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The Portuguese counter-terrorism prevention case: An analysis of the P/CVE strategy and Planning

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Master in International Studies

Supervisor:

PhD Raquel da Silva, Integrated researcher,  
ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon

August, 2021

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SOCIOLOGIA  
E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

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History Department

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## Resumo

Uma estratégia preventiva no campo do contra-terrorismo é uma necessidade para qualquer nação e estas estratégias tornaram-se cada vez mais importantes com os eventos do 9/11. Uma estratégia corretamente definida permite não só que uma nação se defenda, mas previne as circunstâncias que possam levar à radicalização de indivíduos para ideais extremistas.

Muitos académicos vêm estes planeamentos preventivos de uma perspetiva crítica e é da opinião de vários que, como se encontram, as estratégias preventivas de contra-terrorismo não são eficientes e podem até estar na origem de práticas discriminatórias.

O propósito desta investigação é não apenas de entender como um planeamento preventivo é desenvolvido, mas compreender a sua eficácia. Isto será estudado utilizando o caso português como o exemplo de uma nação que permaneceu maioritariamente não afetada por este fenómeno desde o 9/11, mas independentemente precisa de apresentar uma estratégia contra-terrorista devido ao seu envolvimento na União Europeia. Portugal foi escolhido devido à lacuna literária existente para o caso português e um desconhecimento em geral de como contra-terrorismo funciona dentro da nação.

Este objetivo será atingido através de entrevistas com peritos no campo e ao analisar estes resultados através do modelo Estudos Críticos ao Terrorismo (CTS) cuja base crítica permitirá determinar como a estratégia preventiva Portuguesa compara contra as estratégias apresentadas por outras nações. Determinar qual é esta estratégia preventiva, como está alinhada com os requerimentos europeus e se a mesma é eficaz em prevenir o extremismo Islâmico que veio a ser observado em anos anteriores e mais recentemente o extremismo de direita que tem sido observado pela Europa são objetivos chave para esta investigação.

**Palavras-chave:** Portugal, contra-terrorismo, prevenção, radicalização, entrevistas elite



## **Abstract**

A counter-terrorism preventative strategy is a must in any nation and such strategies became of even greater importance with the events of 9/11. A properly defined strategy allows not only for a nation to defend itself but to prevent the grounds that may lead to the radicalization of citizens towards violent extremist ideals.

Many academics look at these preventative frameworks from a critical perspective and it is the opinion of many that, as it stands, counter-terrorism prevention strategies are not effective, and may actually be at the origin of discriminatory practices.

The purpose of this research is not only to understand how a prevention framework is developed but its own effectiveness. This will be ascertained by using the Portuguese case as an example of a nation that has been mostly unaffected by this phenomenon since 9/11 but has nonetheless to deliver its own counter-terrorism strategy due to its placement within the European Union. Portugal was chosen due to the gap of literature on the Portuguese example and the overall lack of knowledge of how counter-terrorism works within the nation.

This goal is achieved by conducting interviews with experts on this field and analyzing these results through the Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) whose framework will allow to determine how the Portuguese preventative strategy compares against the strategies presented by other nations in their preventative activities. Determining what is this preventative framework, how it is aligned with European standards and if it works in successfully preventing the Islamic extremism which was observed in the past years and more recently the rise in far-right extremism observed throughout Europe will be key goals throughout this research.

**Keywords:** Portugal, counter-terrorism, prevention, radicalization, elite interviews





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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

**P/CVE** – Preventing & counter violent extremism

**CVE** – Countering violent extremism

**PJ** – Polícia Judiciaria - [Judiciary Police]

**PSP** – Polícia de Segurança Publica - [Public safety police]

**GNR** – Guarda Nacional Republicana - [National Republican Guard]

**UCAT** – Unidade Combate Anti-terrorismo - [Anti terrorism combat unit]

**SIS** – Serviços de Informações de Segurança - [Information Security Systems]

**SIRP** – Sistema de Informações da República Portuguesa - [Portuguese Republic Information system]

**SEF** – Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras - [Border and Foreigners service]

**CSS** – Center for Security Studies

**CTS** – Critical Terrorism Studies



# **Chapter one: Introduction**

What drives a nation's approach to counter-terrorism remains to this day a highly debated subject. Counter-terrorism studies is a recent field with a smaller academic researcher base in comparison with most studied fields and particularly so in Portugal. It is characterized by known issues in defining widely acceptable concepts and revolving in a world fueled by secrets and speculation, which have proved to originate difficulties in conducting research in this field. It has at times been described as a field contested by many academics without proper qualification who produce research based on hypothesizing (Stampnitzky, 2010). To this extent Hoffman characterizes counter-terrorism studies as a "huge and ill-defined subject [that] has probably been responsible for more incompetent and unnecessary books than any other outside the field of sociology" (1992, 25). However, demand for counter-terrorism research increased immensely after the events of 9/11 and the incidents of the past two decades have come to prove that this is a topic worth studying. As such Stampnitzky (2010) concludes in her research of counter-terrorism studies that despite being impossible to obtain a consensus in this field, particularly in defining what counter-terrorism is, this should not mean that the field ought to be abandoned but rather analyzed from an out of the box perspective. Counter-terrorism is a political matter and will always be so, and as such it is necessary to study and understand the context and the actors who revolve around it.

## **1.1 Case study definition**

In an attempt to contribute to counter-terrorism studies, the focus of this dissertation will concentrate around Portugal, a nation mostly unaffected by terrorism when compared to some of its European counterparts. However, similarly to Skleparis and Knudsen's (2020) approach in their study of counter-terrorism policies in Greece, it is necessary to comprehend what has differentiated Portugal from other European Union countries. In order to achieve this, it is essential to study the Portuguese counter-terrorism efforts, its policies, and the requirements the nation has to meet and how it has chosen to do so, as a member state of the European Union who is obliged to fulfil European terrorism policies, regardless of the existence of a high or a low terrorism threat at the national level.

Despite its firsthand impression of imperviousness, Portugal has dealt with the terrorism phenomenon in the post 9/11 era, particularly in two distinct fronts. First, the foreign fighters' phenomena which involved the radicalization of Portuguese individuals who fought in the ranks of terrorist organizations in international conflicts, their return and conviction using the Portuguese counter-terrorism laws set forth in the legislation. Second, the recent rise of far-right extremism, which can be observed throughout Europe and has gained popularity in Portugal as well.

## **1.2 Case study relevance**

In 2020 the nation witnessed an unprecedented process, which was the prosecution of eight Portuguese nationals who were tied to the terrorist organization DAESH. Out of these eight individuals, one was already under arrest in Portugal, one in the United Kingdom and six others had unknown whereabouts. This put to the test the Portuguese counter-terrorism legislation which proved effective in convicting these individuals for crimes of supporting and collaborating with terrorism. This legislation had already been previously used to convict an ETA member captured in Portugal but was effectively the first time that law 52/2003 was used to convict individuals of Portuguese descentance of crimes of terrorism. Although these individuals all presented the same path, which was the emigration and consequent radicalization outside of national territory this does alert to the presence of possible radicalization factors within the Portuguese society which begs the question, what exactly is being done towards radicalization and the overall prevention of terrorism in Portugal? This question has become increasingly relevant considering that the so-called "widows of Daesh", married to Portuguese foreign fighters who were killed during confrontations have made their intentions known that they wish to return to Portugal with their families, a task now at the responsibility of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The second factor which has been recently observed is the recent rise of far-right extremism throughout the nation. The rise of a political party which now operates within the Portuguese parliament has fueled the extreme-right discourse. Historically speaking Portugal is also fairly familiar with both right-wing and left-wing extremism, widely observed throughout the nation after the Portuguese revolution (see da Silva 2019). It is also noteworthy to mention an episode in 1995 involving the death of Alcino Monteiro, a man of Cape Verdean descentance who was beaten to death due to racial discrimination

by a group of skinhead nationalists. Although this was not classified by the authorities as an act of domestic terrorism, it constitutes one of the most famous episodes of ideologically motivated violence in Portuguese recent history.

Moreover, as mentioned by Santos (2021), a European report on far-right extremism has alerted to the consequent rise of far-right related forms of radicalization and protesting particularly motivated by the nation's measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent social and economic difficulties observed during this time. This same report refers a set of recent events which outline the rise of racism and a series of violent acts motivated by racial discrimination (Santos, 2021). Furthermore, it also refers that *Chega*, the recently created extreme-right political party, has elevated the extreme-right popularity to levels which have not been observed since the Portuguese revolution (Santos, 2021). According to a report from the Internal Security System, the COVID-19 lockdown has brought about a 60% increase in discrimination related crimes particularly in younger age groups due to their exposure to online digital radicalization movements, a threat which can aggravate in the years to come (NA, 2021).

Even though there have been no significant sightings of Islamic related extremism within the nation, a clear rise of far-right radicalization movements has been observed and as such, this research's main goal is to determine how counter-terrorism policies and strategies, particularly preventive ones, have been applied in the pre-criminal space in the post 9/11 era in Portugal.

### **1.3 Dissertation structure**

In order to attain the necessary answers to these questions the dissertation has been divided as follows. Chapter two presents the Critical Terrorism Studies (CTS) approach that will be used to frame and analyze this study, followed by an introduction to the topic from an academic perspective, defining key concepts such as counter-terrorism, extremism and radicalization. This is followed by an exploration of different international counter-terrorism programs. Finally, an historical framing is also performed to explain the Portuguese past experience with extremist movements and a brief explanation of the current legislation in place is also provided to understand the main changes and laws used in Portugal to address terrorism related crimes.

Chapter three clarifies the methodology used in this study, including the methodological procedures chosen for this investigation, how the interviewees were

selected and their respective profiles, how the data was gathered, and the procedures that were followed to complete the data analysis. Chapter four refers to the results obtained through the interviews, which are divided firstly per research questions and secondly by the key themes which were mentioned by the experts and that represent the main points of discussion in Portuguese counter-terrorism prevention. The discussion of the results is framed within chapter four as well, which summarizes the research's main findings and its relation to the literature explored in chapter two, its framing and implications when analyzed from a CTS perspective. and a reflection on its future implications. This dissertation is concluded with a brief analysis on this research's limitations, a reflection on future implications and possible venues to follow to complement this investigation with new research opportunities.



## **Chapter two: Literature Review**

This chapter provides a detailed explanation on the framework from which this dissertation will be analyzed, introducing the essential concepts of counter-terrorism and reviewing a few of the programs employed throughout the world in the post 9/11 War on Terror era thus creating a solid literature which will later on be used to correlate with the findings encountered during this investigation's data collection process.

The first section will approach what counter-terrorism is and the key concepts associated to it. This is followed by an analysis on current P/CVE methodology and some notorious examples of programs carried out by various nations. Finally, the Portuguese example will be integrated where it is defined why Portugal was chosen as this study's case study and a brief exploration of its history, experience, and experience with terrorism. The CTS inspired theoretical framework will be integrated within each of these sections in order to correlate the theoretical scope with the key aspects of counter-terrorism. Afterwards this investigation's results on Portuguese counter-terrorism prevention will be analyzed and explored from this theoretical perspective. Bearing this in mind, the chosen CTS framework defends that counter-terrorism should seek not only to prevent political violence but also to create the necessary conditions that allow for the mitigation of circumstances at its origin. In other words, the CTS nonviolent approach is designed to address the socio-political foundations that lead to terrorism to begin with.

### **2.1 The Essentials of Counter-terrorism**

After 9/11 various states began to realize that their perception of the terrorist threat did not match the seriousness of the issue at hand. Therefore, in the early 2000's different states began to develop prevention programs and carry out amendments in their legislations. This offered them the necessary tools and the legislative flexibility deemed necessary to convict perpetrators and investigate potential threats. Warbrick (2004) explains how the ordinary criminal process cannot process a terrorist or a terrorist organization in the same fashion as they would treat an ordinary criminal due to the particular nature of the threat. As this threat involves organizations who are supported by a larger ideological community, the criminal process and its investigators can find

themselves at times under intimidation, in difficulty in obtaining evidence, and even in convicting a perpetrator due to their outstanding ability to use international territory as a means to elude national boundaries and secure sanctuary (Warbrick, 2004).

To address the phenomena of terrorism and extremism it is necessary to first define these much-debated concepts in the existing literature. Lindahl (2020) does so in his existing study on the conceptualization of violent extremism. Terrorism is defined as the use or threat of physical force in order to address a political statement relating to a current issue in time (Lindahl, 2020). As an example, the attacks in Madrid in 2004 can be referred as these were in response to the Spanish deployment of troops into Iraq at the time. It is an act that is premeditated and used as a strategic plan, therefore far from being an act of random violence (Lindahl, 2020). Extremism can be defined as the process that leads to one identifying with an ideology or beliefs which are employed by violent organizations and may bring the actor to engage in such violent statements as well (Lindahl, 2020). It is however important to distinct that an actor engaging with extremist ideals does not mean that they will engage in political violence as these are two separate processes, distinguishable many times by the actor's radicalization path and a set of personal and social factors (Da Silva, Navarro, Gonçalves, Rosa and Silva, 2018).

Smith, Stohl and al-Gharbi (2019) in turn define counter-terrorism as the set of policies and actions created to attain a goal that must be broader than simply addressing terrorist violence. To this effect, these authors believe that counter-terrorism must be also involved in a communication process due to the fundamental role of the media in disseminating the terrorist message. Thus, counter-terrorism must address public unrest and create the perception that people are secure, and their way of life is not under direct threat, countering the main goal of a terrorist attack which is to spread fear into the general population (Smith et al., 2019). In addition, counter-terrorism must also be about preventing, identifying, and addressing the causes that led to radicalization in the first place (Gielen, 2017).

The CTS approach attempts to evaluate and define counter-terrorism as the ability to focus on more than just countering a threat. It must seek to build a bridge that allows for a common space for societies to share and respect community-based ideals. The CSS<sup>1</sup> analysis (2015) on countering violent extremism defines that most of the prevention policies are in fact achievements which are worthy to obtain regardless of the existence

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<sup>1</sup> CSS (Center for Security Studies)

of a violent threat or not. Such policies promote peace, tolerance and development and such aims should be address at a both societal and governmental level, particularly in regard to foreign policies. The US invasion of Iraq, greatly motivated by counterterrorist efforts, resulted mostly in leaving its people and land in an environment of devastation, which perpetuated the path for further indignation and violent extremist movements. The 2004 Madrid attacks were motivated precisely for the Spanish support in 2003 with the deployment of troops onto Iraqi soil and resulted in the subsequent withdrawal of these troops in fear of further attacks to the Spanish nation (Braithwaite, 2015).

Hence, when discussing counter-terrorism reforms there are two areas in which a government may invest: counter-terrorism legislation and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) programs. The first, counter-terrorism legislation, can be introduced into a nation's legislation system to act against a terrorist event. These pertain to the methods that intelligence services may use to gather information, the actions that police forces may take in capturing and detaining suspects, and to the way the judiciary system can process perpetrators.

After the events of 9/11, there was an increase in pressure towards the creation of such legislation and a demand for tougher legislative reforms. As explained by Jackson (2015) and the CTS approach, there is a mismanagement and incorrect focus from governments on counter-terrorism policies. Kudnani (2014) and Martin (2018) emphasize this by explaining there is a large focus on what are considered to be individuals at risk of radicalization, which further enhances racial and ethnic discrimination.

Some examples have been shared by Wolfendale (2006) which support these claims: in Australia, reforms have been introduced that allow detaining people based solely on the suspicion that at some point they have been in contact with a terrorism suspect; in the United States of America (USA), they have been able to detain and send suspects to Guantanamo Bay, stripped of rights or even due process during the Bush administration; and, in the United Kingdom (UK), legislation has allowed to tighten control and surveillance of the Muslim community as there was a belief that suspects would originate from these communities, even though the actual figures displayed otherwise. Nonetheless the UK parliament passed the Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) in 2001 allowing security forces to detain non-UK nationals without warrants (Warbrick, 2004).

The second available tool at the disposal of counter-terrorism efforts are the preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) programs. These are the measures that pertain not to the action of stopping a terrorist attack or even dismantling known cells

but preventing the breeding grounds that lead to the radicalization of individuals from even occurring or to be stopped. P/CVE programs operate in the pre-criminal space which is presented by Heath-Kelly and Strausz (2018) as the space where the prevention of terrorism occurs, before the presence of a criminal conspiracy. Within this framework, some commonly known prevention measures are, for instance, the involvement of the population in civil prevention and participation, employing social and educational groups to develop specific values such as “honor” and “commitment” in the most fragile and susceptible age groups and also de-radicalization programs in the aforementioned pre-criminal space (Korn, 2016). P/CVE policies came into light in 2001 and although some countries already displayed a solid prevention framework, these policies began to be considered by many as a necessity in 2015 with the wave of attacks that struck Europe (Korn, 2016). Most countries have already had to deal with violent extremism at some point even in the form of domestic terrorism under left and far right movements, but it was with the increased violent Islamic movements that these states realized the need for a solid and consolidated preventative framework (CSS Analyses 2015).

Despite its aforementioned controversial methods Australia has also demonstrated other promising programs in this field. The Australian prevention planning has greatly focused on the education system and its capacity to educate violent young individuals in the hopes of reducing the possibilities of radicalization (Gielen, 2019). This high focus consists of the employment of practitioners particularly in the Education sector, where they are better positioned to identify, and assist dissociated young teenagers who could be turning towards these radicalized ideals (Gielen, 2019). The “Beyond Bali” programs are one example of programs which are designed specifically towards the development of cognitive resilience (Gielen, 2019). Other countries have employed similar approaches towards the Education sector as was the case of Spain for instance. The Australian approach is not limited only to the Education sector. The Australian Multicultural Foundation has developed community-based trainings to bring awareness to individuals in leadership roles and parents to the dangers of violent extremism (Harris-Hogan, Barrelle and Zammit, 2015). In parallel security agencies also work with community-based organizations on building focus on social cohesion (Harris-Hogan et al., 2015).

These measures are intended to strengthen the notion of “resilience” to extremist values, employee practitioners and promotes even other students to participate in disengaging and helping other to move away from such ideals thus creating a positive outcome in contrast with their heavily controversial counter-terrorist legislation

mentioned before (Gielen, 2019). There is also a high focus on Web based sources of extremist content due to the heavy role these play in the radicalization of at-risk individuals (Gielen, 2019). To this topic, Stevens and Neumann (2009) promote an approach that deals not with removing the content itself but reaching to its creators and promoting positive ideals and disengaging them from associating and promoting this type of content. This approach can be followed for both Islamic extremist content and far-right violent movements.

The process of radicalization is one that is heavily aligned with the notion of counter-terrorism. It is therefore important for this study, to define what is clearly understood by the phenomena of radicalization and de-radicalization. Radicalization is understood as the process that leads to an individual in taking an opposing stance in favor of a political achievement, through violent means (Da Silva et., al 2018). Such processes can be influenced by a high number of factors including familiarity with other radicalized individuals or organizations, economic and identity issues, overall frustration for lack of opportunities, among many others (Da Silva et all., 2018). As for de-radicalization, Da Silva et all (2018) associate it to the definition set by Reinares (2011) who defined the process as a change in behavior and in the subject's moral stance of believing that violence will no longer lead to the results that were once desired. It is important to understand that these processes are highly complex and pertain to everyone differently, therefore there is no universal approach that can be followed.

The very idea of radicalization was largely ignored in society up until the moment of the 2005 London attacks which had been carried out by the so-called homegrown terrorists. Most states then began to turn focus to the phenomena of radicalization and the social dynamics in which it fosters (Marsden, 2020). Many began to focus on the availability of radicalized content on the internet and in social medias as other began to study and act on the factors that lead to this event. A close cooperation with certain communities not only helps to prevent radicalization but also facilitates investigation in the cases where it does happen (Marsden, 2020).

Abbas (2017) explains that even though white communities also suffer from extremism and consequent radicalization, the topic is much more focus on Islamic communities by the media and by policy makers as well. In fact, the radicalization of the groups towards Islam can actually be labelled as an act of rebellion (Abbas, 2017), an argument which further discriminates the Islamic community. As such Muslim communities are then the target of radicalization programs, a phenomenon heavily

observed in the United Kingdom (Abbas, 2017). Even though far-right referrals have been growing in the UK, programs such as PREVENT continue to focus mainly on the Islamic society, being described by many as “intrusive” (Abbas, 2017)

As previously demonstrated, the United Kingdom has invested immensely in this matter but not without controversy. Prevention in the United Kingdom came in the form of various programs many of which are meant to address the high number of jailed prisoners that are at risk of being radicalized even though they originally had no affiliations with terrorist groups as explained by Korn (2016). The UK also established several programs in the 90’s design to address right-wing extremist violence in the youth population and in more recent years the “Channel Programme”. The “Channel Programme” consists mostly of identifying individuals at risk from being radicalized from violent extremism, analyzing this risk and to establish a support plan for each at risk individual to disassociate this person from extremist ideals (Martin, 2018). Although the program turned a positive outcome in its early stages, it was also heavily criticized for focusing solely on Islamic communities (Korn, 2016). Some of its criticism included the fact that people were considered to be involved in political violence based on poor evidence and assumption due to their ethnic and religious beliefs (Heath-Kelly, 2013; Martin, 2018). The case of Umm Ahmed is one of the most notorious cases of such discrimination. Through the reports of Qureshi (2015) it is explained that Umm Ahmed was convicted due to the possession of a radicalistic magazine downloaded from a USB stick that contained evidence on her brothers’ trial, who had been flagged for a potential attack on the London stock exchange (Qureshi, 2015). Although this woman had no radicalized roots nor intentions to be involved with extremist content, she was still convicted to 11 months of incarceration for the possession of radicalized material. During her trial, the PREVENT program, which refers to one of the pillars of the UK’s counter-terrorism strategy which constitutes the base where programs such as Channel are developed, was invoked which allowed to extend the conviction to 12 months and therefore gave legal way to demand a re-integration and surveillance program once she had been release, effectively monitoring her life and tainting her future (Qureshi, 2015; Martin, 2018).

Pettinger (2019) provides an interesting remark on the British approach by stating that despite the fact that these programs are not necessarily seen as the prevention of terrorism or violence, since they promote the keen eye of society in identifying “at risk behaviors” within communities that share certain beliefs and ideologies, this approach of

constant surveillance leads to the inevitability that these communities are generally seen as posing a potential risk. Although these programs may be justified as acting through the concern for overall safety, the fact remains that these are intrusive and potentially damaging programs which further stigmatize certain minorities.

Although counter radicalization methodologies have found their way into the Islamic community, Norway has demonstrated how violent extremism can come from a domestic basis as such was the case with Anders Breivik in 2011, an avid support of far-right movements with sympathies for the Neo-Nazi movement (Lindahl, 2017). Breivik's case demonstrated how violent extremism can be more than just ideologically motivated movements and how the focus must not be solely centered on Islamic communities. Such figures have been in the UK, with The Guardian (2020) reporting statistics provided by the security minister, which demonstrate that the Channel program radicalization referrals for far-right extremism (43%), have surpassed Islamic extremism referrals (30%).

Other nations have also focused greatly on addressing the radicalization issue. Germany can be considered a pioneer in P/CVE policies. Having jumped into the extremists' debate in 1952 with the objective to promote political tolerance, by the late 2000's the Violence Prevention Network (VPN) was already a reference in European counter-terrorism efforts, a program which focused originally on de-radicalization programs for jailed prisoners and that was met with tremendous success (Korn, 2016). Over the years the program began to coordinate with authorities to focus on jihadists with intentions to fight in the Middle East, thus attempting to distancing them from extremist ideologies through a direct contact personalized long term approach, to best fit the needs of each potential individual (Korn, 2016). Berlin also faces a high number of violent extremist threats not only from Muslim extremist but also from far left and right movements due to the presence of these Muslim communities (Vermeulen, 2014). Vermeulen (2014) explains how this is related to the radicalization of dissociated young members of society. In order to combat this, local authorities have created the Islam Forum Berlin, precisely to increase collaboration between the local authorities and the Muslim community, thus fostering the community to engage and to care in counter terrorism prevention (Vermeulen, 2014). As per the CTS approach, developing a positive and close relationship with these communities, will not only offer further breathing room for the authorities to operate but will also engage them in developing positive bounds with these youth members who turn to radicalized ideals and even in assisting radicalized individuals to adjust back into society.

Despite being viewed as a collective effort, particularly in the case of EU member states which must comply with European mandates, counter-terrorism did not always work this way. Countries such as Spain or the UK faced terrorist threats using their own efforts and strategies particularly because these countries had their own specific threats. Spain dealt with the ETA organization while the UK faced the IRA. Bearing in mind these threats, some countries began to follow an approach of securitization to counter-terrorism. The concept of securitization means that security is a political process whose issues represent security threats (Floyd, 2020). This means that the actor who does this approaches the so-called threat urgently as he sees it as possibly impacting his existence (Floyd, 2020). This narrative allows for measures which may be seen as unorthodox but claimed by the actor as necessary to address the issue (Floyd, 2020). One of the challenges faced with securitization is that the idea of what is considered as a security matter becomes blurry and may encompass various sectors of society (Charret, 2008). This not only reinforces surveillance mechanisms but also severely limits the information available in the subject as most matters are deemed as a “security risk” (Charret, 2008). This was applied in the world of counter-terrorism, begging the question, of just how much the people should know. While some nations employ the civil society in active prevention, others adopted a strategy of secrecy. But there are two sides to each coin. While one may state that what we do not know cannot hurt us, Febrer (2019) explains how in Morocco the perception of terrorism is seen as a way to exceptionalism extreme measures under the concept of securitization. These extreme measures may aid in stigmatizing the notion of counter-terrorism. The following section will analyze the fundamentals behind P/CVE policies, observe the examples of a few implemented programs and reflect on the outcome of these programs and their general contribution to the mitigation of terrorism through the CTS scope.

## **2.2 The P/CVE framework**

Lindahl (2017) views modern counter-terrorism as incapable, so far, to address the foundation of what leads to terrorism and the radicalization of individuals and describes it as a major responsible for human suffering. Richardson (2006) reinforces Lindahl’s claims by stating that on a first level these socio-political instances must be addressed and afterwards counter-terrorism should then aim to separate the actor from their



extremist ideology and motivation, therefore turning the effort towards potential cases of radicalization.

P/CVE policies are specifically designed to address the root issue that leads an individual to a radicalization path or even its reintegration into society after following an extremist path. To this extent, Stephens, Sieckelinck and Boutellier (2019) have provided a review of the existing literature on P/CVE programs and arrived at the conclusion that the existing programs can fit into one of these four clusters in regard to their preventative approach: resilience, cognitive resources, character traits, and the strengthening of values. These four categories were found to be at the base of the existing P/CVE programs designed in order to construct a positive prevention framework. Such ideals promote that society becomes more involved in a preventative stand where no one is “indifferent” to this issue and is encouraged to speak out and report strange cases which the authorities should investigate (Stephens et al., 2019). It promotes the development of resilience and the strengthening of values where the most susceptible minds, such as teenagers who find themselves not fitting with society will not turn to such extreme methods thus prevailing the basic value of life and integrity (Stephens et al., 2019). The “critical thinking” process is very important especially when trying to detach individuals from their extremist ideologies such as in prison programs for convicted terrorist who wish to integrate society (Stephens et al., 2019). Such was the case of prevention policies taken in Spain and Australia.

Over the past few years, the European Union has been faced with the refugee crisis that originated in Syria and considering the open border policy and tranquility with which you can travel within Europe, these prevention policies became an even bigger key strategy in counter-terrorism prevention as this is an issue that affects all nations combined. Furthermore, this crisis has led to an increase in right-wing populism against these refugees therefore security cannot be individualist, but must be a joint effort and P/CVE policies are designed not only to target Islamic extremism but right-wing extremist violence as well (Korn, 2016).

These social factors meant that focus turned once again to the radicalization debate and a pattern was recognized that most attacks within European borders have occurred from individuals that were born and radicalized in Europe (Korn, 2016). Such is the example of one of the organizers behind the attacks in Paris in 2015. This individual that had been identified by intelligence services as potentially radicalized but up until that point, Belgium had no prevention plan in place to address such cases (Korn, 2016). The

consequences of ignoring such programs allowed for the creation of terrorist cells strategically placed throughout European territory, cells that function as a single organism with a common objective to wreak havoc and sow fear into the population. After the Paris attacks the Belgium government declared that they would begin to work on de-radicalization programs, a measure believed by many to be coming far too late in the European counter-terrorism effort (Korn, 2016).

In order to address the issues with radicalization various countries began to bolster and increase their radicalization programs. In Spain for instance progress took longer to achieve than expected, especially after the attacks in Madrid in 2004 but in 2015, when Europe found itself struck by a violent wave of terrorist attacks, the Spanish government formulated the “Plan Estratégico Nacional de Lucha Contra la Radicalización Violenta” which focuses on youth radicalization and the promotion of tolerance (Korn, 2016). A revolutionary step was taken to create a web page and a free hotline where citizens could report potential cases of radicalization which proved to be incredibly successful and helpful as Korn (2016) mentions that 45% of the anonymous tips were followed up by police forces as they presented credible threats that needed to be investigated. Several programs have also been implemented within the Spanish Penal system to prevent radicalization within prisons, a similar approach to programs observed in the United Kingdom, to be analyzed further below (Korn 2016). The author furthermore emphasizes the priority set out by the State Secretary for Security Francisco Martinez, as centering focus on the youth sector as he claims that de-radicalization can be redirected as an individual effort towards these members and therefore as an effective tool towards aiming at developing tolerance and respect in these individuals (Korn 2016). This represents a similar approach towards the educational sector has already previously analyzed and supported by the studies of Gielen (2019).

The Netherlands on the other hand joined in on the counter-terrorism prevention effort in an early stage, with the “Polarisation and Radicalisation Action Plan” implemented in 2007 (Korn, 2016), with many, including Vermeulen (2014), pointing to the murder of filmmaker Theo Van Gogh as a moment where violent extremism was incorporated in the nation’s policy strategy. This program was designed to increase perception and a sense of integration in the Muslim community within the Dutch population (Korn, 2016). Although this plan was removed in 2011, to this day, the Dutch government continues to allocate resources to improve its collaboration at a national network level and a further demand for international cooperation (Korn, 2016). The focus

has been turned to organizations such as health and security groups which can monitor and interact with these citizens, a threat that remained moderate in the 1<sup>st</sup> decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with 156 arrests for violent extremism but only 20 convictions, however this number has been rising since 2015 due to the increase of Dutch citizens turning towards radicalization (Vermeulen, 2014). To this phenomenon the Radicalization Information Management is one of the programs that was implemented in Amsterdam targeted to monitor for such cases, however similar critiques have been made to the Dutch programs for stigmatizing the Moroccan society as extremist in similarity to the issues presented by the Channel program towards British Islamic communities (Vermeulen, 2014).

Due to what some described as scrutiny, through the actions of various prevention programs, towards various communities particularly the Islamic communities, the CTS framework raises the question on whether counter-terrorism policies actually make an impact to diminish the threat or if a more political and societal approach was needed to address this issue (Gunning, 2007). Although these are examples of successful programs that do create a framework for a prevention development, Stephens et al (2019) also recognize this fundamental issue shared by Jackson (2016) and Gunning (2007) that such policies have had an effect on stereotyping Muslim communities and labelling certain levels of the population as “possibly dangerous”. The United States is another example of a nation that has presented these troublesome traits in their own preventative framework.

The United States experience with P/CVE programs is limited albeit their internal struggle in violent extremism has been increasing in the past years, especially with right-wing violence. Prevention was first identified as a necessity during the Bush administration in 2006 even though no CVE strategy was implemented until 2011 with the Obama administration (Ingram, 2008). Similarly, to the British example these prevention policies were met with mixed results, criticized for once again stigmatizing stereotypes against Islamic communities and considered by the Republican party to be “too soft” (Rosand, 2020).

Ingram (2018) explain how the North American constitution is not prepared to deliver an effective response towards prevention efforts. The author believes that the correct constitutional approach for violent extremism both empowers counter-terrorism efforts and complements itself with a preventative baseline (Ingram, 2018). It is necessary to consider the complex level of threat that faces the United States as widespread violence and access to high grade military weaponry is facilitated to its citizens. Various cases

have been observed particularly with violence in schools from dissociated teenagers with access to radicalized content.

During the Trump administration, these policies were abandoned altogether but this made way for a restructuring of the CVE prevention policy under the wing of the Department of Homeland Security to look at it from a more community-based perspective as supported by Jackson (Ingram, 2018). Such as the case with the 2018 National Strategy for counter-terrorism which identified CVE policies as a key step in national security and highlighted the need to create a stable prevention framework (Ingram, 2018). This supports the involvement of local communities and local practitioners to be engaged more with society and identify possible radicalization events, as such was already the case in Australia and Germany. Rosand (2020) also emphasizes this effort by mentioning secondary prevention programs which have been specifically designed to interact with the community and are led by non-governmental institutions.

CVE prevention in the United States remains limited especially due to their legislative demands pertaining to the jurisdictions designed for federal authorities and respecting the boundaries of state vs federal investigations (Ingram, 2018). At the moment, no specific agency is responsible for leading preventative efforts, and this has led to issues in funding, jurisdiction and accountability on behalf of federal and state actors however Ingram (2018) states that with this issue also comes an opportunity. This needs not to be viewed as a limitation but a possibility to further create space for non-governmental organizations and allow the civil society and private sector to sustain a long-term approach to counter radicalization and prevention (Ingram, 2018). As observed in a CTS approach, civil programs can help identify potentially radicalized individuals by employing key members of society in position to do so, as for example teachers and health professionals. They can assist in identifying these individuals and recommend them to take part in federal program design specifically for such instances (Ingram, 2018). Despite these latest advances Rosand (2020) criticizes the lack of a national plan and the split planning between states which leads to a framework that does not coincide with what the United Nations have urged these countries to develop.

Through the analysis of some of the measures currently implemented in Western societies it becomes clear that theoretically P/CVE policies work towards the promotion of a nonviolent nation and the increase in tolerance, societal values and developing a sense of empathy towards the victims of these attacks, however, this is not necessarily the case. Jackson (2017) describes the current anti-terrorism framework employed by most

Western nations as outdated and primitive. In this study he states that choosing to respond to acts of extreme violence with violence itself will do nothing other than promote the endless cycle of terrorism (Jackson, 2017). The author is able to find evidence where violent counter-terrorism can slow the number of terrorist incidences however only on a temporary basis (Jackson, 2017). In the end such operations cannot solve the deep and enrooted hatred that exists within these individuals, nor can it solve the conflict that led to the creation of terrorist organizations, therefore it cannot be expected to solve the issue (Jackson, 2017).

Jackson (2015) begins by arguing that after 9/11 what was known as “old terrorism”, mostly based on political motivation and its related research began to be seen by many as something which could not be used to understand what is now known as the “new terrorism”, motivated immensely by religious factors. This means that previously identified patterns could no longer be used to study the phenomena, however, this new form of thinking did not bring anything new to counter-terrorism studies (Jackson, 2015). The CTS framework has been focusing on documenting and studying the nature of the threat and has come to highlight that this new form of counter-terrorism has brought consequences such as the exaggeration of the “War on Terror” which have led to a consequent increase of surveillance (Jackson, 2015). In this regard the CTS approach has provided criticism on how political leaders describe the “War on Terror” and even how the media portrays it (Jackson, 2015).

Jackson (2016) suggests that this demonstrates an epistemological crisis in counter-terrorism precisely through this observable lack of knowledge on what terrorism actually is, ultimately describing it as unpredictable. The author provides a simple example which highlights this issue. The death of Osama Bin Laden presumedly marked a stepstone in the fight against terrorism with many believing it would be the end of Al-Qaeda but there were no programs that ended, no funding that was terminated, nor any laws that were no longer applicable (Jackson, 2016). In fact, in the short years after his death the counter-terrorism effort actually intensified and in the face of this incongruence the CTS, non-violence framework, as a methodology, questions the known methods and enriches P/CVE prevention by suggesting an approach that promotes community-based ideals and not one that tightens surveillance and increases discrimination on what considered to be communities at risk of being radicalized (Jackson, 2016).

Despite the fact that these programs have been growing steadily in the post 9/11 era, evaluation of these programs is virtually non-existent and so their success can be highly

debated (Gielen, 2019). Bearing in mind this lack of program evaluation it can still be stated that there is no common approach to prevention. Each country is a specific case and in Crone and Nasser's work (2018) of their comparative analysis of the Danish and Lebanese preventative framework it is observed that the Danish strategy, mostly based on welfare state, cannot be applicable to the Lebanese example, whose strategy sets mostly on security with high constraints of securitization. In this regard each nation defines its road to prevention, and it is important to state that there is not a one size fits all scenario. The literature will turn to the Portuguese case in an effort to determine the various similarities and disparities considered in the aforementioned examples.

### **2.3 The Portuguese case**

The Portuguese case is a very particular one. Portugal does not appear to have a clear and implemented preventative strategy in spite of its European Union obligations. At first instance it seems like a country mostly unaffected by the phenomena of terrorism, however, there has been an increase in the radical right nationalism which has expressed in discontent with immigrants and overall dissatisfaction with the nation's democracy (Santos, 2021). In recent years it has been observed the radicalization of Portuguese foreign fighters which further enhances the need for a study that analysis the Portuguese preventative framework and planning. As a gateway into Schengen space it, Portugal is not impervious to terrorist attacks but has fortunately been able to evade the radar so far. Its CT policies are in accordance with European Union standards, however there is a void in what regards to its preventative framework. A prevention plan was set into the works in 2015 but up until now, no measures have been observed.

Marchi and da Silva (2019) exemplify how in the past 40 years, the political context has brought about instances of extreme political violence and armed actions during and after the April revolution of 1974, especially considering the Portuguese loss of presence in its colonies. From the 90's onward, these authors delineate the rise of political sympathy to neo-Nazi movements, and the arrival of the skinhead culture in Portugal, in response to the anti-immigration discourse which was already found at the time in Europe. Although this violent extremist history is keenly felt, there have been effectively no convictions on terrorism related charges, nor for crimes of a political nature (Marchi and Da Silva, 2019).

Portuguese CT legislation can be said to be a suitable one for a member country of the European Union. Costa (2015) emphasizes this particular point, stating terrorism law has been developed bearing in mind the benefits of international cooperation. Terrorism was foreseen for many years in a particular set of articles of the Portuguese Penal Code and so remained for a great many years. Da Silva, Barbosa, Ventura and Carvalho (forthcoming) explain that references to terrorist offences were inserted from 1981 onwards, however, this did not include a definition on the act of terrorism. It was in September 1982 that the definition of terrorism and terrorist organizations was included in criminal law (Da Silva et al., forthcoming). By 1991 fascism convictions also became foreseen in criminal law as a consequence of the skinhead movement observed at the time (Da Silva et al., forthcoming). Afterwards there was a major intervention of the European Council Framework Decision in 2003, which brought about an amendment which is now the base framework in the fight against terrorism or the law on the fight against terrorism (LFAT) (Costa, 2015). This law is still in use today and has suffered amendments in the past few years. 2007 (Law n°59/2007) brought about responsibility of legal person for terrorism related crimes, 2008 (Law n°25/2008) on the fighting against terrorism financing and 2011 (Law n°17/2011) saw additional penalties for the promotion of terrorist activities and introduced the concept of international terrorism (Costa, 2015). This was seen has a much welcomed changed to a concept which only included until that moment the integrity of Portuguese institutions and began to include international organizations as well.

Further amendments to the Portuguese legislation have brought about additional means for Intelligence Services to collect and monitor further national security threats and monitor on instances of money laundering as fronts for the financing of terrorist acts (Costa, 2015). The absence of an attack thus far and the aforementioned amendments have led Costa (2015) to conclude that Portugal has the proper legislation in place in accordance with the international threat. However, counter-terrorism must be more than merely developing a framework for prosecuting, attending, and punishing terrorism related acts. A framework of prevention must be equally important.

In this regard, Portuguese P/CVE policies are non-existent. Ferreira and Machado (2018) emphasize this in their study of radicalization indicators in Portuguese prisons. Through their interviews with various institutions and their operating professionals, they were told that there are currently no prevention plans for potential radicalization cases in prison, whether for right-wing or Islamic extremist violence and that radicalization is not

a reality in these institutions. Upon further research they realized that prison professionals are aware of the risk of potential far-right extremism but not for the risk of radicalization towards violent Islamic extremism. Nonetheless at no moment during their training and preparation are they instructed on which potential indicators can point out to radicalized inmates. Several requests have been made by these professionals in order to obtain the necessary training or even to be shared of relevant literature which can aid them in understanding what extremism is and what are the indicators for potential cases of radicalization, however such appeals have not been heard nor met.

Nonetheless, radicalization is a topic which is not impervious to Portuguese society. Arena (2018) explains that, so far, eleven Portuguese descendants have been radicalized into fighting in Iraq and Syria. These individuals have all resided in Lisbon and its surrounding urban areas and have all been radicalized throughout Europe such as in France and the UK but remain nonetheless as descendants of Portuguese origin without criminal records. The author justifies these cases of radicalization as the vast majority being linked to socioeconomic issues and an overall sense of lack of professional opportunities. Online radicalization also factored as a primary drive responsible towards the radicalization of these actors. This has led to the immigration of these individuals and their subsequent radicalization and adoption of extremist ideals due to their social crisis and lack of sense of belonging into society (Arena, 2018). This leaves an environment of vulnerability which acts as a steppingstone for recruitment into terrorist organizations. These individuals remain no longer alone but are now fighting for what they believe to be a higher cause.

## **Concluding remarks**

Literature on the subject is highly limited for the Portuguese case which may indicate a lack of interest in counter-terrorism prevention in Portugal. The threat is not inexistent, and its European partners have proved time and again how such endeavors should and must be managed. In an effort to attempt to outline this issue and enrich the existing literature, the below proposed methodology aims at explaining how the data on the subject will be collected, why it was chosen to be so and towards what purpose.



## **Chapter three: Methodology**

As previously stated, the main goal of this dissertation is to determine the Portuguese experience with counter-terrorism efforts and what measures have been set thus far in the post 9/11 era regarding the prevention of terrorism in the pre-criminal space.

In order to be able to obtain this information and reach the desired objectives, two research questions have been posed:

- How has counterterrorism legislation been applied in Portugal in the pre-criminal space since 9/11?
- What are the efforts put into place in Portugal in terms of preventing and countering terrorism in the pre-criminal space?

This chapter presents the knowledge gathering process that will be put into place by describing the tools and the methods chosen to identify and explain Portuguese countering and preventing terrorism policies.

### **3.1 Methodological procedures**

Vilelas (2017) has described the scientific method as a set of practices used by the scientific community as a way to assess, confirm or even to question a particular theory or set of theories. Once one's objective is clear, the data can be gathered using either a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodology. Patton (2002) defines the qualitative method as gathering data with no restraints and particularly no necessity in having predetermined categories. As for the quantitative method, its categorization requires using a limited number of categories and a specific measurement to evaluate the chosen sample for the study (Patton, 2002). Bearing this in mind, in order to attain the desired objectives, a set of information gathering methods come to play, such as interviews or questionnaires in order to arrive at a valid conclusion. The chosen methodology must best be suited to reach the investigation's goal, which in turn depends on the choice of the data gathering method. For the theme in hand and due to the highly limited amount of information

available and the limited number of subjects with field experience, it was decided that a survey or a questionnaire did not represent the most feasible and reliable source of data gathering.

### **3.2 The Qualitative methodology**

For this investigation, the chosen methodology was a qualitative one and the method for gathering data was semi-structured online interviews. Guest, Namey and Mitchell (2013) define the qualitative research method as the analysis of different perspectives and the researcher's analysis and interviewees experience as part of their baseline knowledge for one's study. Their epistemological description of the method pertains to gathering knowledge on people's experience and their goals and constructs in a particular field of research (Guest et al., 2013). In other words, the researcher observes the world at hand (Guest et al., 2013). Due to the nature of this particular methodology, it was decided that this best suited the researcher's needs, although with some limitations, in order to reach a conclusion on the proposed research questions.

### **3.3 Data collection process**

For the purpose of this dissertation, an interview script has been created, in order to attain the main desired objectives of this investigation (Appendix A) and has been approved by ISCTE's ethics committee. This script has been created in a way that allows the investigator to obtain real time information of expert individuals operating in the live Portuguese counter terrorism field on a daily basis, who operate in the first line of defense and are best suited to identify gaps in the prevention framework and their respective solutions.

In regard to the interviewee's anonymity, a non-disclose form was presented and signed which ensures that the researcher at no stage during this investigation mentions the interviewees by their names only as members of a particular labor group. The results will be coded and all shared details concerning past operations and the individuals involved will be analyzed for the purposes of the research questions, however sensitive details which could allow one to identify those involved, will not be shared during this

investigation. Furthermore, the proposed script ensured that no sensitive questions were posed in regard to the interviewee's personal lives, only their professional experience, thus respecting the boundaries of their personal space and operating with the ethical standards of a safe and respectful investigation. The interviewees will be identified accordingly as "interviewee 1", "interviewee 2" and so forth.

Due to the sensitive nature of this topic and its consequent lack of information on the subject, the sample has been limited to 8 interviews. The researcher has given priority to individuals with extensive experience in the field, as opposed to individuals who have studied the topic and even written literature on the subject, but have not felt its affects firsthand, therefore the interviewee sample is quite limited and was acquired using a snowball sampling strategy. All these individuals share similar background, both professionally and academically. Considering the exclusiveness of the information and the difficult of obtaining actual details on such a secretive topic, this sample of eight interviewees contains the majority of individuals with details in this field on a national level who are in a position to share information.

The interviews were comprised of a series of open-ended questions, following a formal structure, that was consistent throughout the various interviewees. The structure of the interviews was presented as follows: (1) Objective of the investigation, how it will be conducted and its relevance to the scientific community; (2) Questions regarding the professional experience of each interviewee in order to comprehend the extent of their knowledge with the topic; (3) Conducting the specific questions available in the interview script on Portuguese counter terrorism prevention policies; (4) closing remarks and offering the possibility for each interviewee to be in the loop of the outcomes of the investigation.

In order to be further aligned with the information that is received from the interviewees, the 2015 national strategy for combating terrorism was analyzed alongside with its five foundation pillars: Detect, Prevent, Protect, Pursue and Respond and also the 2017 action plan to prevent radicalization and recruitment towards terrorism. By studying these plans, it was possible to conduct these interviews on a more even knowledge playing field in what concerns the possible policies which are under implementation or revision.

### 3.4 Interviewees Profile

All interviewees shared a similar academic background ascertaining a level of master's degree or above. In order to obtain real life information from the field the study was broadened beyond the academic audience to contain feedback from individuals from security forces. All selected interviews may be considered as elite interviews. As referred by Harvey (2011), an elite participant is known as someone in a position of greater power or influence than the average participant in a given field. To this extent only experts in the field of counter-terrorism in Portugal have been invited to contribute to this study, thus defining the participant scope as elite.

Considering the general profile of the participants out of the eight interviewees, four have a PhD and have conducted academic investigation on the topic and two others are on the verge of finalizing theirs. Out of these six interviewees, two came from the psychology field and have extensively studied radicalization processes for both religious and politically motivated extremism. Two others have studied the 2015 Portuguese counter-terrorism strategy, one of these having directly contributed to its development and the other studying it from a critical studies perspective. The remaining two are currently developing studies on counter-terrorism development as a part of their PhD dissertation. The final two interviewees conduct professional activities in security forces, one being an officer of the PSP<sup>2</sup>, contributing for a preventative framework on a daily basis and the other interviewee being a criminal investigation coordinator at PJ<sup>3</sup>, one of the paramount security sectors for combating terrorism and undoubtedly one of the most experienced individuals in counter-terrorism in Portugal, with over 34 years of experience in the field and involved in the implementation of multiple programs.

### 3.5 Data analysis

In order to assist with the analysis, the interviews were transcribed and coded using NVIVO 12 software. A thematic analysis approach was used when analyzing the results. Braun and Clarke (2016) describe thematic analysis as a methodology that permits the researcher to organize and identify patterns and key topics throughout the data, thus

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<sup>2</sup> PSP (*Polícia de Segurança Pública* [Public Safety Police])

<sup>3</sup> PJ (*Polícia Judiciária* [Judiciary Police])

allowing the researcher to recognize collective experiences. In other words, it helps in identifying what are the common topics referred by the interviewees. This method of analysis has allowed the researcher to search for common denominators across the entire data field and associate them with key teams that may provide answers to the research question proving to be a flexible and comprehensible approach for the data analysis process.

After the data was gathered and the results coded appropriately, a third stage took place to analyze and understand the data, derive it with the experiences presented by other countries in the aforementioned literature review, compare it with the existing and known Portuguese struggle against terrorism preventions and its efforts and to arrive at appropriate conclusions and steps that could be undertaken to close this gap and ensure an adequate prevention framework. The following chapter will present the results that have been obtained throughout the interviews and their respective analysis and relevance to the research questions.



## **Chapter four: Analysis and discussion**

This section of the dissertation explores the key themes that were referred during the interviews and were transversal for the majority of the interviewees. As previously stated in chapter three the interviewee sample consisted solely of experts in the field of counter-terrorism who possess extensive know-how, either through academic research or professional background. A similar level of knowledge was expected between these participants, however there was a clear difference in the depth of information available from interviewee to interviewee and also a substantial difference when it comes to knowledge of programs and policies in practice.

This analysis provides a detailed look on the main gaps that have been encountered on ongoing Portuguese counter-terrorism prevention practices. In an effort to respond to this investigation's research questions, the following chapter will also relate this data with the literature review and provide a comparison between Portugal and the other nations which have been dedicated to terrorism prevention for some time now.

### **4.1 Post 9/11 counter-terrorism legislation**

When discussing the Portuguese approach to the topic of counter-terrorism, the majority of interviewees displayed some form of knowledge on what constitutes the existing policies and diplomas in this area. One of the interviewees demonstrated that the legislation not only impacted his daily work, but he has extensive knowledge on the changes that were introduced post September 11<sup>th</sup> and has come to be in a position where he has power of recommendation for possible future changes. Law 52 was referred in various instances as the key law on counter-terrorism in Portugal and this same participant was also involved in the first time that law 52 was used in Portugal for the conviction of an ETA member for crimes related to terrorism. As such Interviewee 8 described law 52 by stating:

*Law 52 is inspired in the European Union's decision of July 2002, where countries like Portugal who did not yet have a specific legislation for combating terrorism started to use this one.*

Despite displaying a well-formed legislative structure, a limitation was identified. When inquired on existing prevention diplomas, it was not possible to detect an interviewee with any form of knowledge on such policies which further enhances the necessity of a study that covers the existing forms of prevention, if any.

Whether discussing terrorism on a domestic or an international level, it became quite clear that the EU reality must always be taken into consideration, and this was highly referred by the participants which proved necessary to compare if Portugal works on a level playfield in comparison with other EU member states. In order to do this, it was important to refer back to 2017 when Portugal was reported for not matching with EU terrorism legislation (N.A, 2018). In this regard six participants believed this notification to be justifiable and one believed that this merited action from the Portuguese side. Out of this sample, only two interviewees choose to evaluate and claim that the existing legislation is sufficient and robust enough to comply with EU regulation and convict crimes of terrorism, however no interviewee referred to this legislative capacity in a negative aspect or has displayed the belief that it would not be possible to successfully convict someone of crimes of terrorism. Interviewee one believed to be crucial to keep up with European policies, an opinion shared with Interviewee two who referred that the best way to combat terrorism is for Portugal to transpose its policies with the policies from the European Union. Interviewee five mentioned that not only was this justifiable, but in 2017 parliament began to approve new measures in haste, as a response to this notification however four years later, nothing palpable was observed in terms of actions and plans set into real life application. The majority of the interviewees also believed that change will not occur in the near future due to the lack of priority of this national counter-terrorism plan and also due to the extenuating circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic which have greatly shifted the government's focus and priorities, a phenomenon also observed in other EU member states.

In contrast, two other interviewees believed this was not troublesome as this notification was sent out to various countries and not only Portugal in particular. Interviewee three went a step further and described this action as a political obligation, thus not defining that Portugal has not been delivering with its counter-terrorism legislation. Interviewee three believed that on this aspect, Portugal deserves merit for keeping an up-to-date legislation in comparison with other EU countries in the post 9/11 period.



Considering the results mentioned above, in what regards Portuguese counter-terrorism legislative application in the post 9/11 era, there have been few opportunities to observe it in practice. It is mainly believed by Portuguese counter-terrorism actors that the legislative framework is well structured and robust and seems to have been positively applied in the few opportunities that appeared in the post 9/11 era, such as the convictions of the former Portuguese foreign fighters. This is an observation previously shared by Costa (2015) upon his conclusion that Portugal does possess the proper legislative capacity to process a terrorist threat. From a European perspective, Portugal seems to have stayed behind on its compliance with European regulation. This is mostly seen as formality due to the country's involvement within the European Union and is thus not considered as a failure in counter-terrorism. Furthermore, it is necessary to take into consideration that these are general guidelines that the member states need to adapt and not specific strategies.

## **4.2 Portuguese approach to terrorism prevention**

### ***4.2.1 Diminished threat consideration***

Portugal's positioning within the EU and its existence as a gateway into Schengen Space was heavily considered as a key factor to observe on counter-terrorism discussions. Bearing this in mind, the public perception remains that thus far Portugal has been able to elude the terrorism threat.

Three of this study's participants considered the terrorism threat as real, although one specified that this occurs on a very small scale, but equally related this threat to the country's involvement in the European Union. The five remaining participants referred Portugal as a marginal country in the affairs of terrorism particularly Islamic motivated terrorism. Two participants believed that Portugal was able to evade the Islamic phenomena with one having referred that the issue does not concern him deeply since Portugal is not the same as Spain or France quite simply because we have a much smaller Islamic community and also due to the fact that Portugal has not had a terrorist event in recent years. However, despite these claims, this interviewee stated anyway that vigilance must remain due to the nation's involvement with the EU. Two other participants believed that terrorism is not an issue of public concern and one referred that the national coverage

of this topic, in comparison with other EU member states, has aided in creating a sense of non-urgency. Interviewee five added an interesting remark by stating:

*Portugal has faced terrorism, both from extreme right and extreme left in the last 50 years, and this domestic terrorism is not a part of our collective memory, they are not present to the public or in the academic population, so it seems like we have deleted this from our collective memory, so this is even an additional point that add to the population not being concerned about this topic.*

This statement was however countered by interviewee six who stated:

*(...) after the 2015 attacks from Daesh, there was a survey done to measure the feeling of insecurity and we realized that the Portuguese have a disproportionate fear of something happening here in comparison with other countries that have suffered from terrorism, (...).*

Only one interviewee believed that most of the Portuguese population recognizes the country is not immune to terrorism.

Opinions diverge immensely on this topic and a consensus is difficult to obtain however, seven of the eight interviewees all referred the same point which is the recent rise of far-right extremism both on a European and a national level. These same seven interviewees considered the threat as one that needs and must be monitored, and its possible radicalization addressed via a preventative framework. In this regard, a couple of interviewees shared:

*I think we need to take the threat of the extreme right seriously and this is not easy as we now have a party in parliament, and they have neo-Nazi militants and it's difficult to condemn this. But this should be taken more seriously, fighting it on a more political level. (Interviewee 6)*

*Recently there have been increasing concerns on radicalized right-wing individuals, and in Portugal too. In fact, just last week there was a report that stated, Portugal is the 6<sup>th</sup> biggest increase of this phenomenon in the EU and there be a focus on more preventative programs which address this type of radicalization. (Interviewee 4)*

The rise of the extreme-right phenomena has in fact presented itself as one of the largest common denominators in this research. The social-economic struggles associated to the COVID-19 pandemic seem to have increased the far-right phenomena and this has been a growing tendency in Portugal particular in younger age groups who can easily access online content related to this extremist ideology. It was mentioned by the majority of interviewees that there should be an increase focus on this phenomenon and its subsequent radicalization factors.

#### ***4.2.2 Secrecy and information sharing gaps***

Secrecy was always expected to be a part of counter-terrorism operations. The UK chooses to operate on a basis of employing the civil sector on daily prevention and France has also displayed a similar approach, but it was always important to comprehend the road Portugal has chosen and its level of transparency not only with society, but with experts and even those employed in security services. Here it was imperative to determine the existing P/CVE policies in Portugal and secrecy seems to hold a major role in determining the community's know-how and the efficiency of inter-agency collaboration.

From the interviewee sample, six of the eight participants were not able to name the existing prevention policies in Portugal, including an operating member of a security force. All six members attributed this to the secrecy surrounding counter-terrorism affairs despite their efforts to investigate this matter on a deeper basis. Two of these participants believed that the secrecy is needed so as to not alarm the public unnecessarily, while the other four classified this lack of information as an issue and the disclosure of further information as a necessary step. Interviewee six stated:

*(...) the people need to know what is happening, they need to be informed. Most of the population believes that the government does not do anything to the benefit of the population and for this case it would be very important for the Portuguese citizens to know about this and that something is being done to prevent terrorism.*

Interviewee four also provided an interesting remark mentioning that due to the secrecy surrounding the topic, there is an increased difficulty in evaluating our preventative capacities by referring:

*“Proving what is done on the prevention side is difficult. If it done correctly then we cannot prove it because nothing happened. That is the thing with prevention plans. The fact that nothing happened so far in Portugal maybe it is because our preventative work has been outstanding. We really have no way of knowing.”*

Secrecy also proved to be a factor on the participants ability to name the services that operate on a preventative capacity. Three participants were not aware of any branch or service that acts on this basis. Three other members pointed to PJ as instrumental in the prevention of terrorism but once again were not able to describe their activities towards prevention. The remaining participants attributed this responsibility to various branches. Interviewee seven claimed it is a part of all security forces in Portugal including the PSP and the GNR<sup>4</sup> who patrol the streets on a daily basis, which in itself consists of an act of prevention. Interviewee eight attributed this to a collaboration between PJ who work on criminal prevention, the Portuguese Services (SIS<sup>5</sup>, SIRP<sup>6</sup> and former SEF<sup>7</sup>) who investigated and monitored for potential cases of radicalization and the Ministry of foreign Affairs which acts on the reports of these entities.

Various interviewees referred to the 2015 national strategy for combating terrorism which was created precisely to further enhance the nation’s preventative framework, however six of these eight interviewees had no information on this strategy’s implementation. The remaining interviewees who did possess knowledge of this strategy believed that what was developed is sufficient however opinions differed once again. Interviewee three affirmed that the strategy is already in place, even though the majority of people working on this field are not aware of this fact. Interviewee three went to great lengths to describe the strategy and the pillars it contains:” Detecting, Protection, Pursuing and Response”, thus mirroring what is the existing European Union’s counter-terrorism strategy. On the other hand, Interviewee eight claimed on the 2015 national strategy:

*(...) it is not a priority. The national strategy for counter-terrorism was left alone for six years. It remains in the “basket” for now.*

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<sup>4</sup> GNR (*Guarda Nacional Republicana* [National Republican Guard])

<sup>5</sup> SIS (*Sistemas de Informação de Segurança* [Information Security Systems])

<sup>6</sup> SIRP (*Sistemas de Informações da República Portuguesa* [Portuguese Republic Information Systems])

<sup>7</sup> SEF (*Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras* [Foreigners and Border Service])

Instead, interviewee eight described a set of activities performed by the Judiciary Police as the only organism in place that handles criminal terrorism investigations. These activities consisted in strategical communication to deconstruct the messages passed by terrorist organizations, several programs to aid victims and families of actors who have become radicalized and in 2014 an awareness session with the civil sectors to inform all relevant actors of what to do if confronted by a potential case of radicalization, such as teachers, doctors, psychologists, and the various ministries.

The information appears to surround a very particular set of individuals and even so, opinions diverge. It was necessary then to ascertain how the information flows between the individuals and agencies that do possess this information. All participants referred in this regard to UCAT (*Unidade Combate Anti-Terrorismo* [Anti-Terrorism Combat Unit]).

UCAT is not an organism or an entity itself but a place where representatives from all security services in Portugal can share relevant information concerning terrorist activities. This same unit was created based on the increased threat post September 11<sup>th</sup>, but it is not without its flaws. A few interviewees shared:

*I interviewed a secretary of state who was involved in the organization of the Euro championship in Portugal in 2003, around the time of the creation of UCAT and he was unanimous on their struggles, the sharing of information. (Interviewee 3)*

*UCAT was born with some issues, but I believe the issue in Portugal is due to the excess of entities and not the lack of entities. We have too many entities and what we need to urgently improve is the coordination of the units. (Interviewee 5)*

Out of the totality of the interviewees only one believed that information was properly shared between the various services. The remaining identified the issue behind this procedure but recognized the necessity as well of having such an information sharing system. Two of these interviewees emphasized this aspect by referring that the sharing of information is a central axe to prevent and combat terrorism. These individuals believed that steps must be taken to fix these issues however Interviewee three believed that this will not be possible as this issue is deeply enrooted within Portuguese security forces. Interviewee three referred that one of the causes was the fact that each service responds to a different entity therefore each of these services will hold the information until they

deem it necessary to share with the remaining actors. This is a practice that has been occurring for decades and therefore it would be very difficult to alter.

As seen above mentioned, secrecy is undoubtedly the largest point to consider in this study. It divided interviewee opinion and seemed to be focused on a very particular set of individuals demonstrating that securitization in Portugal is considerably applied. Although it cannot be said that in Portugal extreme measures are taken in the name of security, the fact of the matter remains that society is not aware of what is happening which creates a big difficulty in studying counter-terrorism in Portugal from an academic perspective. This has been one of the constraints of securitization that was observed in Charret's study (2008). The majority of the academic audience was not able to describe in detail the 2015 national strategy against terrorism, its current implementation state or even the P/CVE programs currently in practice. Only one participant demonstrated specific knowledge on the 2015 national strategy to combat terrorism's implementation, someone whose investigation led to direct contact with policy makers, claiming that this strategy is successfully implemented. However, this is directly opposed by the information provided by one of the most experienced individuals in the field of counter-terrorism in the country, a person who operates within this field on a daily basis and who possess no knowledge or evidence on the implementation of this strategy. Information appears to be limited to the academic population which proves to be a constraint in developing studies and research in this field. As for the strategy itself, comprised of 5 pillars: Detect, Prevent, Protect, Pursue and Respond, appears to present various similarities to the European Union's approach to P/CVE and was praised for the inclusion of its extra pillar Detecting. In this sense, the Portuguese 2015 national strategy for combating terrorism appears as a well-developed strategy that if indeed is set into motion, can prove to be a correct course of action for the nation as was specified by the counter-terrorism actors that were interviewed for this investigation.

As mentioned previously, in Crone's and Nasser's (2018) work the Danish welfare state strategy, cannot be applied to the Lebanese example, mostly based on securitization. This is another factor to take into consideration. As it was ascertained that securitization can also be observed in Portugal this means that the Portuguese strategy cannot be the same as one observed in the UK or Germany for instance. These nations focus on the employment of the civil sector however this cannot be applied to Portugal as both Portuguese citizens and academic community are mostly unaware of the nation's counter-terrorism approach.

The exclusiveness of the information surrounding counter-terrorism activities also creates a difficult to evaluate the country's efficiency in combating terrorism in the pre-criminal space. It is the opinion of several academics that this focus does not exist or not as much as it should, however, security actors do provide examples of various programs done on an EU level to further develop prevention however, they also justify the secrecy as necessary so as not to unduly alarm the population. Although this approach has demonstrated to be sound throughout the years, this fits precisely on Floyd's (2020) definition of securitization. It is their believe that too much prevention can also be a bad thing as it can not only create an incorrect perception of the threat, but it can as well create a space where maladjusted individuals can take this as an opportunity to investigate extremist ideals and even reach a point of radicalization where they may search for alternatives and ideals where they believe they may fit. Even though these programs have existed in the past there seems not to be a record of recent programs which have been implemented within this framework. Whether this was not discovered because they do not exist or simply because they remain highly secretive programs, unfortunately this remains unknown and somewhat problematic as well as many security actors are not aware of these programs, which further enhances the issue with this approach.

Beyond these constraints, the Anti-Terrorism combat unit (UCAT) was created as a middle ground for exchanging information which appeared to be a good approach towards information sharing but as mentioned by the majority of this studies participants, it is presented as a defective program. This can mostly be attributed to the fact that each security sector reports to a different governmental representative and therefore will withhold information until such a time where they deem fit to share it with other police and investigative services. Once again securitization is handled to an extreme and proves to be another constraint which in the Portuguese case extends itself to security forces. Charret's (2008) study on securitization proves to be of valued importance and helps to identify these flaws as some of the largest constraints in what regards the security services organization in combating terrorism, one that may affect the Portuguese capacity and response towards a terror event.

### ***4.2.3 The loss of focus on radicalization***

Radicalization was one of the key themes during these discussions, particularly the role that prisons play in this phenomenon. Interviewee three concurred that prisons are fundamental in radicalization and that working towards this prevention should and most be of paramount importance mentioning that Portugal can learn immensely from the UK's and France's example.

Interviewee eight once again referred to Judiciary Police's work in this sector, in bringing the appropriate actors onto the fold of how to react when faced with radicalized individuals. There is a belief that all management within prisons is aware of how to handle this and even referred that there is a hotline created specifically to report this phenomenon. The remaining participants presented a different opinion. Four interviewees were not aware of the existence of radicalization strategies in prison and interviewee one considered this to be a failure in the prevention of terrorism. Interviewee six shared an interesting example of the identification of an inmate who was displaying signs of radicalization but when reported internally, no action was taken.

*I have a colleague who works in a prison, and she knows nothing of terrorism in there. Three years ago, she told me she was speaking with a client who said that once he got out, he was going to join Daesh. My colleague had already flagged that case to the prison's director, but the director chose to ignore it.*

Two other interviewees ultimately classified this matter as one that needs urgent action to improve our preventative framework, with the creation of trainings and content which can be equally accessible to all prison related staff.

As observed previously in the literature by Korn (2016) prisons can be places of recruitment and a number of countries have developed programs to address radicalization under these particular circumstances as such was the example of the United Kingdom and Germany. The Violence Prevention Network (VPN) in Germany is one example on the importance of addressing radicalization in prisons (Korn, 2016). This is an example which is not found in the Portuguese prison system which demonstrate virtually no approach to inmate radicalization. Once again there are those of refer that these approaches exist and those who deny these claims. It remains unclear what is the actual reality, but the testimonies of this studies' participants support that this information is only shared on a



hierarchical level. Prison directors appear to be informed but the same cannot be said of the guards who observe these inmates and sit in a privileged position where they can identify possible radicalization factors. The aforementioned example of an inmate that wished to join a terrorist organization further enhances the need of developing the “critical thinking” process as previously mentioned by Stephens et al (2019). It is very important to attempt to detach individuals from their extremist ideologies in the cases of inmates who begin to demonstrate these traits (Stephens et al., 2019). This lack of focus can be mentioned as one of the nation’s biggest gaps in counter-terrorism prevention and one whose results directly support Ferreira and Machado’s (2018) findings on their study of the Portuguese approach towards inmate radicalization. As mentioned by the authors this study also found that there is no active planning, nor any training provided to the professionals of these institutions on possible radicalization signs or what to do in such instances.

Beyond prison planning, radicalization also took a key place in the discussions on daily prevention, particularly since it is public knowledge that there have been Portuguese nationals who became radicalized and went on to fight for the ranks of terrorist organizations. Extreme right-wing radicalization is also a factor to consider. Two interviewees possessed no knowledge on existing radicalization programs but shared an equal opinion on the importance of addressing this phenomenon.

The remaining participants have at some point studied these processes and pointed to the SIS, PJ and former SEF as actors in this process. Interviewee eight explained that all known foreign fighters were radicalized outside of Portuguese borders and all of them were accounted for, with the exception of one individual who is presumed dead. Despite demonstrating knowledge on work towards radicalization several participants believed a more structured approach would bring added benefit to the preventative framework. Interviewee three believed there are guidelines on how to handle radicalization but mentions that Portugal would benefit from adding this in the form of a legal diploma. Interviewee four on the other hand has studied the protection of the Portuguese society in the face of violent radicalization, particularly the process of youth radicalization and right-wing extremism. This interviewee believed that the creation of programs and added funding for these investigations depends on the relevance of this topic, and at this moment, the topic is not considered as relevant, in spite of a steady increase of right-wing radicalism which has been observed in recent times.

Bearing in mind the information analyzed above, it can be said that Portugal displays a solid security framework in place, with various actors performing roles in criminal prevention and the monitorization of radicalized individuals and with the Judiciary police having once again a key role in this regard. Lack of actors is not a problem, and some academics even refer that the security sector would benefit from a better organization and a smaller number of actors with clearly defined roles however there are other limitation factors to consider towards the Portuguese radicalization approach.

The employment of the civil sector in prevention can be way to address radicalization as many countries have demonstrated, however as observed previously in this investigation, there has been no concrete evidence on the employment of the civil sector in the prevention of radicalization, not to the extent that Spain or Australia displays for instance. In Australia there is a focus on community-based trainings employing key individuals in leadership roles, the various sectors such as health and education and even the employment of family (Harris-Hogan et al., 2015). In Spain, the creation of a free hotline places citizens in positions where they can assist in identifying radicalization factors Korn (2016). Furthermore, the Spanish focus on the youth sector allows to direct individual effort towards susceptible young members of society and it has proven to work well in developing notions of tolerance and respect within these communities (Korn, 2016). There are many examples where society is employed to work as one towards a common goal. As it stands, securitization and the overall necessity of secrecy hinder this approach towards radicalization in Portugal.

It is clear that despite the existence of a few programs, dated back from a few years, the preventative framework would benefit greatly from the employment of those who are in positions that can identify individuals who display extremist radicalization traits. In this regard, there is a desire to increase focus in the youth sector and programs which are extended nationwide to all schools, not just the known troublesome areas, which could prove to be an asset in the future. It is important not only to train these individuals to detect but to explain how they can aim at separating these potentially radicalized individuals from their extremist ideologies, focusing the solution at the root of the issue, an approach observed in Australia and Germany where professors, doctors and even family members of foreign fighters aim at creating once again a bridge between these actors and community-based ideals that promote tolerance, peace, and mutual respect.

Despite this lack of focus on the civil society employment this does come with a benefit. Portugal seems to have evaded the fundamental issues detected by Jackson (2016)

in his study of the CTS approach which is the stigmatization of minorities as was detected earlier in the case of the Netherlands towards the Moroccan society (Vermeulen, 2014) and the British example towards their own Islamic communities (Heath-Kelly, 2013; Abbas, 2017; Martin, 2018) However, as Portugal strategy does bear similarities with many other European strategies, it is also possible to justify this change in behavior due to the lack of implementation of radicalization programs.

#### *4.2.4 Addressing pre-criminal space gaps*

The final key theme identified in these interviews was a lack of focus on engaging terrorism in the pre-criminal space which can be associated to with the aforementioned gaps in the preventative framework. Four of the participants, including a member of a security force, believed that focus on preventing violent extremism in the pre-criminal space is not sufficient as it stands.

Interviewees seven and eight, both believed that prevention comes first and foremost from the daily activities from the security forces particularly from the Judiciary Police. Their criminal prevention activities ensure that focus is turned onto the pre-criminal space, however there is room for improvement. Financing comes to play in this field, and as presented before, financing depends on the relevance of the topic. If Portugal is viewed as a marginal nation outside of the various terror organizations scope, then funding naturally diminishes. Participant eight mentioned that with further investment in the area, services such as the Judiciary Police, could be at the vanguard of combating terrorism.

The participants laid out a series of best practices that should be followed in order to address this gap in the pre-criminal space. Interviewee five shared that the 2015 national strategy for combating terrorism, already laid out, is positive and would successfully aid our preventative framework if implemented by stating:

*This strategy would be enough. It is a heading that is defined and as a course of action for the country it seems appropriate.*

This input was shared by three other participants who attributed the same importance to this strategy. One interviewee believed that by following what are known European best practices, Portugal could share the same level of efficiency as the UK or Spain share.

Two other interviewees believed there should be an increased focus on youth prevention and not only on the most troublesome regions. Interviewee one stated:

*There should be a focus on creating programs for youth radicalization and online content by extending existing programs on cyber bullying and crimes of sexual nature.*

On another hand interviewee three, who studied the 2015 strategy at great lengths, shared a different opinion, believing this focus is real and mentioned:

*(...) it exists, and I have been in the middle of it. It's being done and in very good hands, but I also know that the population do not know what is being done but it is being done, that I can assure you.*

However, as mentioned before the lack of focus on civil prevention was once again identified as this interviewee highlighted the positive work done in France in involving the civil sector on the moral and active responsibility to prevent terrorism and urged that we follow the same thought process.

Ultimately it can be stated that Portuguese pre-criminal prevention does exist particularly in the action of the Judiciary Police however it is scarce and difficult to assess the effectiveness of the few programs that do exist. As it stands it cannot be stated that Portuguese P/CVE programs fit within the definition provided by Heath-Kelly and Strauz (2018) of combating terrorism effectively in the pre-criminal space. Furthermore, it has proved challenging to obtain information on what are the future plans for Portuguese counter-terrorism prevention. It remains unclear if we will ever be able to witness the implementation of a nation strategy or an increase in civil prevention awareness. At this stage in time focus seems to have shifted to the COVID-19 pandemic and is not expected to change in the foreseeable future. Although there is no evidence that would point to an increase of Islamic motivated terrorist activity it is expected that the far-right phenomenon continues to grow, and that the Portuguese prevention framework could be presented with situations where its efficiency and capacity can be put to the test.

## **Concluding remarks**

Taking into consideration the limitations found above, a new question can be placed on how this pre-criminal terrorism prevention focus should look. If this focus does not exist, should Portugal be looking to the example of its EU neighbors? It is necessary to take caution here because as previously explained the CTS approach alerts to the epistemological issue in counter-terrorism that leads to uninformed individuals creating unproductive policies that contribute to discrimination and racism (Jackson, 2015). There should be more than just analyzing the successful P/CVE cases throughout the globe but analyze the constraints they bring as well. In the UK, Channel and Prevent have contributed to a rise in discrimination towards Muslim communities (Stephens et al., 2019). The same has been observed in the Netherlands (Vermeulen, 2014). In Australia reforms have allowed for the detention of individuals even without concrete evidence (Wolfendale, 2006). This is the fundamental issue that Jackson (2016) alerts to. Attempting to mirror these programs in Portugal could prove an issue. The Portuguese Muslim community is small but very well integrated in society (Bernardo, 2018). It is also necessary to take into consideration that the far-right phenomena have been growing in Portugal. Allowing for a discourse which stigmatizes certain communities such as the Muslim, Romani, or African as potentially dangerous or at risk of radicalization could contribute to a bigger rise in right-wing extremism.



## **Chapter five: Conclusion**

The following chapter is divided into three sub-topics which are meant to consider this research's limitations, the research questions and the answers obtained to them, thus reflecting on what is known of the current Portuguese preventative framework and lastly to consider the future possible directions for new investigations which can further complement this work, assist Portuguese terrorism prevention, address the gaps that have been discovered and ultimately aid in creating a solid literature basis on a subject which possesses little to no data.

### **5.1 Main findings**

With the first research question, this study aimed at understanding how counterterrorism legislation has been applied in the post 9/11 era and although the opportunities have been few, the Portuguese counter-terrorist constitutional approach appears as robust and up to date, even though not always in alignment to the European Union requirements. In this regard few suggestions can be provided here as the main findings demonstrated that the largest issue is keeping up with European requirements, a fact that despite necessary due to the nation's involvement with the European Union, does not hinder nor diminish the existing legislative strength.

The second research question was aimed at understanding the efforts put into place in Portugal in terms of preventing and countering terrorism in the pre-criminal space. Throughout this study it was possible to comprehend that the Portuguese P/CVE strategy is mostly non-existent. A number of limitations have been encountered with its strategy most noticeably securitization and a lack of focus on prison radicalization. The current Portuguese strategy appears as flawed, but this issue is not only extended to Portugal. Per the Critical Terrorism Studies, there is an enrooted issue with the majority of preventative approaches conducted throughout the globe and the fact of the matter is that no strategy nor framework has been able to address the fundamental issues that lead to terrorism in the first case. Although there are cases where counter-terrorism has successfully prevented the radicalization of individuals and possible attacks, it has also contributed to the enormous stigmatization of minorities as was seen in previous examples. Fortunately,

Portugal does seem to evade the main critique from CTS to modern counter-terrorism on the increasing disparity towards minorities particularly the Islamic population,

Portugal does not present P/CVE strategies in its pre-criminal space, but it has managed nonetheless to present itself with a very low terrorist threat and it is important to reflect why a nation with seemingly no approaches, can be successful in preventing terrorism. Undoubtedly, the fact that Portugal is a marginal country plays a part here, just as mentioned by a majority of this studies participants. Another potential factor can be that Portugal plays a small role in the international scope as it has not been involved in any major conflicts in decades. Spain on the other hand, played a part in the Iraqi invasion of 2003, which lead to the Madrid bombings of 2004 as a consequence.

Although Portugal is not unfamiliar to terrorism in its history, in the past right-wing extremist groups have been successfully disbanded and convicted. As previously explained by Da Silva et al., (forthcoming) in 1991, fascism conviction became foreseen in criminal law which played a key role in convict neo-Nazi movements. This has highly unmotivated similar groups to follow these patters due to the heavy prison sentences for those involved. The same goes for the Portuguese foreign fighters which despite not having been radicalized in Portugal, those that survived, were still convicted in national territory. The legislation has been comprehensibly developed to convict members involved in just about any terrorist activity, from the financing of acts of terrorism 2008 (Law n°25/2008), to the promotion of these activities 2011 (Law n°17/2011) (Costa, 2015).

Even though Portugal lacks in P/CVE approach it does certainly compensate in its legislative capacity. As it is remains Portugal maintains a very low profile of interest towards religious motivated terrorism. Political motivated terrorism has been highly discouraged by its legislation capacity and criminalization of such activities. However, one must still bear in mind the fact that right-wing extremism has been increasing throughout Europe and Portugal is no exception. The lack of focus on the implementation of programs may prove to be a challenge in the future, considering the rise of far-right extremism the country has been facing but as of now and taking into consideration the fundamental issues behind P/CVE strategies, it cannot be stated that Portugal would benefit from adopting these approaches.

Not limiting the scope of this investigation only towards the Portuguese case, a set of larger questions can be posed based on these results; should we continue to develop P/CVE strategies as they stand? Are these strategies appropriate to the reality of the world



where various refugees travel to Europe looking towards their own peaceful future? Could we be creating future threats by monitoring individuals based solely on their religious beliefs and place of origin, individuals that if born outside of a Muslim country, would otherwise not be considered as a threat? Could we be creating a breathing ground for right-wing nationalism by unduly focusing prevention and potentially labelling other ethnic societies? A factor that needs to be considered, not only for Portugal is that the recent rise of far-right extremism has so far been underestimated. The most notorious case has been the 2021 invasion of the American capitol, one of the biggest threats to American democracy in recent times. This invasion was conducted mostly by middle aged conservative male Americans and as it stands the American P/CVE strategy was not able to prevent this nor identify the thousands of individuals that had been presenting extremists ideals up to the moment of the Capitol invasion.

It is of fundamental importance to dedicate efforts towards this phenomenon as Portuguese preventative strategies could have a ripple effect in increasing this extremism if not done properly. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous effect on individuals which have been presenting themselves as discontent with governmental mandate isolation and the social and economic struggles that have surfaced as a consequence. These are individuals which can be further united if they believe they are fighting for a common cause as for example, protecting the nation from foreigners and ill wanted minorities during times of economic hardship.

## **5.2 Research limitations**

Associated to this study there is a series of limitations which have to be considered. Although the researcher recognized the importance of conducting on site interviews and the importance of developing a relationship with the interviewees, the presential capacity of these interviews was severely limited by the progress of the COVID-19 pandemic. As an alternative the interviews were pre-arranged in both Skype and Zoom platforms. The data collection process was completed successfully however with some limitations associated to the amount of data collected as it was difficult to maintain hour long active connections with the interviewees. Furthermore, the sampling strategy relied on a convenience sampling, collecting data and feedback from those willing to participate in this study. Although there is a healthy sample at hand which contained the vast majority

of national experts with knowledge on this field, the data gathered was nonetheless limited due to the fact that counter-terrorism discussions in Portugal are a high secretive topic and the amount of information that can be shared is severely limited.

### **6.3 Future research considerations**

Having obtained a detailed view of Portuguese counter-terrorism efforts the researcher can now reflect on appropriate venues of investigation which can further contribute to this work. As a future opportunity of research, the researcher recognizes the importance of studying the current preventative strategies on a global level, now with the reality of the pandemic so as to understand the effect that preventative strategies have had in the past two years, not only regarding the increase in racial and ethnic discrimination but also in the creation and unification of extremist groups which were brought together by these recent events. The researcher also recognizes the importance of studying how these P/CVE strategies are created on a governmental level so as to understand and prevent the creation of policies from unexperienced individuals with no knowledge on the fundamental issues of counter-terrorism, which then leads to policies that stigmatize selected members of society, unduly alarms the remaining and that disregard some of the most important factors in counter-terrorism prevention as was the documented case of Portugal and its lack of attention on prison radicalization and pre-criminal prevention.

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## APPENDIXES

**Appendix I** – Interview script

**Appendix II** – Interview consent

## APPENDIX I – Interview script

### Guião de Entrevista: Normas P/CVE - Portugal

CTC – SENTINEL

#### Introdução e experiência profissional

1. Podemos iniciar a entrevista com alguns dados demográficos?
  - a. Profissão?
  - b. Anos de experiência na área?
  
2. Poderia começar por falar um pouco acerca do seu cargo e quais são as responsabilidades que daí advém?
  - a. O que o levou a começar a trabalhar nesta área?
  - b. Há quanto tempo se encontra a desempenhar as suas funções?
  - c. O seu trabalho está diretamente relacionado das atuais políticas de contraterrorismo definidas na legislação portuguesa? Se sim, como?

#### Caraterização da ameaça

3. Considera que a atual ameaça de violência extremista e terrorista, quer seja doméstica ou internacional, é fundamentada e relevante para Portugal?
  
4. Extremismo é por vezes visto como terrorismo o que não é verdade, mas por vezes um extremista pode dar o passo para cometer um ato de terrorismo. Pensa que existe a dificuldade ou o medo em Portugal de classificar um ataque de motivações extremistas como terrorismo?

#### Normas P/CVE

5. Considera que a Legislação Portuguesa e as atuais políticas preventivas refletem o presente estado de alerta na Europa?
  - a. [caso não seja mencionado na questão principal, perguntar] Quais são as normas P/CVE existentes em Portugal?
6. Pensa que as revisões que foram introduzidas na constituição em 2003 e desde então em 2007 e 2011 são suficientes?
7. Considera que Portugal tem uma política de normas de P/CVE que sejam eficientes numa eventualidade de um caso de violência extremista ou terrorista?
  - a. Considera que estas se aplicam a todos os tipos de extremismo e terrorismo (e.g. extrema-direita, jihadismo)?
  - b. Existe algum ramo governamental ou de investigação que esteja dedicado apenas a normas de P/CVE?
  - c. É feita alguma revisão regular a estas normas preventivas, tendo em conta os desenvolvimentos mais recentes no nosso país e na Europa durante esse tempo?
8. Portugal tem uma estratégia específica para lidar com o fenómeno de radicalização?
  - a. Existe alguma unidade especial que monitorize potenciais casos de radicalização?
  - b. É feita alguma preparação para potenciais casos de radicalização nas prisões?
  - c. É feita alguma monitorização dos atuais portugueses que se converteram ao extremismo Islâmico e encontram-se fora da Europa de momento?
  - d. Alguma vez sentiu que não existe um foco em combater o terrorismo no espaço pré-criminal?
9. Recentemente a União Europeia notificou Portugal do incumprimento em adaptar às novas regras europeias no combate ao terrorismo. Acredita que esta chamada de atenção é fundamentada?

- a. Se sim, o que falhou e o que pode ser feito para cumprir com estas normas europeias?
10. Como vê a partilha de informação entre os vários sistemas de inteligência e investigação em Portugal? E na Europa?
11. [Forças de segurança apenas] Alguma vez esteve envolvido numa investigação de violência extremista?
- a. Se sim, pensa que teve as ferramentas necessárias para proceder a essa investigação de forma eficiente?
12. Que mais poderia ser feito na sua perspetiva para expandir as nossas capacidades preventivas?

## CONSENTIMENTO INFORMADO

O presente estudo surge no âmbito de uma tese de mestrado a decorrer no **ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa**. O estudo tem por objetivo determinar a atual existência e viabilidade das normas P/CVE na legislação portuguesa.

O estudo é realizado por Xavier Sampaio (axmso@iscte-iul.pt), que poderá contactar caso pretenda esclarecer uma dúvida ou partilhar algum comentário.

A sua participação no estudo, que será muito valorizada pois irá contribuir para o avanço do conhecimento neste domínio do conhecimento, consiste numa entrevista de experiência e opinião profissional que tende a demorar uma hora. Não existem riscos significativos expectáveis associados à participação no estudo.

A participação neste estudo é estritamente **voluntária**: pode escolher livremente participar ou não participar. Se tiver escolhido participar, pode interromper a participação em qualquer momento sem ter de prestar qualquer justificação ou recusar-se a responder a questões específicas durante a entrevista. Para além de voluntária, a participação é também **anónima** e **confidencial**. A entrevista será gravada, mas uma vez que seja transcrita, a gravação será destruída. A transcrição da entrevista também pode ser partilhada com os entrevistados, caso assim o desejem, para que os mesmo possam rever, adicionar, alterar ou remover alguma informação que tenha sido previamente partilhada.

Os resultados deste estudo serão partilhados com a comunidade académica e com o público em geral através de comunicações orais e escritas, no entanto o seu nome ou de qualquer outro participante neste estudo, nunca será mencionado.

**Declaro** ter compreendido os objetivos de quanto me foi proposto e explicado pelo/a investigador/a, ter-me sido dada oportunidade de fazer todas as perguntas sobre o presente estudo e para todas elas ter obtido resposta esclarecedora, pelo que **aceito** nele participar.

\_\_\_\_\_ (local), \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (data)

**Nome:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Assinatura:** \_\_\_\_\_