunctures that it evokes – hence it is particularly suited for the contextualised study of Islamophobia. Drawing on a larger European study, and specifically on discourse analysis and empirical research on the Portuguese context, this article examines, on the one hand, narratives on Muslims and Islam circulating in the academic literature and in cyberspace (2000–20); on the other, different expressions of Islamophobia – individual and institutional (Sayyid 2014a): i) a case of mosque vandalism and practices of media reporting; ii) concerns regarding educational equality raised by research participants, namely regarding school organisation and history teaching. Engaging with the intrinsic instability of the category Muslim – across historical junctures, political contexts, and academic disciplines – this article calls for an engagement with Islamophobia beyond the national register (Vakil 2010), revealing how the wider circulation of public discourse and interventions constrains the possibility of articulating Muslim political subjectivities.

Key words: Muslims – Islamophobia – Portugal – academic knowledge – discourse in cyberspace – media analysis – mosque vandalism – state education – history teaching

Introduction: Researching Islamophobia

Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness. (APPBM 2020: 11)

Popularised in Europe by the 1997 Runnymede Trust Report *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All*, the concept of Islamophobia has remained elusive in public debates and frequently disputed from varied epistemological angles: underdefined or circumvented in the literature on Muslims in Europe (Sayyid 2014a), seen as a conceptual inflation with little empirical grounds (Allen 2010a), and a contested PC category intended to “silence” those who criticise Islam in a “*gone too far*” multiculturalism (Tyrrer 2010), or a diversion from discussions on racism and

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material inequalities (Husain 2020). Its analytical edge is captured in *Thinking through Islamophobia: Global Perspectives* (Sayyid and Vakil 2010), which offers a collection of key texts pondering on the relation between Islamophobia and attendant understandings and phenomena, including anti-Islam hatred (e.g. Allen 2010a; Vakil 2010), the racialisation of Muslims (e.g. Meer and Modood, 2010), and neo-Orientalism (e.g. Birt 2010; Tyrer 2010).

Following the works by T. Asad (2003), M. Mamdani (2004), C. Allen (2010b), A. Vakil (2010), S. Sayyid (2014), this article approaches debates on Islamophobia as denoting specific junctures when the figure of the “Muslim” is constituted as a problem for domestic and global governmentalities, within a reading of the West and its history as the linear unfolding of Modernity, Enlightenment, and Liberal Democracy. It operates through the racialisation of bodies similarly marked by religion, territory, culture, history, which requires an engagement with the “overlapping networks of relations” producing Europeanness in specific cultural contexts (Sayyid 2010: 13). The study of Islamophobia follows a threefold approach. First, a historically informed understanding of processes of national formation in which anti-Muslim hatred and discrimination became meaningful in Europe. On the one hand, we need to consider the long historical entanglement of the categories of race and religion (Quijano 2000; Fredrickson 2002; Mielants and Grosfoguel 2006), and their articulation with culture, language, territory, and custom in the emergence of early modern notions of Europeanness (Asad 2003). This approach helps overcome the dead end of positivistic conceptualisations (i.e. biological-turned-cultural racism, perceived as *explaining* Islamophobia), to consider instead how the categories of race and religion have worked alongside each other, marking specific bodies in certain socio-political contexts. On the other, the connection between past and present Islamophobia must be perceived in its complexity: rather than the mere legacy of persisting colonial continuities, we need to appreciate how the relation between Islam and the West is constantly being refashioned through a variety of repertoires that borrow significantly from colonial tropes but are not totally reducible to them. Following Chris Allen’s analysis, we need to distinguish accounts that see Islamophobia as a constant phenomenon since the Crusades and other critical junctures (2010b: 21), and those that perceive contemporary Islamophobia as linked but not totally dependent on historical context, where history provides the frames of reference and symbolic repertoires of contemporary Islamophobia but does not quite *explain* it (Allen 2010b: 14, 34–5). Islamophobia in Europe is hence latent, characterised by “cyclical periods of dormancy and intensification that reach epidemical levels following certain events” (Allen 2010b: 15).

Secondly, methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Schiller 2002) is to be overcome by considering the wider circulation of narratives about Islam and Muslims and their recontextualisation in different national contexts. Such expressions are

tied to specific historical developments, relationships, and narratives – and cannot neatly be translated into *national Islamophobias* (Vakil 2010: 32–3). Whilst discussions of Islamophobia in Europe have been tied to specific events that mobilise the figure of the Muslim – in contexts such as the UK, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany – their reverberations extend to nations where such debates previously lacked traction, specifically concerning the Muslim population (see Law et al. 2019). For example, the 2005 *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons affair in Denmark and the 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* attack in France fed public debates in the Portuguese context that stirred up wide anti-Muslim hostility in a milieu where debate on freedom of speech regarding Islam mobilised the anti-fascist tradition against the dictatorial rule of António O. Salazar’s New State, thus framed in the lexicon of *censorship*. Previous coherent national expressions of Islamophobia are not required for a specific social and political issue regarding Islam to become salient: underlying notions of Europeanness, in their relationship to nationhood and race, are at play. Shortly after the Madrid-Atocha bombings on 11 March, for instance, the media amplified fears of a terrorist attack in Portugal just before the Euro 2004 Football Championship took place on national soil, which helped reimagine the country as a *European* nation: a fertile ground for “Islamic fundamentalism” due to its alleged historical tradition of tolerance. That such announced threat was then publicly dismissed is less relevant than how the possibility of a common enemy seemed to place Portugal on the map of global terrorism, and symbolically in Europe.¹ Hence, when considered beyond its national registers, the tropes of Islamophobia reveal themselves as relatively stable, however adaptable: Muslim populations originating from a variety of contexts across the world are perceived as pre-modern, backward, and barbaric, which is explained through distance from Europeanness (see Said 2003 [1978]; Asad 2003). Hence, although requiring context-sensitive approaches, a fruitful research strategy engages with how Islamophobia feeds off and consolidates imaginaries of Europe.

Thirdly, considering the “contingent racial and cultural dynamics of the macro-historical juxtaposition between ‘Europe’ and ‘Islam’” (Meer and Modood 2010: 71), a performative approach is particularly suitable to a nuanced account of Islamophobia which affects a broad category of people who are united not so much by cultural, linguistic, territorial or phenotypical markers, but precisely by their (racialised) construction as Muslims – Islamophobia being that which gives the “Muslim” category its substance (Meer and Modood 2010: 77). Hence, this article follows the performative approach proposed by S. Sayyid: “Islamophobia is a form of racialized governmentality. It is more than prejudice or ignorance; it is a series of interventions and classifications that affect the well-being of populations designated as Muslims” (2014a: 19). Sayyid draws attention to the political dimension – and not just religious, cultural, or emotional aspects – of hostility

towards Muslims. Drawing on Brian Klug's definition of anti-Semitism, he argues that "more than an expression of hatred or fear, Islamophobia should be understood as neutralizing the ability of Muslims as Muslims to project themselves into the future" (2014a: 14). Islamophobia is thus not merely a morally condemnable discourse, but a phenomenon that greatly impacts on Muslims, however contingently (Allen 2010a: 55).

This article accounts for research on the Portuguese context which was part of a larger international project mapping out the contemporary expressions of Islamophobia in eight European countries, as well as the counter-narratives that are emerging to combat it (Law et al. 2019; see also Araújo et al. 2019).² The study reported here focuses on the understandings and manifestations of Islamophobia, unraveled through qualitative methodologies:

- i) A meta-analysis of the academic literature on Muslims, Islam, and Islamophobia in Portugal, covering the period 2000–20; this aimed at mapping general patterns and trends, rather than being exhaustive.
- ii) The collection and analysis of relevant content in cyberspace published since 2000; over 100 entries were analysed, mainly reports in news outlets online, opinion pieces, comments sections, personal blogs.³
- iii) Semi-structured interviews with almost 30 participants, including institutional and civil society representatives, Muslim religious and community leaders.⁴

Engaging with knowledge production, public discourse, media frameworks, and empirical data concerning Islam and Muslims in Portugal and more widely in Europe, this article aims to discuss the myriad ways in which Islamophobia is being framed, performed, and naturalised.

Muslims of Portugal: National Entanglements

To contextualise the contemporary debates in Portugal, three key historical periods and processes were selected to unravel the positioning of Islam and Muslims in the national imaginary.

Iberian Muslims, outcast: "reconquest", expulsion, and national formation

The Islamic State released a new video in which it promises more attacks and threatens Portugal and Spain again. "The Iberian Peninsula will never be forgotten." Back in November, the terrorist organisation had warned of the objective of recovering Al-Andalus, the name given by the Muslims to the Iberian Peninsula, which they controlled between the 8th and 15th centuries. (*Diário de Notícias*, 31 January 2016)

Public discourse has often portrayed Portugal as the oldest nation-state in Europe, characterised by ethno-racial, cultural, linguistic, and religious homogeneity – a narrative crucial to the construction of national identity.⁵ Founded in 1143, Portugal was recognised as sovereign by the Pope Alexander III in 1179 and settled its mainland borders with the 1297 Treaty of Alcañices, signed with the King of Castile. The process known as *Reconquista* – whereby the Christian kingdom conquered territory southwest of *Al-Andalus* (eight-thirteenth centuries, until the 1249 conquest of Faro, Algarve) – is perceived as defining symbolic national borders, tying the territory to an imagined coherent and unified national identity (Vakil 2003).

The analysis of foundational narratives *vis-à-vis* Islam requires consideration simultaneously of the *erasure* of diversity and the *production* of difference: on the one hand, how the national imaginary is anchored in the assumption of an Islam purged from the boundaries of the newly founded nation (e.g. n. 5). In the late Middle Ages, Portugal's hybrid demographics combined Arab, Berber, Celtic, Germanic, Lusitanian, Phoenician, and Roman populations. Whilst the Muslim population remained in the territory after the twelfth century, such presence has been practically erased within the hegemonic narrative of a (Christian) nation built *against* Islam (imagining its due evaporation from national soil). How the complex history of violence against Portugal's historical Others, that shaped conditions for greater national homogeneity and attendant racial hierarchies to which early modern processes are particularly relevant, continues to be widely evaded. For instance, in the medieval period, Muslims were part of the social, political, and economic fabric of the nation, yet governed by a legal apparatus with important exclusionary dispositions and power asymmetries – the increasing disciplining of Muslim (and Jewish) bodies through distinctive clothing and segregated spaces in urban areas (*mourarias* and *judiarias*), as well as forced conversion and expulsion from national territory by royal decree in 1496, is illustrative (Barros 2019).

The erasure of diversity and violence helps construct a coherent, purified nation. This is despite prominent historians having proposed that Portugal was built on two cultural and civilisation centres: Islamic and Christian (e.g. Borges Coelho 1989; Oliveira Marques 1993). The downplaying of the heterogeneity and complexity of such situations has further been entangled in long-established narratives on national formation, perceiving the Islamic world (and Christianity) as monolithic and necessarily in conflict, as Adel Sidarus suggests: “In truth, those wars and invasions of the eleventh-twelfth centuries were not wars between universal religions, but between peoples ‘regimented’ through sectarian and aggressive religious ideologies” (1997: 6). The population conquered in the making of the Portuguese nation was not *purely* “Arab” or “Maghrebin,” and the Muslim protagonists defeated can be perceived as autochthone (16); neat categories such as “Muslim” and “Christian”

hence overlook the complex historical relation of peoples in the Iberian Peninsula (Sidas 1997: 16). This points to the inherently unstable character of widely circulating West/Islam polarisations (see Said 2003 [1978]).

Casting colonial Muslims in the Empire under siege

It can be argued that this Portuguese humanism, which some authors have expressly cited as specific, is still felt today by the host countries of those who emigrate here. It translates not only into an attitude of respect for the “other,” as defined by his/her culture, but also a rare ability to adapt to other cultures without losing one’s own identity, whilst practicing miscegenation without prejudice. In our analysis we would therefore venture to say that the Portuguese practiced interculturalism by vocation. (Lopes-Cardoso 2008: 26)

A second key historical process concerning populations designated as Muslim regards the crisis brought with the end of empire. Following the 1955 Bandung Conference, and responding to political pressure by national liberation movements in Africa and the United Nations to grant independence to the colonies (then “overseas provinces”), the New State regime (*Estado Novo*) espoused a trope of *benevolent colonialism* that helped to create a facade of harmonious relations between colonisers and colonised – drawing on assumptions of the national uniqueness of the Portuguese as heirs of historical contacts with Moorish and Jewish populations in the Iberian Peninsula (Castelo 2019).⁶ With mounting international critiques of colonial exploitation and racial discrimination, official rhetoric took harbour in legal reform (abolishing the Indigenous Code in 1961, granting Portuguese citizenship to the colonised: Macagno 1999). Muslims, previously considered the foes of the Christian faith and nation by the New State, were mobilised in the construction of this trope. Their claims to represent “over two-million” people in the colonial nation in the 1960s – to attain political legitimacy next to a metropolitan context where Muslims represented a few dozen – were soon appropriated by Salazar’s regime to advertise a multi-continental, multiracial, and pluri-religious Portugal (Vakil 2004: 299). In 1968, the official recognition of Islam as a religious confession by the New State dictatorship took place (Vakil 2004: 299). The constitutional review of 1951 had declared Catholicism the “religion of the Portuguese Nation”, granted special privileges, allowing the possibility of other religions to request legal recognition (Miranda 1986: 122). In 1971, the Law on Religious Freedom foresaw equal treatment of all confessions based on their representation – Catholicism was the “traditional” religion of the country (Miranda 1986: 123). Political negotiations and legal arrangements took place in tandem with processes of co-optation – which interrupted previous official suspicion of conversions to Islam amongst Africans, perceived as hampering the

“civilisational mission” – with Muslims cast as supporters of the colonial regime’s propaganda (Vakil 2004; Machaqueiro 2011). With the 1974 Revolution restoring democracy in Portugal, a shift in political discourse – fostering international solidarity and an opening to the Arab world – came to shape negotiations between Muslims and the state on the basis of a cultural politics of identity and recognition (Vakil 2004: 300–1): since 1975, mosques and other sites of religious worship emerged, mainly in the Lisbon metropolitan area and in the Algarve (see Tiesler 2000), and later in most districts across the country.

Muslims, recast in immigrant Portugal

[Muslims in Portugal are] a very responsible, very participatory immigrant population, which has also known how to make a very important contribution to the Portuguese community . . . we have been lucky with the immigrant citizens, knowing how to live in this diversity. . . . we have had a easier job here because you don’t have issues of religion linked especially to Islamophobia that have been raised in other European countries . . . (High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue representative, interview in 2010 within research on history education)

With the national independence of the former colonies in the mid-1970s, the Muslim population – increasing amongst the populations in African contexts, particularly Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau – significantly diminished. Still, migration flows to Portugal in the decades following the 1974 Revolution brought an increase of Muslim population. Whilst various official sources⁷ and academic articles have provided tentative figures, a more accurate estimate may be provided by the organised community (see Tiesler 2000; Vakil 2004). The Islamic Community of Lisbon (CIL – Comunidade Islâmica de Lisboa) estimates that about 50,000 Muslims currently live in Portugal (0.5%).⁸ According to available information, the demographics of the Muslim population have changed across time: in the 1950s-1960s, it was mainly constituted by students and other elites (e.g. Indian elites from Mozambique in retail and banking); since the mid-1970s, families coming from Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau; and later, immigrants from Northern Africa (mainly Morocco and Algeria), Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the members of diverse embassies from Arab countries accredited in Portugal.⁹ The religious population is diverse: Sunni Islam is majoritarian and composed of a variety of communities, religious practices, and experiences; Shi’a Islam, formed both by Ismaili and Isna Ashari; and Ahmadiya (Vakil 2004). A significant part of the Muslim population has been constituted by Portuguese citizens (Tiesler 2000), diversely and contingently racialised in relation to wider international tropes.

In the last decade, in addition to the Muslim post-colonial population, there has been an increasing migrant population that is socio-economically vulnerable. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemics exposed the heightened precariousness experienced by immigrants from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Thailand who work in the agricultural sector in Southern Portugal – increasing following Brexit. These populations, many of whom are Muslims, are often understood as immigrants with no established links to the country, arriving due to changes in world economies and Portugal’s integration in international immigration networks – occluding how colonial history continues to shape patterns of immigration (e.g. from Bangladesh: see April 2005: 853ff.).

Explaining the Muslim: Academic Agendas and Public Discourse (2000–20)

The three junctures described above help situate contemporary debates on Muslims and Islam in academic research and discourse in cyberspace, to which now we turn.

Muslims and Islamophobia in the social sciences

Where do young Portuguese Muslims go after dinner?

(*Público*, 1 December 2007)¹⁰

In the social sciences, the academic literature analysed tends to focus on Muslims, rather than Islamophobia, following key disciplinary traditions: anthropology, sociology, history, international relations, and political science. The academic agenda began consolidating about two decades ago (suggesting that interest was sparked by international events), and it continues to flourish (signalled by the significant increase in postgraduate theses by younger social scientists).

The analysis of academic work produced in Portugal since 2000 identified four areas of enquiry. First, there is increasing discussion on terrorism and security threats in Europe, and hence, so the argument goes, in Portugal. Such research originates in the traditions of political science and international relations, focusing on *Jihad* and “Islamic fundamentalism” (e.g. Vegar 2007; Raposo 2009; Costa and Pinto 2012) – which have found lack of expression in Portugal so far, possibly due to its little geopolitical relevance on the map of the global “War on Terror” (see Kundnani 2014). A related focus is the question of “radicalisation” and “securitisation” (Silva 2011) – which the media have been fuelling in recent years by highlighting cases of individuals joining ISIS/DAESH. These studies help construct the idea that Portugal is under threat of terrorism due to its history as part of *Al Andalus* (*Gharb Al Andalus*) – a territory which the Jihadists would wish to

reclaim.¹¹ Conferring relevance on the *possibility* of a threat, these studies project Portugal as European/Western, whilst constructing Muslims as eternal outsiders to Portuguese society and Islamophobia as self-victimisation.

Secondly, and most expressive, is research addressing the contemporary presence of Muslims within broader debates on immigration in Portugal. This literature, mainly in the anthropological and sociological traditions, reports a diversity of migration trajectories, religious practices, issues of social and cultural integration, and the everyday experiences of Muslims (e.g. Abranches 2007; Mapril 2005; Faria 2007). Studies tend to focus on specific national populations, such as Guineans, Moroccans, and Bangladeshis, deploying an ethnographic approach to detail the ways of life, the formation of identities and, implicitly, their compatibility with an idea of the West. Whilst discrimination is acknowledged, Islamophobia is not discussed (even when the term is deployed). The enquiry into gender issues is pivotal in many of these texts (e.g. Abranches 2007; Faria 2007), and often perceived as the *real* problem of discrimination affecting Muslims in Portugal.

Thirdly, there is sociodemographic analysis of “religions minorities” (e.g. Vilaça 1999) and studies of the Muslim population in Portugal (e.g. Tiesler 2000, 2005). Research within this line of enquiry tends to unravel the (prejudiced) representations of Islam and Muslims in specific spheres (for instance, in the media, e.g. Ferreira 2016, and justice, e.g. Jerónimo 2016). The focus turns away from the figure of the Muslim to interrogate post-colonial institutions and conditions. Although this strand of work does point to prejudice against, and discrimination of, Muslims, it is hesitant in identifying and examining Islamophobia as institutionalised in the power structures and life spheres analysed.

Finally, there are debates about national formation and the historical presence of Islam. Particularly following the 1974 April Revolution, Portugal witnessed the publication of works that present the notion of an “Islamic Period” in history – crucially, envisaging Muslims *within* the national imaginary (Vakil 2003). Particularly relevant works, mostly in history and anthropology, include the archaeological work by Cláudio Torres in Southern Portugal, publications by Filomena Barros (2007, 2019) on the history of Muslims in medieval and early modern times, AbdoolKarim Vakil’s works (e.g. 2003, 2004) on Islam, national identity and history, Mário Machaqueiro’s studies (e.g. 2011) of colonial policy in Mozambique and the construction of a Portuguese Islam, and the meta-analysis of studies on Arab and Muslim populations in Portugal by Cardeira da Silva (2005). These works engage with issues of knowledge production, the constitutive nature of Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, and (post-) colonial continuities in state relations with Muslims in Portugal – hence opening the possibility of interrogating wider imaginaries of belonging.

The very scarcity of studies on Islamophobia may certainly be fuelling the broader perception of its absence in Portugal (Rosário, Santos and Lima 2011; Dias and Dias

2012; Mapril 2012). References to Islamophobia are not completely absent from academic enquiry: studies on Muslim populations in the third strand refer to specific cases but do not offer a systematic analysis of how it operates in the national context – despite the data they themselves present, which not only allow for such exploration, but require a more substantive analysis than showing evidence of stereotypes. A contrasting example can be found in the work by Mapril, who follows S. Sayyid and sees Islamophobia as “a set of speeches laden with moral panics and simultaneously a global process of racialization of the figure of the Muslim” (2012: 141, footnote). Interestingly, most works invoke the authority of inter/national organisations (e.g. the Runnymede Trust, the EUMC and subsequent FRA, the UN) as a way to legitimise deploying the term Islamophobia, eschewing a genealogy of the concept long before its popularisation by the Runnymede Trust (see Vakil 2010).

These disciplinary agendas are not nationally specific; further comparative research can help to unravel the invisibilisation of Islamophobia in academic studies on Muslims.

Public discourse in cyberspace

Islam uses primitive violence against Israel and the West, and we have been too tolerant; but we either stop playing the fool or we will be blown up. (Online comment, 2014)

We are entitled to forbid, as they want to impose on us: forbidding Christmas, taking crosses out of state schools, dictating female dress. (Online comment, 2017)

Online discourse is a privileged object for analysing Islamophobic narratives due to its role in mediating and amplifying traditional and recent forms of hatred and abuse (Matamoros-Fernandez 2017). In Portugal, this is a recently emerging topic of research, most often tied to a focus on the “refugee crisis” and increasing populism (e.g. Santos, Sousa, and Vieira 2020).

According to Sayyid’s proposal (2014a), the expression *hate narrative* is understood in its performative dimension, as the discourse and acts specifically targeting – and defining – people associated with Islamic religious beliefs. Across the narratives analysed below, Muslim and Islam are used interchangeably. Islam is ambiguously perceived, as a faith, a civilisation, a society, and a political system; in any case, fixed, essentialised and made coherent (see Said 2003 [1978]). The following two interrelated clusters emerged.

Islam as pre-modern, barbaric, and irrational

The perception of Islam as fostering violence is probably the most frequent notion circulating in cyberspace, both in common sense and amongst the educated public.

This narrative focuses on terrorism and security-related events as demonstrative of both the violent nature of Islam and its refusal of Europeanness; it is implied that Europe overcame the use of violence with the Holocaust, a defining moment in its identity and solidarities (Asad 2003). Mamdani argued that discussions of political violence regarding so-called pre-modern ideas are generated through the prose of culture (*culture talk*), which “attributes political violence to the absence of modernity” (2004: 4). Culture/modernity is, in this sense, “the dividing line that separates those who are in favor of a peaceful, civic existence and those inclined to terror” (Mamdani 2004: 18). So-called “Islamic civilisation” is hence perceived as incompatible with Western liberal democracies (see Sayyid 2014b); those in the West protesting otherwise are perceived as victims to political correctness and cultural relativism. The European pathway to civilisational progress (i.e. Modernity, Enlightenment) is presumed as the template to which all civilisations should abide (Wallerstein 1997; Venn and Featherstone 2006); crucial to such “progress” is the separation of powers between church and state (Asad 2003; see Sayyid 2014b: 31–44), overcoming theocratic rule. This binary approach can also be observed in the discourse portraying the Islamic world as antinomic to (Western) democracy, the rule of law, or/and liberalism, deploying Saudi Arabia as exemplary. Eschewing history, such discourses attribute the propensity for autocracy and dictatorship to Islam and Muslim populations: these societies are perceived as having an *overwhelming* presence of religion, and Muslims as displaying a lack of autonomy in relation to religious authority, prone to be manipulated by irrational forces and hence against science and reason (see Alatas 2006). This is not a recent narrative: mid-nineteenth-century debates by French intellectuals, such as Ernest Renan, conceived of Islam as “hostile to science”, considering that science and philosophy “had only entered the Islamic world from non-Arab sources” (Mamdani 2004: 45). “Islamic civilisation” is denied its links to properties that define European/Western identity. One of the most common ways this is achieved is by negating Islam’s own essence, for example, through its representation as a “*carrier civilization* that helped bring important elements into Europe from outside, material and intellectual elements that were only contingently connected to Islam” (Asad 2003: 169).

Muslims as illiberal subjects prone to bigotry, misogyny, and homophobia

A second cluster of narratives focuses more closely on the figure of the (male) Muslim. The discourse that places women in an inferior and submissive position to that of the “hyper-sexist Muslim man” circulates most abundantly amongst Portuguese educated elites, including women who recognise that parity has not been achieved in the West. The policing of Muslim attitudes towards gender equality has increased since 9/11, often within what Razack (2004) called the logic of the triangle “Muslim woman in danger”, “dangerous Muslim man”, and “civilized European” (see Toldy 2012). In

Portugal, the main issues summoned to denote intrinsic gender inequality in Islam are wearing the *burka* or the *hijab*, so-called “forced marriages”, and lack of educational prospects. Significantly, gender was deployed as a key alibi in Afghanistan’s invasion, as Western forces rescued women from the Taliban (Puar 2007). Besides being seen as misogynist, Muslims are constructed as homophobic and against “progress” (i.e. not supporting liberal LGBTIQ groups). In Portugal, traditionally a very conservative country, the significant social and political change over the last decade towards a manifest increase in the defence of LGBTIQ rights has functioned, in the national imaginary, as a symbol of its European/Western character. Indeed, the depiction of Islam as fostering a set of retrograde and homophobic beliefs has been mobilised by states such as Israel to build an imaginary of a tolerant, gay-friendly, and even irreverent nation, attractive to Euro-American investment – *pinkwashing* the country’s occupation of Palestine as part of a modern and progressive civilisational endeavour (see Puar 2007).¹² Muslims are hence perceived as incapable of assimilating into “European values”.

Tolerance is understood as a pillar of *Western* civilisation and identity (Mamdani 2004); significantly, it is understood as pre-existing Muslim speech and action (i.e. “Westerns/Europeans” had been tolerant until event X – 9/11, March 2004, the murder of Theo van Gogh, July 2005, *Charlie Hebdo*, . . . – but “had enough”). The narrative on freedom of expression as Western was often deployed in social commentary and peaked during the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015, when prominent intellectuals rallied against those who had a critical stance and denounced Islamophobia. These narratives helped to continually mark difference: Muslims could only be assimilated upon giving up what many seem to consider “their essence”, something many do not seem to be willing to – remaining, therefore, *unassimilable* (Asad 2003: 169).

The construction of ontological *difference* in online discourse, clearly resonating in other national contexts (e.g. Law et al. 2019), *explains*, or renders *intelligible*, the Muslim to “unsuspecting” fellow citizens. In cyberspace, the figure of the “Muslim” reaches its utmost abstract and generic form: an empty vessel for the narratives of Western superiority and anxiety.

Enacting Islamophobia: Individual and Institutional Expressions

Thus far, I have attempted to untangle the dominant narratives sustaining Islamophobia in the Portuguese context. In this section, following Sayyid’s performative approach to produce “action-able knowledge” (2014a: 12), I aim at “elucidate[ing] the kind of behaviours that can potentially be understood through deployment of the category [of Islamophobia]” (Sayyid 2014a: 15). Sayyid identifies six performative clusters of Islamophobic activities (2014a: 15–16):

- a) Attacks on people perceived as Muslims;
- b) Attacks on property believed to be related to Muslims;
- c) Acts of intimidation;
- d) “[Acts] which may occur in institutional settings, in which those perceived to be Muslims receive less favourable treatment than peers in comparative positions”;
- e) “[I]ncidents in which there is a sustained and systematic elaboration of comments in the public domain that disparage Muslims and/or Islam”;
- f) State activities related to the surveillance of Muslim populations.

Expressions of Islamophobia are addressed in two broad groups: one pertaining to individual or group harassment and attacks on Muslims and property identified as such; the second, concerning the public, institutional, and state dimensions of Islamophobia. Privileging depth over breadth of analysis, I selected two case studies from the analysis of media content and empirical fieldwork (see nn. 3 and 4) – which are not exceptional events, but rather illustrate the routine operation of Islamophobia including through media depictions.

**Intimidation and attacks on people and property:
the Central Mosque of Lisbon**

1143, quem não sabe esta data não é bom português

1143, who doesn't know this date is not a good Portuguese (school proverb from the New State, still taught one or two decades after the 1974 Revolution)

The first set of clusters of Islamophobic behaviours identified by S. Sayyid (2014a) can be understood as operating at the level of individuals, encompassing a range of intimidating behaviours threatening Muslim well-being, dignity, and property. In Portugal, the most common expression of Islamophobia in everyday life seems to be verbal harassment in public places – such offences are not usually reported to the authorities. The press has conveyed that Muslim communities' representatives have warned against making generalisations about verbal abuse. Such situations thus tend to be framed as temporary and exceptional, not requiring formal denunciation – possibly, a strategy to maintain a low profile and contain hatred.

Property vandalism, particularly of places of worship, seems to occur less often. In recent years, there has been an increasing incidence of mosque vandalism, as well as significant deadly attacks on believers (e.g. Islamic Centre of Southwest Ontario in 2021, Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019; Quebec City mosque in 2017; Finsbury Park, London, in 2017; Barcelona, Spain, in 2017), curtailing not only religious freedom but human life. Whilst in Portugal no such attacks took place, there have been incidents of vandalism targeting the Central Mosque of

Lisbon, generating significative media content for analysis of an otherwise under-reported problem.¹³

The first of the recent attacks to the Central Mosque was carried out early in the morning of 9 January 2015, a couple of days after the *Charlie Hebdo* shootings in Paris. The date “1143” was sprayed in blue onto the main entrance door and on one of the mosque’s walls. According to the police, the symbolism is “generally evoked by xenophobic and neo-Nazi groups” (*Público*, 9 January 2015). This date – taught to children as a milestone in national history and identity – alluded to a milestone in narratives on national foundation, when the Kingdom of Portugal achieved independence from Castile and signed the Zamora Treaty, establishing peace between Afonso Henriques and his cousin Afonso VII of León and Castile.¹⁴ It was the police authorities who circulated a reading of the event as pertaining to the realm of political right-wing extremists and xenophobic groups, with the term Islamophobia never being deployed.

The analysis of news reports about this event in national broadsheets with online outlets identified two interrelated narratives: on the one hand, those promoting the view that such attacks on Islam also happen throughout Europe – thus positioning Portugal within notions of Europeanness; on the other, those contrasting the events with terrorism and security threats. On 9 January 2015, daily broadsheet *Público*¹⁵ reported that the mosque’s imam Sheik David Munir saw the act as a “provocation”, particularly in light of the mosque’s traditional open doors to the public at large and the symbolically charged nature of the date in question. The newspaper also reported that the Metropolitan Police of Lisbon was *not* carrying out an enquiry into the event. Furthermore, it added that other “sites of Muslim worship” had been subjected to criminal acts (in France, following *Charlie Hebdo*), situating Portugal in the centre of political debate on Islamophobia. News outlet *Observador*’s¹⁶ first paragraph was more cautious about attributing responsibility to neo-Nazi groups, suggesting that “they may” have authored the attacks and that the police alerted mosque representatives to the xenophobic nature of the inscription. The report quoted the intelligence agency SIRP (Sistema de Informações da República Portuguesa) stating there had been no change in the alert status in Portugal following the Paris attacks – displacing the focus on national Islamophobia to that of terrorism in Europe. *Jornal I*¹⁷ broadly reproduced *Observador*’s report, stressing that it was the police informing that it was a “xenophobic act” and that there were no changes concerning the alert on terrorism. *Sol*¹⁸ also followed the leading news by *Observador*, providing a list of events regarding the situation in France concerning terrorism and security threats. News television websites were also analysed, revealing a more homogeneous picture, namely the portrayal of representatives of the mosque as *good Muslims* who do not complain even in the face of aggression (see Mamdani 2004). The discourse purveyed by over-the-air new broadcast services

(freeview TV) can be summarised as follows. *RTP Notícias*¹⁹ stated that, according to the mosque's imam, the attack was led by people who are "neo-Nazi, probably, that do not like Muslims and do not like others", implicitly denying the specificity of the attack as being Islamophobic. *SIC Notícias*²⁰ interviewed the cultural coordinator of the mosque, Mr Mohamed Culano, who stated that "They wrote on the door and on one of the walls of the Mosque, that's all", he said. . . . "We think that maybe it is a xenophobic group. . ."; "it does not disturb or bother us much". According to Mr Culano, the mosque had previously been sprayed with graffiti, though never containing hateful messages ("mensagens lesivas", *SIC N*). He spoke of "an isolated act" which had not been unexpected given the Paris events, but that they, as a community, "remained calm". *TVI 24*²¹ reproduced the same content of *SIC N*, with Mr Culano further adding that, although such a situation never happened at the mosque, "we are in a democracy and we are subjected to these things, but we are calm".

The Central Mosque was vandalised again on 10 February 2017, with white paint thrown to a wall next to the entrance (*Público*, 9 February 2017).²² This followed the 29 January Quebec City mosque shooting in Canada – which, unlike *Charlie Hebdo*, targeted followers of Islam. The incident thus suggested not only lack of solidarity with a community mourning the loss of lives, but also protest against Islam's institutional presence – significantly, the specific Muslim community considered most integrated in Portuguese society. This second case reported in the media had the same characteristics of earlier events but was now reported as an "act of vandalism", probably due to increasing public interest. Interviewed by the newspaper *Público*,²³ Sheik David Munir stated that it was an "isolated case", probably committed by a "fool". He suggested that there had been an increasing interest in Islam and the mosque in Lisbon, seen in a growing number of visits, and that such attack was at odds with that: "The Sheikh actually affirms that he has not found any hostility regarding the Muslim community in Portugal, estimated at about 50 000 people: 'On the contrary. There are many people who are interested. We have been having many visits to the Mosque . . .'". *Observador*²⁴ broadly reproduces *Público*'s report, repeating Sheikh Munir's statement that there is no hostility to Muslims in Portugal. Overall, this second event was attributed significantly less importance and did not feature on the news of the most prestigious broadcast services.²⁵

Whilst giving the illusion of a public concern about Islamophobia, the media seem to actually contribute to concealing it: first, by regularly excluding the everyday experiences of people who are victims of Muslim hatred and voicing those of "good Muslims" who downplay them; second, by framing such events as "isolated acts", rather than interpreting them as belonging to the realm of politics and connected to wider expressions of Islamophobia; third, by naturalising Islamophobia

as a response to terrorist attacks on the Western world; finally, by portraying these expressions of hatred as minor acts committed by the extreme right, the media helps legitimate the official discourse in Portugal of a universalistic nation characterised by historical tolerance (e.g. ACM 2017), where Islamophobia is not a concern.

Public discourse, institutional practices: the case of education

A second cluster of Islamophobic activities identified by Sayyid refers to the systematic and sustained formulation of derogatory public comments; disadvantaging events and acts in institutional contexts; and increasing state surveillance activities (2014a: 16).

Mainstream political and institutional discourse is pervaded by a tacit, diplomatic approach highlighting the integration of Muslims in the country (often, in reference to post-colonial communities). Hateful messages and disparaging comments tend to circulate in cyberspace. Yet, extreme right groups have promoted Islamophobia online, often through nativist claims against a “Muslim invasion”: “Reclaim what is ours!”, “Against the Islamisation of Europe” by “hordes of barbarians” who “do not want to share our values” and aim to “impose Islamic law [Sharia]” (Araújo 2017, 2019). Public meetings and demonstrations are illustrative: in September 2015, five male elements of the far-right National Renewal Party (PNR) wore the *niqab* and distributed propaganda in the streets of Lisbon about the “Muslim invasion”.²⁶ Historical references, such as claims that Muslims wish to “win back Al-Andaluz”, have also been conveyed on occasion.²⁷

State surveillance activities, in Sayyid’s typology, refer to acts such as “intensification of surveillance of Muslim populations using technology, agent provocateurs, and paid informers” (2014a: 16). Given its sensitive nature and the lack of public data in Portugal, it is difficult to access this information. Yet, with the internationalisation of the “War on Terror”, the surveillance of the Muslim population is becoming more visible, and the journalistic content analysed emphasised more the suspicion of Muslims than the concern with issues of surveillance.²⁸

Regarding institutional practices, education is an interesting field of analysis to untangle Islamophobia, as examined below. Research participants pointed to the administrative, management, and organisational features of the education system, on the one hand, and issues related to the production and dissemination of knowledge of Islam, on the other.

School organisation and arrangements

In 2020, two school children were blocked from progressing to the next school year for missing Citizenship Education lessons as their (Catholic, presumably Opus Dei) parents argued “conscientious objection” and wanted to prevent their

“indoctrination” by the “state religion”,²⁹ which was supported in a petition by key public figures.³⁰ Public discussion ensued, and humorist Ricardo Araújo Pereira, in a weekly TV show, disputed the petition. His main argument was to avoid setting a precedent for non-Catholic families: “People who come to Portugal [such as] Muslims, Gypsies . . . they have to respect our rules and values . . . If someone, because of religion, feels that in Portugal they can treat their wives as they treat them in Saudi Arabia, we won’t allow it, ‘cause we do things differently here . . .” (*Governo Sombra*, 5 September 2020, 2’40’’) ³¹

During fieldwork, in interviews with religious representatives and community members in small towns, the lack of halal school menus was addressed. According to the information provided, the Halal Food Institute in Portugal operates mostly via imports, then distributing the meat through community networks. At the level of state school organisation, there were no official guidelines on this: schools can prepare meals or contract caterers locally, but changes to the menu are anticipated for health reasons only.³² Participants stated that the school boards had resisted any change to established routines. Eventually, they accepted the need to make arrangements and find solutions, falling mostly on families: parents picking up students for lunch (when transport and work schedules allowed) or preparing halal versions of the school’s menu (sending children’s lunch), and a school offering alternative fish meals in the canteen (“fish fingers everyday”, according to a participant’s child). Meanwhile, Muslim communities in that locality were negotiating with the town’s council a solution for a full school year.

Another key question raised by research participants, mainly politicians, religious, and community leaders, concerned provisions for religious education. In Portugal, an optional subject of Moral and Religious Education (mostly, Catholic education) is offered in every school and supported by the state, following the 2004 Concordat signed with the Vatican.³³ Most Muslim students, however, receive religious education outside the formal school system, in madrassas at local mosques.³⁴ Although the 2001 Law on Religious Freedom allows schools to offer religious education for other confessions, a form with a minimum number of students must be organised – given the small number and geographical dispersion of Muslim students in Portugal, this has not been feasible.³⁵ This is particularly significant as online commentary, borrowing from the repertoires of other contexts, portrays Muslims as profiting from public funds to promote “separatism” and “fundamentalism” (see Araújo 2017, 2019).

Finally, the lack of facilities for prayer, particularly amongst secondary and higher education students, was also mentioned. A community leader recollects his own experience:

I wrote a letter to the board of directors . . . the school and college management both answered in the same way, that “If you want to practice your religion in public, you can do your prayers in public.” I asked for a space to say the prayer and I was always denied. The twist was that, meanwhile, in college, and I’m not talking about high school, I became friends with the college security guard, and he said: “When the time comes for prayer, you stay here behind the stairs, no one comes here.” It was no more than the stairwell. “Say your prayer under the stairwell, that is the best place for you, and nothing happens there.” He indicated a space. And the same happens in these questions of halal, regarding meat, because what I notice is that, whenever there is an accountability of the [school] management, they try to maintain secularism, try to maintain a posture. Sometimes things sorted out informally become easier. (Participant 1)

Public allegations of state secularism have pre-empted a meaningful debate about religious pluralism in schools. For instance, whilst the *hijab* was being debated and forbidden entry in French schools in the early 2000s, with the setting up of the Stasi commission on *laïcité* (Asad 2005), the Association Republic and Laicism (ARL) in Portugal was denouncing the hanging of crucifixes in the classrooms of state schools. The debate did not quite address pluralism or equality between different confessions.³⁶ Rather, the denunciations of what were considered remnants of the (Catholic, pre-modern) past were grounded on the Constitutional endorsement of the secular state in the 1970s, with ensuing public discussions often conflating the secularisation of the state with the secularisation of society. According to Talal Asad, the *secularisation thesis* can be summarised as follows: “in order for a society to be modern it has to be secular and for it to be secular it has to relegate religion to nonpolitical spaces because that arrangement is essential to modern society” (2003: 182). Such approach suggested the undesirability of display of religious symbols, both public (i.e. crosses in school walls) and personal (i.e. *hijab*). Whilst the latter was a debate of no practical relevance in Portugal, its emphasis obscured relevant issues, such as the school calendar and commemorations being organised around Catholic festivities and holidays,³⁷ and how Islamic civilisations are taught.

History education

Three narratives circulate on Islam: i) *the invader Islam*, depicted negatively by the “Reconquista” against evil “Moors”, insidiously present in expressions such as “to toil like a Moor” (*mourejar*) or “talking gibberish” (*algaraviadas*); ii) *the mythical Islam of Al-Andalus*, characterised by perfect conviviality between Christians, Jews and Muslims; iii) *the exotic Islam* of nineteenth-century literary and artistic accounts, fluctuating between the *One Thousand and One Nights* and the

Lawrence of Arabia imaginaries. (Notes from interview with representative of a history association, Participant 7)

A second key issue that emerged in this study regarding education concerns the teaching of the history of Islam and Arab civilisations, particularly in their relation to Europe. The Portuguese state's strategy of emphasising the value of diversity and deploying interculturality discourse has most often been a panacea not translated into specific measures (Araújo 2013). In this study, several participants (e.g. scholars, religious and community leaders) pointed out that, regarding Islam and Muslim students, there are no real intercultural projects taking place in schools (Participants 2–4). For instance, a mosque leader and high school teacher reasoned that schooling is structured around the Judaeo-Christian paradigm: this is perceived not only in school arrangements and organisation (e.g. school meals and calendar), but also in the national curriculum (e.g. taught concepts such as “Reconquest”, “Holy War”). Exemplifying, he argued that the “Crusades” are not taught from the point of view of Arabs, and that there is an absence of accounts of the historical relation of conviviality in the Iberian Peninsula (including with Sephardic Jews) (Participant 2).

A scholar of religious studies (Participant 5) considered this a twofold problem. On one hand, history teachers are not being trained in universities on issues pertaining to Islam and Arab peoples. This means that the three or four classes planned in the national curriculum for these issues are generally reduced to one. On the other, when Islam is addressed in school lessons and textbooks, it focuses only on historical conflicts between Christianity and Islam (e.g. besides the “Reconquest”, the fall of Constantinople). One of our interviewees, who is carrying out doctoral studies on Muslim diasporas in Portugal (Participant 6, Sadiq Habib³⁸), recalled his own school experience and spoke of the “ambivalence and duplicity in the way in which the figure of the Muslim is historically represented and perceived, illustrated in the notion of ‘us’ [*Portuguese*] versus ‘them’ [*Moors*]”. He also highlighted that “there is no way one can ignore the contributions of *Al-Andalus* to material culture, technology, civilisation, and so on . . . Even the language, the fact that the Portuguese language has so much heritage from the Arabic.” Although these contributions may be briefly mentioned at school, he argued that the idea of alterity in relation to Muslims persisted.

The analysis of curriculum guidelines for Key Stage 3 (ME 2013), common for all students, attested that Muslims and Arabic peoples disappear from history teaching after the twelfth century is covered. The need for reconsidering contemporary curriculum standards was hence addressed by most interviewees. In addition, better liaison between schools and local Muslim communities is needed: a scholar interviewed mentioned that when lecturers are invited to go to schools in

outreach activities, they are expected to focus on the relation between Islam and terrorism: “this is what teachers and students want to know” (Participant 5).

The demand to reassess the teaching of questions pertaining to Islam and Muslims goes beyond a concern with education; journalists and those involved in political affairs pointed out how this lack of knowledge, including in universities, was reflected in biased agenda setting and poor journalist reporting practices (Participant 8). More than just pedagogical, this is hence an epistemological issue shaping the production and dissemination of knowledge, informing subsequent socio-political in/visibilities – including Islamophobia.

Conclusions: Transparent Muslims?

While nation-building powerfully sought and seeks to nationalise frames of reference, recasting past and future in national cultural and statist terms, neither the histories nor the tropes mobilized in Islamophobic discourses quite fit the national. (Vakil 2010: 32)

A productive tension pervades engagements with complex national specificities – allowing to explore a social issue in-depth – while arguing against methodological nationalism. In this article, I have brought together a variety of national events and debates *vis-à-vis* Muslims, aiming to shed light on both their historical contextuality and their relation to other contexts and underlying notions of Europeanness. The meta-analysis of the academic literature produced in Portugal is revealing: i) studies attempting to *explain* the Muslim, as a “newcomer immigrant” or “minority” and, increasingly, as a “potential terrorist” – with distinct political and epistemological commitments; ii) research addressing national history and identity entanglements with Islam and Muslims, pointing to the need of further interdisciplinary endeavours capable of unravelling the specific national identity projects tied to the production of analytical categories. When considering the period analysed (2000–20), I depicted how the “Muslim” as an object of research is produced in disciplinary fashion. Diachronically, I attempted to illustrate the varied meanings of “Muslim” (from *Al Andalus* to colonial to immigrant Portugal), and its inherent instability as an analytical category mobilised in different historical junctures.

Clearly, Muslim is a classification best understood at the crossroads of diverse historical, identity, and political projects; significantly, none resembles closely the *transparent Muslim* (i.e. a generically “bad”, “fundamentalist Muslim”: see Mamdani 2004) that is unravelled by the analysis of discourse in cyberspace, which seems to soothe the anxieties of the Western mind and acquire meaningful symbolic presence, echoing international debates across Europe (see Law et al. 2019). Muslims, like Said’s “Orientals”, were “rarely seen or looked at; they were

seen through, analysed not as citizens, or even people, but as a problem to be solved or confined” (Said 2003 [1978]: 207, my emphasis)

At the level of the analysis of individual and institutional expressions of Islamophobia, the cases concerning mosque vandalism and the education system show little influence of wider debates on the discrimination of Muslims and the small purchase of official rhetoric on interculturality in institutionalised practices, whilst continuing to shape the lived experience and livelihood of those perceived as Muslims – however unwittingly. Significantly, they reveal the binary opposition between Europe and Islam, where Muslims are perceived as an “intrusive presence” that disturbs a narrative on Europeanness based on homogeneous space and linear time (Asad 2003: 167), and on Portugal as a Christian, homogeneous country since its formation and made diverse only through globalised immigration (Araújo 2013). Muslimness is hence displaced to the margins of the national, constraining the conditions for the formation of a Muslim political identity as a legitimate historical subject (Sayyid 2010: 17), that is, an autonomous (national) subject capable of producing relevant critiques and alternatives to the present.

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Notes

- 1 At the time, media reporting obscured the possible targeting of Prime Minister Durão Barroso (2002–4) for complicity in the “War on Terror”, as he accepted to host the Summit of Lages (Azores) in the previous year with George Bush Jr, Tony Blair, and José Maria Aznar, which enabled military action in Iraq four days later (<https://www.record.pt/fora-de-campo/detalhe/terroristas-estiveram-em-braga-a-preparar-atentado-para-o-euro-2004>, accessed 5 July 2021). The disconnection of motivations for terrorism from the global “War on Terror” was analysed by Arun Kundnani (2014).
- 2 The project “Countering Islamophobia through the Development of Best Practice in the Use of Counter-Narratives in EU Member States”, was funded by the European Commission (EC DG-JUST/2015/ACTION GRANTS) and coordinated by the University of Leeds.
- 3 Online content was selected by searching Google.pt for the terms “Muslims” and “Islamophobia” which helped narrow down the search: the entries examined involved not only talk about Muslims (too many results for a feasible analysis), but some categorisation of discourses as Islamophobic (including hate speech *and* counter-narratives) (see Araújo 2017).
- 4 Semi-structured interviews were carried out in 2017 and 2018, by Marta Araújo, Max Ramos, Pedro Varela, and Silvia Maeso. Participants were 28 individuals, including representatives of relevant public bodies and organisations, religious leaders, community and mosque representatives, political activists, academics, and journalists (see Araújo, Maeso, and Ramos 2019).

- 5 See e.g. this diplomatic statement on national history: <https://ue.missaoportugal.mne.gov.pt/pt/portugal/sobre-portugal/historia>, accessed 6 June 2021.
- 6 *Lusotropicalism*, a notion formulated by Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s to explain the success of the Brazilian multiracial society, was partially adopted in Portugal in the 1950s. According to Freyre (2003 [1933]), Portuguese colonialism was exceptional as nationals would exhibit a particular aptitude to biological miscegenation and cultural interpenetration with the people from the tropics (Castelo 2019).
- 7 A question on religious affiliation was introduced in 1991 Census, which underestimates the size of the Muslim population due to its voluntary nature (see Vilaça 1999). In the 2011 Census, 20,640 respondents were followers of Islam, corresponding to 0.2% of the national population (8,989,849 at that time). About two-thirds of Muslims respondents lived in Greater Lisbon: 14,202 residents self-declared as Muslim in a universe of about 2.383.995 respondents (0.6%) (INE 2012). The Census does not collect information on ethnicity/“race”, and hence it is not possible to estimate the representation of Muslims in intersecting groups.
- 8 <https://www.comunidadeislamica.pt/en/islam.html>, accessed 17 May 2021.
- 9 Data formerly available online at: <http://www.comunidadeislamica.pt/pt/comunidade-islamica/comunidade-islamica-em-portugal/quantos-somos>, accessed 13 March 2017.
- 10 News piece published following the organisation of an international conference on Muslims and Islamophobia in Lisbon. <https://www.publico.pt/2007/12/01/jornal/para-onde-vao-os-jovens-muculmanos-portugueses-depois-de-jantar-239839>, accessed 1 July 2021.
- 11 For instance, in 2016, international news reported the publication of a video on behalf of the Islamic State in which the intention to “win back Al-Andaluz” was expressed (e.g. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/31/islamic-state-execution-video-blond-french-man>, accessed 13 April 2021). *Observador* had previously reported this on a piece on security research (<https://observador.pt/2015/11/03/estado-islamico-al-qaeda-as-ameacas-espanha-portugal/>, accessed 1 June 2017).
- 12 See *Pinkwashing Israel*, an online resource for activists working under the BDS movement, with Queer communities that resist the use of LGBTQ rights to normalize the Israeli occupation. <http://www.pinkwatchingisrael.com>.
- 13 In 2007, the breaking of a window and a bomb scare at the Central Lisbon Mosque were reported by the media and played down: it was considered a “false alarm”, downplaying how such threats *per se* are a form of harassment. In 2016, when the building of a new mosque in Mouraria, Lisbon, was announced, a petition was launched to stop it: <https://www.publico.pt/2016/05/25/local/noticia/peticao-tenta-travar-construcao-demesquita-na-mouraria-1733012>, accessed 21 June 2021.
- 14 Another foundational date commemorated is 1147, referring to when Afonso Henriques, with the support of the Crusaders against the Moors, ended the Siege of Lisbon – an event turned by the New State regime into what historian José Mattoso designated as a point zero for the Christian “Reconquest”, thus signalling “a new history whose reverse was the erasure of the Islamic past as barbarie” (Vakil 2003: 7).
- 15 <https://www.publico.pt/2015/01/09/sociedade/noticia/mesquita-de-lisboa-vandalizada-1681707>, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 16 <http://observador.pt/2015/01/09/mesquita-de-lisboa-alvo-de-vandalismo-durante-manha/>, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 17 https://ionline.sapo.pt/artigo/273977/mesquita-de-lisboa-foi-alvo-de-vandalismo?seccao=Portugal_i, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 18 <https://sol.sapo.pt/artigo/121787/mesquita-de-lisboa-vandalizada>, accessed 1 June 2021.

- 19 https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/pais/mesquita-de-lisboa-vandalizada-esta-manha_v795667, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 20 <http://sicnoticias.sapo.pt/pais/2015-01-09-Mesquita-de-Lisboa-vandalizada>, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 21 <https://tvi24.iol.pt/sociedade/1143/mesquita-de-lisboa-alvo-de-vandalismo>, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 22 <https://www.publico.pt/2015/01/09/sociedade/noticia/mesquita-de-lisboa-vandalizada-1681707>, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 23 <https://www.publico.pt/2017/02/12/sociedade/noticia/-mesquita-de-lisboa-vandalizada-foi-actio-isolado-diz-ima-1761776>, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 24 <http://observador.pt/2017/02/12/david-munir-acredita-que-vandalismo-na-mesquita-de-lisboa-foi-um-ato-isolado/>, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 25 Except *SIC-N*, <http://sicnoticias.sapo.pt/pais/2017-02-11-Mesquita-de-Lisboa-vandalizada-esta-madrugada>, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 26 The video report is available: https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/politica/pnr-leva-burkas-para-as-ruas-de-lisboa_a862585, accessed 1 June 2021.
- 27 See the newspaper story titled ‘Islamic State threatens Portugal and Spain and swears to recover the Iberian Peninsula’ (<https://www.dn.pt/mundo/estado-islamico-volta-a-ameacar-portugal-e-espanha-5008269.html>, accessed 1 June 2021), reproduced in other newspapers.
- 28 <https://www.dn.pt/sociedade/sef-deteve-homem-procurado-pela-interpol-suspeito-de-crimes-relacionados-com-terrorismo-13961232.html>, accessed 21 July 2021.
- 29 <https://www.jn.pt/nacional/processo-em-tribunal-para-travar-aulas-de-cidadania--12444881.html>, accessed 21 July 2020.
- 30 <https://iep.lisboa.ucp.pt/asset/8106/file>, accessed 1 July 2021.
- 31 <https://sicnoticias.pt/programas/governo-sombra/2020-09-05-As-nossas-regras-sao-estas-sao-as-que-estao-nesta-disciplina>.
- 32 Policy regulation 3/DSEEAS/DGE/2013, 2 August.
- 33 Resolution by the National Parliament 74/2004, 16 November.
- 34 There is one private school offering religious education (International School of Palmela).
- 35 Art. 24, Law 16/2001, 22 June. Forms dedicated to Evangelical confessions and the Baha’i faith have been offered.
- 36 E.g. the opinion piece by E. Mucznic, <https://www.publico.pt/2005/12/09/jornal/laicidade-e-liberdade-religiosa-52949>, accessed 2 June 2021.
- 37 Despite legislation allowing some flexibility for workers and students to commemorate religious festivities (Art. 14, Law 16/2001, 22 June), those interviewed were seemingly not aware of this, or preferred to not use such right to go under the radar and avoid discrimination.
- 38 Anonymity was ensured in this study. Sadiq Habib, a Postgraduate Research Student at SOAS University of London, asked to be credited with his ideas as a decolonial ethical gesture of epistemic recognition and inclusion, granting permission for his name to be acknowledged.

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